

# MATRIZes

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## DOSSTÊ:

*Novas Perspectivas em Teorias  
da Comunicação*

Edgar Morin

José Van Dijck

Eugênio Rondini Trivinho

Carlos Vidales

Júlio Bezerra

## ENTREVISTA:

Norval Baitello Junior



 Editorial

**A**LL THE WHILE we are surprised by recurrent technological advances and consequent improvements in communication processes, we also have a set of reflections being constantly generated by these phenomena. In a way, this determines a repository of references and theoretical instruments that end up lasting more than the very phenomena, and thus one can rescue and mobilize them before each new scenario that presents itself.

This premise legitimates the editors to open the **Dossier** for this issue of *MATRIZES* with the text **Socialist thought in ruins. What can we expect?**, originally written by Edgar Morin almost 30 years ago. The author begins with the proposition that the meaning of socialism was weakened at that historical moment, requiring the revision of his most fundamental aspirations to keep alive the hope for a better society. Such reflection remains urgent today, once we consider that the same crises pointed out by the author at that time – originated by the belief in a technical rationality sold to the illusion of unbridled progress – have their complexity increasingly accentuated. This complexity is exemplified and explored in the following text, when the author José van Dijck, in **Seeing the Forest for the Trees: Visualizing Plataformization and its Governance**, constructs a detailed mapping of the digital platforms structure through the metaphor of a tree. Observing the operation of these platforms from an arrangement of elements that resembles the articulation between root, trunk and arboreal branches, van Dijck highlights the game of relations that sustains this scenario of plataformization, allowing us to glimpse possibilities of thinking policies to reshape this ecosystem from interests focused on the common good of society.

Following up with the dossier, in the article **What is Glocal? Conceptual Systematization and New Theoretical Considerations on the Most**

**Distinctive Techno-Cultural Invention of the Media Civilization**, Eugênio Rondini Trivinho explores the possible meanings for the term in question. Observing this mixture between *global* and *local*, promoted by the action of communication forms over the notions of space and time, Trivinho develops his argumentation from a systematization of several implications of *glocalization* as a reconfiguring phenomenon of social practices. The following article, **Building Communication Theory from Cybersemiotics**, by Carlos Vidales, proposes to observe communication from its transdisciplinarity, which, according to the author, enables the constitution of a common basis for its conceptualization as opposed to the duality of humanist and mechanistic views for its theoretical framework.

Finally, the article **Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty: Cinema in its Continuous Rebirth**, by Júlio Bezerra, aims to build an approximation between these important and influential authors. According to Bezerra, Gilles Deleuze and Maurice Merleau-Ponty are commonly seen opposing each other regarding their contributions to the reflection on cinema. His proposal to make this intersection, which the very author declares risky, should be considered as carrying a certain novelty, thus ending this dossier that seeks precisely to present new perspectives for the studies of communication.

The **Interview** entitled **From Iconophagia to Ecology of Communication – the Images and the body in communication and culture studies** brings Norval Baitello Junior in conversation with Luciano Guimarães and Leão Serva, evoking the need to promote an ecology of communication. Norval tells how he has developed his studies on image and body in communication, in an archaeological and interdisciplinary method, based on both phylogenesis and ontogenesis of communication, which culminate in theories that relate the Communication Sciences, Media Theories and Image Theory. It seems to us that the text from Edgar Morin published in this issue and the propositions of Norval Baitello Junior, presented in the **Interview**, do wander in the same direction: the denunciation of a irrationality growth and the defense of an anthroposocial political project and an ecology of action (Morin) or ecology of communication (Baitello).

Starting the section **In Agenda**, Samuel Mateus, in the article **The Mediatization of Memory**, problematizes the expansion of memory in the virtual space, noting that the infrastructures of diffusion and acceleration may weaken its function of constituting social bonds. Then, the text **From Media to (Algorithmic) Mediations: Mediation, Reception, and Consumption on Digital Platforms**, by Kérley Winques

and Raquel Ritter Longhi, proposes the construction of a *Map of the Algorithmic Mediation System*, in the manner of Jesús Martín-Barbero, in order to bring the algorithmic context closer to the theoretical instruments of Cultural Studies.

Guilherme Oliveira Curi and Veneza Mayora Ronsini, in the text **Recognition and Redistribution in the Digital Media of the Común Tierra Project**, analyze how a project of documentation of sustainable communities throughout Latin America may be understood as a community communication process, assuming a pedagogical character for the dissemination of ecological practices. This form of attentive analysis, elaborated from a very well-designed empirical object, is also conducted in the following three texts of the section. In **The vaccine in two Brazilian newspapers before and after covid-19**, Luisa Massarani and Luiz Felipe Fernandes Neves discuss how the coverage of the covid-19 pandemic has gone from service journalism to scientific journalism, highlighting the ways by which science may be crossed by political, economic and ideological aspects. Sandra Fischer and Aline Vaz, in the text **Images of Amor de Mãe: Gridlines and Escapes**, analyze the imagery of the said telenovela, from an examination of the symbolic dimensions that may be articulated for the characters on screen by the frames and scans of scenes.

**Towards the Violated Face: The Mugshot of Bophana and the Cambodian Tragedy**, by Ricardo Lessa Filho and Frederico Vieira, is a sensitive text that discusses how a fragile and small portrait, unfolded in a documentary, highlights the political power of images, especially when they may be considered traces of violence perpetrated by power. The section ends with the article **Participation as an organizational commitment in public service television**, by Daniele Ferreira Seridório, Danilo Rothberg and Octavio Penna Pieranti, which presents an overview of the use of society participation mechanisms in the management and editorial production bodies of Brazilian public broadcasters.

Ending this issue of MATRIZes, we have the **Review** of Letícia Xavier de Lemos Capanema, entitled **Praxis of Television Analysis in Four Theoretical-Methodological Axes**, which explores the book *Analysis of Television Fiction: Metodologias e Práticas*, organized by Simone Rocha e Rogério Ferraraz.

We appreciate your interest in reading this new issue, expecting that, once again, MATRIZes may contribute to the important debates in our area. ■

Luciano Guimarães  
Wagner Souza e Silva

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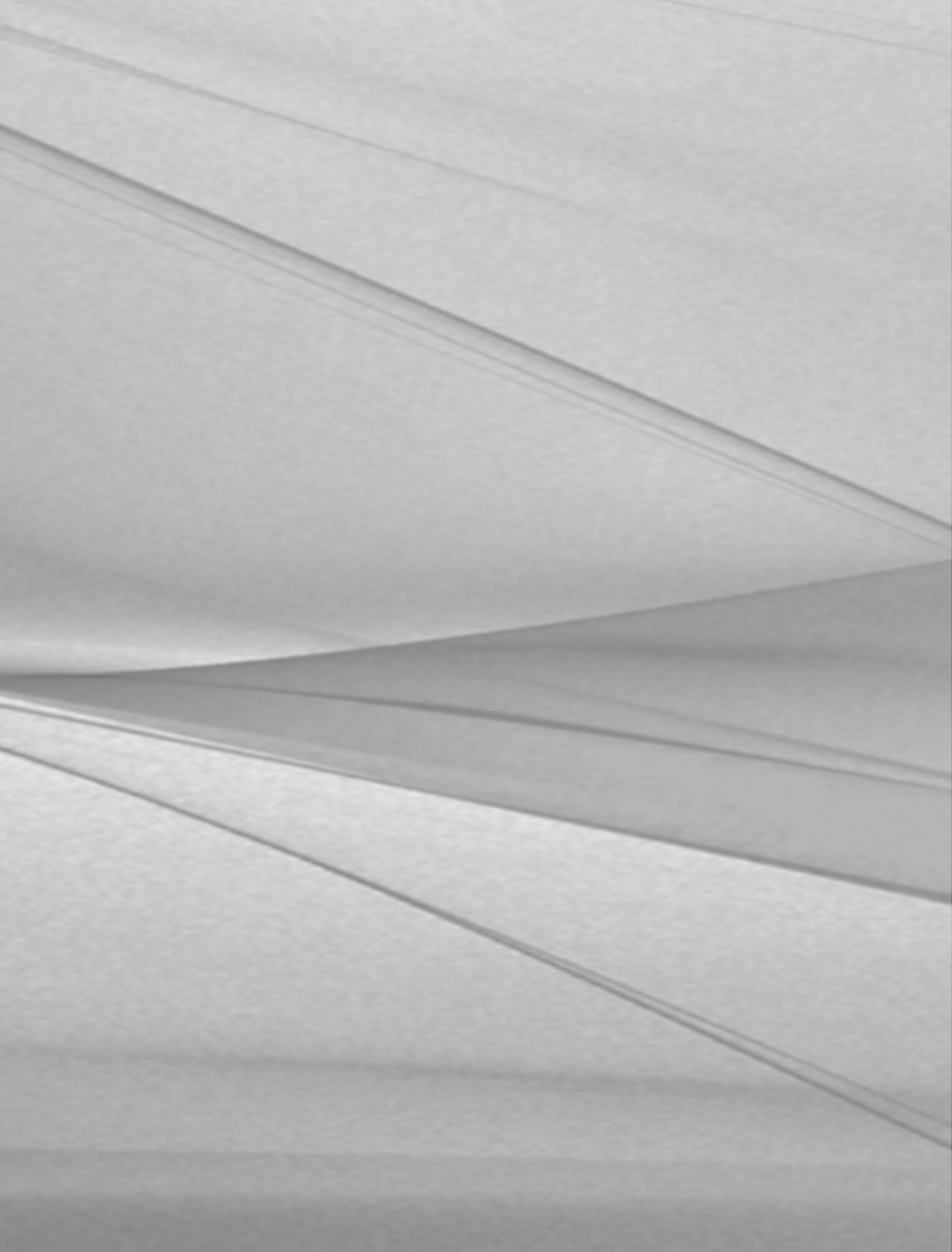
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# DOSIÊ

*Novas Perspectivas em Teorias da Comunicação*



# La pensée socialiste en ruine Que peut-on espérer?<sup>a</sup>

## *Socialist thought in ruins. What can we expect?*

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### RÉSUMÉ

Essai publié dans le journal *Le Monde* en 1993, dans lequel l'auteur discute du sens du socialisme dans la perspective d'une révision de ses aspects constitutifs et ses aspirations à la construction d'une société meilleure. Remettant en cause les déterminismes définis par une rationalité avide de progrès, Edgar Morin nous invite à réfléchir sur la nécessité d'un projet civilisateur visant à « transformer l'espèce humaine en humanité » et capable de répondre à un contexte de complexité croissante, qui semble être à son apogée de nos jours, faisant de ce texte un important manifeste d'espoir pour la construction de relations sociales toujours plus humaines.

**Mots-clés :** Société, civilisation, espoir, pensée, pensée socialiste

### ABSTRACT

This is an essay published in *Le Monde*, in 1993, in which the author discusses the meaning of socialism from a possibility of reviewing its constitutive aspects and its aspirations for the construction of a better society. Questioning determinist ideas defined by a rationality eager for progress, Edgar Morin calls us to reflect on the need for a civilizing project aimed at “transforming the human species into humanity”, being able to respond to a context of increasing complexity, which seems to reach its apex today, making this text an important manifesto on hope for the construction of social relations more and more human.

**Keywords:** Society, civilization, hope, thought, socialist thought

<sup>a</sup> Article publié à l'origine dans le journal *Le Monde* (1993, 21 avril). <https://bit.ly/3ANpqq1>

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# D

## La pensée socialiste en ruine Que peut-on espérer?

**L**E SENS DU mot socialisme s'est totalement dégradé dans le triomphe du socialisme totalitaire, puis totalement discrédité dans sa chute. Le sens du mot socialisme s'est progressivement étioilé dans la social-démocratie, laquelle est arrivée à bout de souffle partout où elle a gouverné. On peut se demander si l'usage du mot est encore recommandable. Mais ce qui reste et restera ce sont les aspirations qui se sont exprimées sous ce terme : aspirations à la fois libertaires et « fraternitaires », aspirations à l'épanouissement humain et à une société meilleure.

Gonflé par la sève de ces aspirations au cours du dix-neuvième et du vingtième siècle, le socialisme a apporté une immense espérance. C'est cette espérance, morte aujourd'hui, qui ne peut être ressuscitée telle quelle. Peut-on générer une nouvelle espérance ? Il nous faut revenir aux trois questions que posait Kant il y a deux siècles : « Que puis-je savoir ? Que dois-je faire ? Que m'est-il permis d'espérer ? » Les socialistes du dix-neuvième siècle avaient bien compris la solidarité des trois questions. Ils ne répondirent à la troisième qu'après avoir interrogé les savoirs de leur temps, non seulement sur l'économie et la société, mais aussi sur l'homme et le monde, et l'entreprise d'investigation la plus complète et synthétique fut opérée par Karl Marx avec l'aide de Friedrich Engels. Sur ces bases cognitives, Marx a élaboré une pensée qui a donné sens, certitude, espérance aux messages socialistes et communistes.

Aujourd'hui, le problème n'est plus de savoir si la « doctrine » marxiste est morte ou non. Il est de reconnaître que les fondements cognitifs de la pensée socialiste sont inadéquats pour comprendre le monde, l'homme, la société. Pour Marx, la science apportait la certitude. Aujourd'hui, nous savons que les sciences apportent des certitudes locales mais que les théories sont scientifiques dans la mesure où elles sont réfutables, c'est-à-dire non certaines. Et, sur les questions fondamentales, la connaissance scientifique débouche sur d'insondables incertitudes. Pour Marx, la certitude scientifique éliminait l'interrogation philosophique. Aujourd'hui, nous voyons que toutes les avancées des sciences raniment les questions philosophiques fondamentales. Marx croyait que la matière était la réalité première de l'univers. Aujourd'hui, la matière apparaît comme un des aspects d'une réalité physique polymorphe apparaissant comme énergie, matière, organisation.

Pour Marx, le monde était déterministe et il crut dégager des lois du devenir. Aujourd'hui, nous savons que les mondes physique, biologique, humain évoluent, chacun à leur manière, selon des dialectiques d'ordre, désordre, organisation, comportant aléas et bifurcation, et toutes menacées à terme par la destruction. Les idées d'autonomie et de liberté étaient inconcevables dans cette conception déterministe. Aujourd'hui, nous pouvons concevoir de

façon scientifique l'auto-organisation et l'autoproduction, et nous pouvons comprendre que l'individu comme la société humaine sont des machines non triviales, capables d'actes inattendus et créateurs.

### LITANIES ET PRAGMATISME

La conception marxienne de l'homme était unidimensionnelle et pauvre: ni l'imaginaire ni le mythe ne faisaient partie de la réalité humaine profonde: l'être humain était un Homo faber, sans intériorité, sans complexités, un producteur prométhéen voué à renverser les dieux et maîtriser l'univers. Alors que, comme l'avaient vu Montaigne, Pascal, Shakespeare, homo est sapiens demens, être complexe, multiple, portant en lui un cosmos de rêves et de fantasmes.

La conception marxienne de la société privilégiait les forces de production matérielles ; la clé du pouvoir sur la société était dans l'appropriation des forces de production ; les idées et idéologies, dont l'idée de Nation, n'étaient que de simples et illusoirs super-structures ; l'Etat n'était qu'un instrument aux mains de la classe dominante ; la réalité sociale était dans le pouvoir de classes et la lutte des classes ; le mot de capitalisme suffisait pour rendre compte de nos sociétés en fait multidimensionnelles. Or, aujourd'hui, comment ne pas voir qu'il y a un problème spécifique du pouvoir d'Etat, une réalité sociomythologique formidable dans la nation, une réalité propre des idées ? Comment ne pas voir les caractères complexes et multidimensionnels de la réalité anthroposociale ?

Marx croyait en la rationalité profonde de l'histoire ; il croyait le progrès scientifiquement assuré, il était certain de la mission historique du prolétariat pour créer une société sans classes et un monde fraternel. Aujourd'hui, nous savons que l'histoire ne progresse pas de façon frontale mais par déviations, se fortifiant et devenant tendances. Nous savons que le progrès n'est pas certain et que tout progrès gagné est fragile. Nous savons que la croyance dans la mission historique du prolétariat est non scientifique mais messianique : c'est la transposition sur nos vies terrestres du salut judéo-chrétien promis pour le ciel après la mort. Cette illusion a sans doute été la plus tragique et la plus dévastatrice de toutes.

Beaucoup d'idées de Marx sont et resteront fécondes. Mais les fondements de sa pensée sont désintégrés. Les fondements, donc, de l'espérance socialiste sont désintégrés. À la place, il n'y a plus rien, sinon quelques formules litaniques et un pragmatisme au jour le jour. À une théorie articulée et cohérente a succédé une salade russe d'idées reçues sur la modernité, l'économie, la société, la gestion. Les dirigeants s'entourent d'experts, énarques, technocrates, éconocrates. Ils se fient au savoir parcellaire des experts qui leur semble garanti (scientifiquement, universitairement). Ils sont devenus aveugles aux formidables défis de civilisation,

à tous les grands problèmes. La consultation permanente des sondages tient lieu de boussole. Le grand projet a disparu.

La conversion du socialisme à la bonne gestion ne peut être qu'une réduction au gestionnarisme : celui-ci, en se vouant au jour le jour, a aussi sapé les fondements de l'espérance, d'autant plus que la gestion ne peut résoudre les problèmes les plus criants.

### L'INSUFFISANTE MODERNISATION

Le débat archaïsme/modernisme est faussé par le double sens de chacun de ces termes. Si l'archaïsme signifie répétition litannique de formules creuses sur la supériorité du socialisme, les vertus de l'union de la gauche, l'appel aux « forces de progrès », alors il faut briser avec cet archaïsme. S'il signifie le ressourcement dans les aspirations à un monde meilleur, alors il faut examiner si et comment on peut répondre à ces aspirations. Si le modernisme signifie s'adapter au présent, alors il est radicalement insuffisant car il s'agit de s'adapter au présent pour essayer de l'adapter à nos besoins. S'il signifie affronter les défis du temps présent, alors il faut être résolument moderne. De toutes façons, il ne s'agit pas seulement de s'adapter au présent. Il s'agit en même temps de préparer l'avenir. Enfin, signalons que le moderne, dans le sens où il signifie croyance au progrès garanti et en l'infailibilité de la technique, est déjà dépassé.

Il est certain désormais qu'il faut abandonner toute Loi de l'histoire, toute croyance providentielle au Progrès, et extirper la funeste foi dans le salut terrestre. Il faut savoir que, tout en obéissant à divers déterminismes (qui du reste s'entrechoquent souvent et provoquent du chaos), l'histoire est aléatoire, connaît des bifurcations inattendues. Il faut savoir que l'action de gouverner est une action au gouvernail, où l'art de diriger est un art de se diriger dans des conditions incertaines qui peuvent devenir dramatiques. Le principe premier de l'écologie de l'action nous dit que tout acte échappe aux intentions de l'acteur pour entrer dans le jeu des interrétroactions du milieu, et il peut déclencher le contraire de l'effet souhaité.

Il nous faut une pensée apte à saisir la multidimensionnalité des réalités, à reconnaître le jeu des interactions et rétroactions, à affronter les complexités plutôt que de céder aux manichéismes idéologiques ou aux mutilations technocratiques (qui ne reconnaissent que des réalités arbitrairement compartimentées, sont aveugles à ce qui n'est pas quantifiable, et ignorent les complexités humaines).

Il nous faut abandonner la fausse rationalité. Les besoins humains ne sont pas seulement économiques et techniques, mais aussi affectifs et mythologiques.

## DE L'HOMME PROMÉTHÉEN À L'HOMME PROMETTEUR

La perspective originelle du socialisme était anthropologique (concernant l'homme et son destin), mondiale (internationaliste), et civilisatrice (fraterniser le corps social, supprimer la barbarie de l'exploitation de l'homme par l'homme). On peut et doit se ressourcer dans ce projet, tout en en modifiant les termes.

L'homme de Marx devait trouver son salut en se « désaliénant », c'est-à-dire en se libérant de tout ce qui était étranger à lui-même, et en maîtrisant la nature. L'idée d'un homme « désaliéné » est irrationnelle : autonomie et dépendance sont inséparables, puisque nous dépendons de tout ce qui nous nourrit et nous développe ; nous sommes possédés par ce que nous possédons : la vie, le sexe, la culture. Les idées de libération absolue, de conquête de la nature, du salut sur terre, relèvent d'un délire abstrait.

De plus, l'expérience historique de notre siècle a montré qu'il ne suffit pas de renverser une classe dominante ni d'opérer l'appropriation collective des moyens de production pour arracher l'être humain à la domination et à l'exploitation. Les structures de la domination et de l'exploitation ont des racines à la fois profondes et complexes, et c'est en s'attaquant à toutes les faces du problème que l'on pourra espérer quelques progrès.

Nous ne pourrions éliminer le malheur ni la mort, mais nous pouvons aspirer à un progrès dans les relations entre humains, individus, groupes, ethnies, nations. L'abandon du progrès garanti par les « lois de l'histoire » n'est pas l'abandon du progrès, mais la reconnaissance de son caractère non certain et fragile. Le renoncement au meilleur des mondes n'est nullement le renoncement à un monde meilleur.

Est-il possible d'envisager, dans cette perspective, une politique qui aurait pour tâche de poursuivre et développer le processus de l'hominisation dans le sens d'une amélioration des relations entre humains et d'une amélioration des sociétés humaines ?

Nous savons aujourd'hui que les possibilités cérébrales de l'être humain sont encore en très grande partie inexploitées. Nous sommes encore dans la préhistoire de l'esprit humain. Comme les possibilités sociales sont en relation avec les possibilités cérébrales, nul ne peut assurer que nos sociétés aient épuisé leurs possibilités d'amélioration et de transformation et que nous soyons arrivés à la fin de l'Histoire... Ajoutons que les développements de la technique ont rétréci la Terre, permettent à tous les points du globe d'être en communication immédiate, donnent les moyens de nourrir toute la planète et d'assurer à tous ses habitants un minimum de bien-être.

Mais les possibilités cérébrales de l'être humain sont fantastiques, non seulement pour le meilleur, mais aussi pour le pire ; si Homo sapiens demens avait

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dès l'origine le cerveau de Mozart, Beethoven, Pascal, Pouchkine, il avait aussi celui de Staline et d'Hitler... Si nous avons la possibilité de développer la planète, nous avons aussi la possibilité de la détruire.

### DE L'INTERNATIONALE À LA TERRE PATRIE

Ainsi, il n'y a pas de progrès assuré, mais une possibilité incertaine, qui dépend beaucoup des prises de conscience, des volontés, du courage, de la chance... Et les prises de conscience sont devenues urgentes et primordiales. La possibilité anthropologique et sociologique de progrès restaure le principe d'espérance, mais sans certitude « scientifique », ni promesse « historique ».

La pensée socialiste voulait situer l'homme dans le monde. Or, la situation de l'homme dans le monde s'est plus modifiée dans les trente dernières années qu'entre le XVI<sup>e</sup> et le début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. La terre des hommes a « paumé » son ancien univers ; le Soleil est devenu un astre lilliputien parmi des milliards d'autres dans un univers en expansion ; la Terre est perdue dans le cosmos ; c'est une petite planète de vie tiède dans un espace glacé où des astres se consomment avec une violence inouïe et où des trous noirs s'autodévorent. C'est seulement dans cette petite planète qu'il y a, à notre connaissance, une vie et une pensée consciente. C'est le jardin commun à la vie et à l'humanité. C'est la Maison commune de tous les humains. Il s'agit de reconnaître notre lien consubstantiel avec la biosphère et d'aménager la nature. Il s'agit d'abandonner le rêve prométhéen de la maîtrise de l'univers pour l'aspiration à la convivialité sur terre.

Cela semble possible puisque nous sommes dans l'ère planétaire où toutes les parties sont devenues interdépendantes les unes des autres. Mais c'est la domination, la guerre, la destruction qui ont été les artisans principaux de l'ère planétaire. Nous sommes encore à l'âge de fer planétaire. Toutefois, dès le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, le socialisme a lié la lutte contre les barbaries de domination et d'exploitation à l'ambition de faire de la terre la grande patrie humaine.

Mais la nouvelle pensée planétaire, qui prolonge l'internationalisme, doit rompre avec deux aspects capitaux de celui-ci : l'universalisme abstrait : « Les prolétaires n'ont pas de patrie » ; le révolutionnarisme abstrait : « Du passé faisons table rase ».

Il nous faut comprendre à quels besoins formidables et irréductibles correspond l'idée de nation. Il nous faut, non plus opposer l'universel aux patries, mais lier concentriquement nos patries, familiales, régionales, nationales, européennes, et les intégrer dans l'univers concret de la patrie terrienne. Il ne faut plus opposer un futur radieux à un passé de servitudes et de superstitions. Toutes les cultures ont leurs vertus, leurs expériences, leurs sagesses, en même temps



que leurs carences et leurs ignorances. C'est en se ressourçant dans son passé qu'un groupe humain trouve l'énergie pour affronter son présent et préparer son futur. La recherche d'un avenir meilleur doit être complémentaire et non plus antagoniste avec les ressourcements dans le passé. Le ressourcement dans le passé culturel est pour chacun une nécessité identitaire profonde, mais cette identité n'est pas incompatible avec l'identité proprement humaine en laquelle nous devons également nous ressourcer. La patrie terrestre n'est pas abstraite, puisque c'est d'elle qu'est issue l'humanité.

Le propre de ce qui est humain est l'unitas multiplex : c'est l'unité génétique, cérébrale, intellectuelle, affective d'Homo sapiens demens qui exprime ses virtualités innombrables à travers la diversité des cultures. La diversité humaine est le trésor de l'unité humaine, laquelle est le trésor de la diversité humaine.

De même qu'il faut établir une communication vivante et permanente entre passé, présent, futur, de même il faut établir une communication vivante et permanente entre les singularités culturelles, ethniques, nationales et l'univers concret d'une terre patrie de tous.

Alors s'impose à nous l'impératif : civiliser la terre, solidariser, confédérer l'humanité, tout en respectant les cultures et les patries.

Mais ici se dressent des formidables défis et menaces inconcevables au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le monde était alors livré aux anciennes barbaries qu'avait déchaîné l'histoire humaine : guerres, haines, cruautés, mépris, fanatismes religieux et nationaux. La science, la technique, l'industrie semblaient porter dans leur développement même l'élimination de ces vieilles barbaries et le triomphe de la civilisation.

D'où la foi assurée dans le progrès de l'humanité, en dépit de quelques accidents de parcours.

## **NOUVEAU MALAISE DE CIVILISATION**

Aujourd'hui, il apparaît de plus en plus clairement que les développements de la science, de la technique, de l'industrie sont ambivalents, sans qu'on puisse décider si le pire ou le meilleur d'entre elles l'emportera. Les prodigieuses élucidations qu'apporté la connaissance scientifique sont accompagnées par les régressions cognitives de la spécialisation qui empêche de percevoir le contextuel et le global. Les pouvoirs issus de la science sont non seulement bienfaisants, mais aussi destructeurs et manipulateurs. Le développement techno-économique, souhaité par et pour l'ensemble du monde, a révélé presque partout ses insuffisances et ses carences.

Et voici des formidables défis qui se posent en chaque société et pour l'humanité tout entière : l'insuffisance du développement techno-économique; la marche accélérée et incontrôlée de la techno-science; les développements

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hypertrophiés de la techno-bureaucratie; les développements hypertrophiés de la marchandisation et de la monétarisation de toute chose; les problèmes de plus en plus graves posés par l'urbanisation du monde.

Ce à quoi il faut ajouter les dérèglements économiques et démographiques, les régressions et piétinements démocratiques, les dangers conjoints d'une homogénéisation civilisationnelle qui détruit les diversités culturelles et d'une balkanisation des ethnies qui rend impossible une civilisation humaine commune.

Ici se pose le problème de civilisation. La politique de civilisation

En reprenant et développant le projet de la Révolution française, concentré dans la devise trinitaire Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité, le socialisme proposait une politique de civilisation, vouée à supprimer la barbarie des rapports humains: l'exploitation de l'homme par l'homme, l'arbitraire des pouvoirs, l'égoïsme, l'ethnocentrisme, la cruauté, l'incompréhension. Il se vouait à une entreprise de solidarisation de la société, entreprise qui a eu certaines réussites par la voie étatique (Welfare State), mais qui n'a pu éviter la désolidarisation généralisée des relations entre individus et groupes dans la civilisation urbaine moderne.

Le socialisme s'était voué à la démocratisation de tout le tissu de la vie sociale; sa version « soviétique » a supprimé toute démocratie et sa version social-démocrate n'a pu empêcher les régressions démocratiques qui, pour des raisons diverses, rongent de l'intérieur nos civilisations.

Mais surtout un problème de fond est posé par et pour ce qui semblait devoir apporter un progrès généralisé et continu de civilisation. Au-delà du malaise dans lequel, selon Freud, toute civilisation développe en elle les ferments de sa propre destruction, un nouveau malaise de civilisation s'est creusé. Il vient de la conjonction des développements urbains, techniques, bureaucratiques, industriels, capitalistes, individualistes de notre civilisation.

Le développement urbain n'a pas seulement apporté épanouissements individuels, libertés et loisirs, mais aussi l'atomisation consécutive à la perte des anciennes solidarités et la servitude de contraintes organisationnelles proprement modernes (le métro-boulot-dodo).

Le développement capitaliste a entraîné la marchandisation généralisée, y compris là où régnait le don, le service gratuit, les biens communs non monétaires, détruisant ainsi de nombreux tissus de convivialité.

### DESTIN TERRESTRE

La technique a imposé, dans des secteurs de plus en plus étendus de la vie humaine, la logique de la machine artificielle qui est mécanique, déterministe, spécialisée, chronométrisée. Le développement industriel apporte non seulement

l'élévation des niveaux de vie, mais aussi des abaissements des qualités de vie, et les pollutions qu'il produit ont commencé à menacer la biosphère.

Ce développement, qui semblait providentiel à la fin du siècle passé, comporte désormais deux menaces sur les sociétés et les êtres humains : l'une extérieure vient de la dégradation écologique des milieux de vie ; l'autre, intérieure, vient de la dégradation des qualités de vie. Le développement de la logique de la machine industrielle dans les entreprises, les bureaux, les loisirs tend à répandre le standard et l'anonyme, et, par là, à détruire les convivialités.

L'essor des nouvelles techniques, notamment informatiques, provoque perturbations économiques et chômages, alors qu'il pourrait devenir libérateur à condition d'accompagner la mutation technique par une mutation sociale.

Dans ce contexte, la crise du progrès et les incertitudes du lendemain, soit réduisent le vivre à un « au jour le jour », soit transforment les ressourcements en fondamentalismes ou nationalismes clos.

D'où les gigantesques problèmes de civilisation qui nécessiteraient mobilisation pour : humaniser la bureaucratie, humaniser la technique, défendre et développer les convivialités, développer les solidarités.

Tous ces défis, le défi anthropologique, le défi planétaire, le défi civilisationnel, se lient dans le grand défi que lance à notre fin de siècle, partout dans le monde, l'alliance des deux barbaries, l'ancienne barbarie venue des fonds des âges, plus virulente que jamais, et la nouvelle barbarie glacée, anonyme, mécanisée, quantifiante.

Aujourd'hui, la prise de conscience de la communauté de destin terrestre et de notre identité terrienne rejoint la prise de conscience des problèmes globaux et fondamentaux qui se posent à toute l'humanité.

Aujourd'hui, nous sommes dans l'ère damocléenne des menaces mortelles, avec des possibilités de destruction et d'autodestruction, y compris psychiques, qui, après le court répit des années 89-90, se sont aggravées de nouvelle manière.

La planète est en détresse : la crise du progrès affecte l'humanité entière, entraîne partout des ruptures, fait craquer les articulations, détermine les replis particularistes ; les guerres se rallument ; le monde perd la vision globale et le sens de l'intérêt général.

Civiliser la terre, transformer l'espèce humaine en humanité, devient l'objectif fondamental et global de toute politique aspirant non seulement à un progrès, mais à la survie de l'humanité.

Il est dérisoire que les socialistes, frappés de myopie, cherchent à « aggiornar », moderniser, social-démocratiser, alors que le monde, l'Europe, la France sont affrontés aux problèmes gigantesques de la fin des Temps modernes.

**LES REDRESSEURS D'ESPÉRANCE**

Il s'agit de repenser, reformuler en termes adéquats le développement humain (et ici encore en respectant et intégrant l'apport des cultures autres que l'occidentale).

Nous avons à prendre conscience de l'aventure folle qui nous entraîne vers la désintégration, et nous devons chercher à contrôler le processus afin de provoquer la mutation vitalemment nécessaire.

Nous sommes dans un combat formidable entre solidarité ou barbarie. Nous sommes dans une histoire instable et incertaine où rien n'est encore joué.

Sauver la planète menacée par notre développement économique. Réguler et contrôler le développement technique. Assurer un développement humain. Civiliser la Terre. Voilà qui prolonge et transforme l'ambition socialiste originelle. Voilà des perspectives grandioses apte à mobiliser les énergies.

A nouveau, et en termes dramatiques, se pose la question : que peut-on espérer ?

Les processus majeurs conduisent à la régression ou la destruction. Mais celles-ci ne sont que probables. L'espérance est dans l'improbable, comme toujours dans les moments dramatiques de l'histoire où tous les grands événements positifs ont été improbables avant qu'ils adviennent : la victoire d'Athènes sur les Perses en 490-480 avant notre ère, d'où la naissance de la démocratie, la survie de la France sous Charles VII, l'effondrement de l'empire hitlérien en 1941, l'effondrement de l'empire stalinien en 1989.

L'espérance se fonde sur les possibilités humaines encore inexploitées et elle mise sur l'improbable. Ce n'est plus l'espérance apocalyptique de la lutte finale. C'est l'espérance courageuse de la lutte initiale : elle nécessite de restaurer une conception, une vision du monde, un savoir articulé, une éthique. Elle doit animer, non seulement un projet, mais une résistance préliminaire contre les forces gigantesques de barbarie qui se déchainent. Ceux qui relèveront le défi viendront de divers horizons, peu importe sous quelle étiquette ils se rassembleront. Mais ils seront les porteurs contemporains des grandes aspirations historiques qui ont pendant un temps nourri le socialisme. Ce seront les redresseurs de l'espérance. ■

# Ver a Floresta por suas Árvores: Visualizando Plataformização e sua Governança<sup>a</sup>

## *Seeing the Forest for the Trees: Visualizing Platformization and its Governance*

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### RESUMO

As complexidades das plataformas estão cada vez mais em desacordo com os conceitos jurídicos e econômicos rígidos que fundamentam sua governança. Este artigo busca analisar a plataformização através da lente metafórica de uma árvore para entender os ecossistemas de informação como estruturas hierárquicas e interdependentes. Adotando uma abordagem holística à plataformização, essa metáfora visual pode inspirar um conjunto de princípios para remodelar o ecossistema de plataformas ao interesse da sociedade e do bem comum.

**Palavras-chave:** Política antitruste, big tech, regulação de dados, governança da internet, economia de plataforma

### ABSTRACT

The complexities of platforms are increasingly at odds with the narrow legal and economic concepts in which their governance is grounded. This article aims to analyze platformization through the metaphorical lens of a tree to make sense of information ecosystems as hierarchical and interdependent structures. Taking a holistic approach to platformization, this visual metaphor may inspire a set of principles that reshapes the platform ecosystem in the interest of society and the common good.

**Keywords:** Antitrust policy, big tech, data regulation, internet governance, platform economy

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# D

## Ver a Floresta por suas Árvores

*Todas as formas como você nos imagina são amputações, sempre. Sua espécie nunca nos vê inteiros. Vocês perdem a metade, e mais. Há sempre tanto abaixo do solo quanto acima. Esse é o problema com as pessoas, seu problema básico.*

*A vida corre ao lado delas, invisível.*

*–Richard Powers, *The Overstory**

**O** QUE FAZ DAS grandes empresas americanas de tecnologia poderosas e a governança de suas plataformas complexa? Este artigo defende que a operação coletiva de um conjunto exclusivo de plataformas concorrentes e coordenadas governa o núcleo dos sistemas de informação digital do mundo, exercendo, a partir dele, um controle econômico, social e (geo)político sem precedentes. Nos últimos anos, as empresas de tecnologia transformaram produtos em serviços de dados onde os clientes pagam principalmente com suas informações e atenção pessoais. Mercados, além de setores, infraestruturas e serviços públicos, são atraídos para um ecossistema orientado por dados completamente comoditizados e cujo impacto cresce em consonância com novos campos em florescimento, como inteligência artificial e tecnologias robóticas. As complexidades das plataformas conflitam cada vez mais com os estreitos conceitos jurídicos e econômicos em que suas governanças estão baseadas. Em vez de nos concentrarmos em empresas de tecnologia alavancando cada vez mais plataformas, propomos focar na dinâmica da plataformação e em como adequadamente ajustar estratégias de governança.

A plataformação é um processo semelhante à industrialização ou eletrificação, já que se refere a uma transformação multifacetada das sociedades globalizadas (Poell et al., 2019). A ascensão dos ecossistemas de plataformas corporativas e estatais acabou com o ideal outrora popular de uma internet universal e neutra que conecta o mundo. Em certa medida, também enfraqueceu distinções clássicas entre Estado, mercado e sociedade civil – conceitos que ainda são vitais para demarcar arranjos governamentais. Aparelhos técnico-corporativos, que já superam a potência econômica das nações, governam os sistemas de informação globais. Sua influência supera indiscutivelmente a influência política de governos e administrações eleitos no que diz respeito à regulamentação de democracias e a vida cívica (Moore, 2018). Enquanto as plataformas de tecnologia controlam cada vez mais a entrada de todo o tráfego online, circulação de dados e distribuição de conteúdo – fazendo sociedades inteiras dependerem de seus sistemas – essas plataformas conseguiram evitar as formas convencionais de regulamentação (Gillespie, 2018). Marcos regulatórios nacionais e supranacionais (ou seja, a União Europeia [UE]) normalmente examinam apenas um aspecto da governança, como concentração de mercado, liberdade de informação ou

direito à privacidade, mesmo quando a plataforma atravessa estruturas legais e cruza continentes.

Precisamos cada vez mais entender como a plataforma funciona e criar imaginários que ajudem a reformular as estruturas compartimentalizadas de governança em uma abordagem mais holística (seção “Da Governança da Plataforma à Plataformização da Governança”). Na tentativa de visualizar a dinâmica da plataforma e seus atores, este artigo propõe uma *árvore* como sua metáfora constitutiva (seção “A Árvore de Plataformização”). Tal metáfora pode nos ajudar a entender sistemas de informação como estruturas complexas cujo poder operacional é exercido através de camadas hierárquicas e interdependentes que se entrelaçam visível e invisivelmente, abaixo e acima do solo, horizontal e verticalmente. A forma em camadas, mas integrada da árvore, chama a nossa atenção para a dinâmica da plataforma: integração vertical, infraestruturalização e setorização cruzada (seção “A Dinâmica da Plataformização”). A metáfora também nos ajuda a revisar a atual fragmentação dos marcos regulatórios, abordando a assimetria de poder entre os cidadãos e os sistemas de informação que os governam (seção “Governando o Status Desregrado das Plataformas Intermediárias”). Por fim, a árvore da plataforma serve para identificar pontos de intervenção que órgãos reguladores, particularmente na UE, podem implantar para atuar como agentes de mudança, por exemplo, articulando um conjunto de princípios e valores que remodelem o ecossistema de plataforma ao interesse da sociedade e do bem comum (seção “Reformulando Governança para Promover a Diversidade de Plataformas”).

## DA GOVERNANÇA DA PLATAFORMA À PLATAFORMIZAÇÃO DA GOVERNANÇA

Segundo Taylor Owen (2019, p. 3), “a plataforma Web consiste em espaços públicos controlados por empresas privadas que, em sua maioria, são governadas pelos incentivos comerciais de atores privados e não pelo bem coletivo da sociedade em geral”, afirmação que sintetiza o problema da sociedade atual de plataforma (van Dijck et al., 2018). Há um crescente descontentamento com as empresas de tecnologia que se tornaram grandes e multifacetadas demais para operar de forma transparente aos olhos do público e cujo poder extraordinário afeta mercados e democracias negativamente. Os custos sociais e econômicos dessa concentração de poder têm se tornado um problema global devido ao *capitalismo de vigilância* que sustenta a lógica econômica da extração de dados no controle da vida dos consumidores no Ocidente (Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Srnicek, 2017; Zuboff, 2019). O sistema americano é monopolizado por cinco empresas de Big Tech (Alphabet-Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple e Microsoft, conhecidas como Gafam) que entraram

no núcleo da vida econômica e cívica da maioria dos continentes, com exceção da China. A China opera um ecossistema de plataformas controlado pelo Estado e gerido corporativamente em torno de suas três grandes empresas (Baidu, Alibaba e Tencent, ou BAT). Este embate ideológico entre poderes estatais se manifesta cada vez mais como um embate técnico-corporativo. Tais confrontos revelam que, em vez de operar como ecossistemas de plataformas distintos, eles estão entrelaçados em vários níveis. O emaranhado entre os interesses americanos, chineses e europeus na governança global da inovação digital promove o aumento das tensões entre as superpotências continentais e seus aliados (DeNardis, 2020; Jia, 2018; Mueller, 2017; Steinberg, 2019; Winseck, 2017).

Apesar de sua escassez de “grandes” empresas de tecnologia, a UE tenta se posicionar como um agente governamental de mudança na economia digital global. Em seu memorando Construir o Futuro Digital da Europa (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/pt>), a Comissão Europeia articulou suas ambições (aparentemente incongruentes) de priorizar sua liderança na inovação tecnológica dentro da economia de dados e comprometer-se a proteger os valores democráticos e públicos na sociedade de plataforma, promovendo oportunidades iguais, mercados abertos, transparência, confiabilidade e privacidade. Até agora, a Comissão implementou uma colcha de retalhos de intervenções regulatórias para lidar com os problemas causados pelas empresas de plataformas globais – desde a monopolização dos mercados online e violações de privacidade até a contenção da desinformação e do discurso de ódio. A Comissão pretende tornar a Europa o lugar ideal para dados industriais de alta qualidade que possam ser usados para, por exemplo, criar ferramentas de IA e (ao mesmo tempo e pelos mesmos meios) uma estrutura para “espaços comuns de dados europeus” – uma nova infraestrutura de dados digitais que estimulará e incentivará o compartilhamento e uso de dados privados para o bem comum (“Experts say...”, 2020). Para alcançar ambições tão ousadas em 2021, será fundamental transformar a atual colcha de regulamentações baseadas em regras e políticas de dados em uma governança holística e baseada em princípios.

Por reconhecermos a necessidade de novos imaginários, propomos uma metáfora visual que configura a plataformização como um processo dinâmico. No passado, as plataformas foram frequentemente examinadas como construtos metafóricos com dimensões tecnológicas, sociais, econômicas e políticas (Gillespie, 2010; van Dijck, 2013). Ainda que elas sejam alimentadas por dados e regidas por algoritmos, as plataformas funcionam como parte de seu ecossistema – um conjunto de plataformas em rede regido por um determinado conjunto de mecanismos (van Dijck et al., 2018, p. 9). Em seu trabalho seminal, Benjamin Bratton (2016) argumentou que plataformas, como redes elétricas



inteligentes, nuvens e aplicativos móveis, evoluem não como objetos separados, mas como um aparelho computacional com uma nova arquitetura governante. A arquitetura em camadas destas plataformas foi visualizada como uma coleção de *pilhas*<sup>1</sup>, refletindo sua modularidade e acumulação (Andersson Schwarz, 2017; Tiwana, 2014; Walton, 2017). A ciberativista Marleen Stikker (2019) distingue três tipos diferentes de pilhas – o Estado, as empresas e a pilha pública – para teorizar os interesses convergentes e divergentes de governos, mercados e populações. No entanto, outros teóricos configuram constelações em que pilhas são particionadas em plataformas *centrais* e *periféricas* (Constantinides et al., 2018).

Encontramos dois problemas ao configurar ecossistemas de plataformas como pilhas: alguns pesquisadores veem plataformas individuais como entidades distintas das infraestruturas digitais e sociais mais amplas nas quais aquelas operam, ao passo que outros assumem ser possível separar as empresas dos interesses do Estado, embora isso pareça cada vez mais difícil na nova ordem de plataforma. Como Langlois e Elmer (2019) defenderam convincentemente, gigantes da tecnologia têm se afastado do modelo de plataforma fechada para construir uma infraestrutura baseada em dados que lhes permite assumir o funcionamento das cidades, transporte, comunicação, varejo etc. Ao fazê-lo, elas “reivindicam a necessidade de não serem submetidas à regulamentação pública por abrirem novos horizontes, exigindo de fato um novo estado de *inovação que dispense permissão* para moldar nossas condições de existência” (Langlois & Elmer, 2019, p. 248). Essa transformação é problemática para a governança de plataforma não apenas porque essas constelações fogem dos marcos regulatórios existentes, mas porque também desafiam os próprios conceitos econômicos e legais em que estão fundamentadas – empresas, mercados, consumidores, infraestruturas, estados, cidadãos e setores públicos e privados. No mais, nem todas as plataformas são iguais ou “empilhadas” aleatoriamente. Algumas são mais iguais do que outras pois os ecossistemas de plataforma são organizados de forma hierárquica e interdependente. Em suma, a pilha pode não mais ser adequada para imaginar a dinâmica complexa subjacente ao sistema todo (Donovan, 2019).

Por isso, propomos evitar imaginar plataformas como entidades acumuladas em pilhas para vislumbrar a plataformização como um processo dinâmico em evolução, impulsionado por atores humanos e não-humanos. A plataformização é a “interpenetração das infraestruturas digitais, processos econômicos e estruturas governamentais de plataformas em diferentes setores econômicos e esferas da vida” (Poell et al., 2019, p. 6). Favorecendo uma abordagem que combine estudos de ciência, tecnologia e sociedade e economia política, tentamos entender como sistemas sociotécnicos e atores político-econômicos (empresas e estados) constroem relações simbióticas para criar valor conectivo e desenvolver seu poder

<sup>1</sup> No original, a autora refere-se ao termo “*stack*”, que pode ser entendido como um empilhamento funcional de infraestruturas tecnológicas para atingir um determinado objetivo (N. do E.).

de coordenação. O impacto da plataformização já foi documentado em relação à Web (Helmond, 2015), à produção cultural (Nieborg & Poell, 2018) e aos sistemas de aplicativos móveis (Nieborg & Helmond, 2019). A próxima seção defende como uma nova metáfora, a árvore de plataformização, pode ser usada como um prisma para desembaraçar dinâmicas complexas do ecossistema de plataformas.

### A ÁRVORE DE PLATAFORMIZAÇÃO

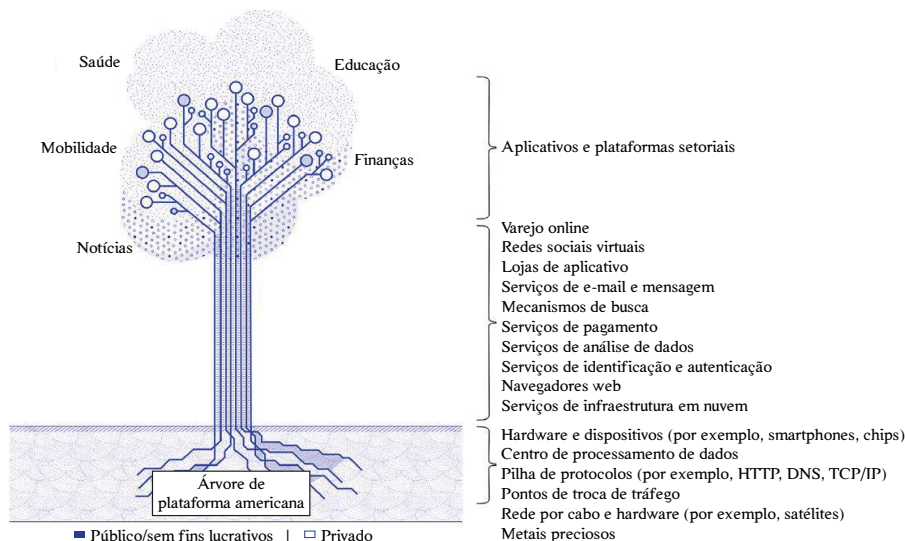
Para vislumbrar a natureza hierárquica e interdependente do ecossistema de plataforma, imaginamos uma árvore com três camadas interconectadas: as raízes de infraestruturas digitais chegam ao tronco de plataformas intermediárias que se ramifica em setores industriais e sociais de onde brotam galhos e folhas. Esta metáfora enfatiza como as plataformas constituem sistemas dinâmicos “vivos” que constantemente se transformam, “co-moldando” sua espécie. Assim como folhas, galhos e raízes absorvem o ar e a água para fazer a árvore crescer, a plataformização é um processo no qual dados são continuamente coletados e absorvidos. Dados (voluntariamente) fornecidos e (involuntariamente) exalados por usuários formam o oxigênio e o dióxido de carbono que alimentam o ecossistema de plataforma. Devido à distribuição onipresente das interfaces de programação de aplicação, a absorção e transformação de dados em nutrientes – um tipo metafórico de fotossíntese – estimula o crescimento da árvore para cima, para baixo e para os lados. Cada árvore faz parte de um ecossistema maior – uma rede global de conexão impulsionada por forças orgânicas e inorgânicas. Resistindo à tentação de avançar na elaboração dessa metáfora, nos concentramos nas três camadas que constituem sua forma básica: raízes, tronco e ramos (Figura 1).

As raízes referem-se às camadas de infraestrutura digital que penetram no solo. Capazes de atingir grandes profundidades e se espalhar amplamente, elas conectam árvores umas às outras. As raízes simbolizam os sistemas infraestruturais sobre os quais a internet é construída – cabos, satélites, microchips, centros de processamento de dados, semicondutores, conexões rápidas, pontos de acesso sem fio, caches e muito mais. As infraestruturas materiais permitem que telecomunicações e redes como a internet e as intranets enviem pacotes de dados. O tráfego online é organizado por meio de protocolos codificados, como o protocolo de controle de transmissão/protocolo de internet que ajudam a associar locais a um endereço IP e um sistema de nomes de domínio para roteamento adequado e entrega de mensagens. A *world wide web* é um desses sistemas de protocolo que ajuda a rotear dados integradamente pela rede. Os provedores de internet podem fornecer a infraestrutura na qual os clientes podem criar aplicativos, tais como navegadores.

Cada elemento da raiz contribui para a infraestrutura digital global – uma estrutura da qual muitas empresas e estados dependem para construir suas plataformas e serviços online. A própria internet foi originalmente concebida como um “serviço”, cuja organização e gerenciamento são independentes e indiferentes aos variados interesses geopolíticos e corporativos, garantindo a fluidez global do tráfego. Por exemplo, a Corporação da Internet para Atribuição de Nomes e Números (Icann) representa uma governança ideal, dividida entre vários interessados, um ideal que vem sendo pressionado à medida que empresas e estados estendem seus poderes para se apropriar da arquitetura “profunda” da internet<sup>2</sup>. Por um lado, as empresas de tecnologia privatizam partes vitais dessa infraestrutura (Malcick, 2018; Plantin et al., 2018). O Google, por exemplo, investiu bilhões de dólares em centros de processamento de dados em todo o mundo e em cabos subaquáticos para distribuição de dados. Por outro lado, estados e governos buscam cada vez mais controlar as infraestruturas digitais, a exemplo das intervenções do governo americano no projeto da Huawei para desenvolver redes 5G na Europa.

<sup>2</sup> Por exemplo, em 2019, a empresa americana de participação societária Ethos Capital tentou, sem sucesso, comprar o domínio “.dot.org” da Corporação da Internet para Atribuição de Nomes e Números por US\$ 1 bilhão.

**Figura 1**  
*Árvore de plataforma americana (Sequoia-gigante)*



Nota. Projetado por Fernando van der Vlist.

Embora o controle sobre as camadas de infraestrutura “mais profundas” tenha sido privatizado e politizado, vemos lutas semelhantes nas camadas situadas na gradual mudança entre as raízes e o tronco da árvore: hardware de consumo e serviços em nuvem, por exemplo. Dispositivos de hardware como celulares, laptops,

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## Ver a Floresta por suas Árvores

tablets, assistentes digitais (Siri, Echo, Alexa) e caixas de navegação permitem que a atividade na internet se espalhe entre os usuários. Dentro desses dispositivos, os componentes de hardware – incluindo concentradores, comutadores, placas de rede, modems e roteadores – estão ligados a componentes de software proprietários, como sistemas operacionais (iOS, Android) e navegadores (Chrome, Explorer, Safari). A arquitetura dos serviços em nuvem forma um modelo para armazenar, analisar e distribuir dados. O controle sobre a arquitetura em nuvem influencia cada vez mais a governança das funções e setores da sociedade. Amazon Web Services, Google Cloud e Microsoft Azure dominam essa camada enquanto estados e atores da sociedade civil dependem cada vez mais deles, diminuindo o controle público sobre sua governança. Enfraquecer as fronteiras entre *infraestrutura digital* e *serviços intermediários* permite que eles continuem a ser incorporados.

As plataformas intermediárias no tronco da árvore constituem o núcleo do poder das plataformas ao mediarem infraestruturas, usuários e setores sociais. A pilha neste nível inclui serviços de identificação ou login (Facebook ID, Google ID, Amazon ID, Apple ID), sistemas de pagamento (Apple Pay, Google Pay), serviços de e-mail e mensagens (Facebook Messenger, Gmail, MS Mail, Skype, FaceTime), redes sociais (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube), mecanismos de busca (Google Search, Bing), serviços de publicidade (Facebook Ads, Google), redes de varejo (Amazon Marketplace, Prime) e lojas de aplicativos (Google Play, Apple). Esta lista não é exaustiva nem estática. Nenhuma dessas plataformas intermediárias é essencial para todas as atividades da internet, mas, juntas, constituem portais de informação centrais, dominando uma ou mais camadas no tronco e canalizando fluxos de dados para cima e para baixo. O que caracteriza serviços intermediários é que (1) as plataformas Gafam dominam estrategicamente este espaço, ao passo que quase não há presença estatal ou de entidades fora do mercado; e (2) essas superplataformas dependem muito umas das outras, regendo o ecossistema através de concorrência e coordenação. Na próxima seção, explicaremos com mais detalhes como seu poder é exercido a partir deste nível intermediário.

Quando nos movemos para os galhos que brotam do tronco da árvore, podemos ver seu volume se expandir e se diversificar em ramos e galhos menores cuja folhagem se espalha infinitamente em direção ao céu. Os ramos representam as aplicações setoriais construídas sobre serviços de plataforma na camada intermediária (tronco) e habilitadas pela infraestrutura digital (raízes). Os numerosos ramos da árvore representam os muitos setores sociais nos quais a plataformização toma forma. Alguns setores são majoritariamente privados, atendendo mercados e consumidores individuais; outros, majoritariamente públicos, atendendo cidadãos e guardando o bem comum. Em princípio, plataformas setoriais podem

ser operadas por empresas – incluindo as Big Five, empresas titulares legadas e startups (nativas digitais) – mas também por z governamentais, não governamentais ou públicos (van Dijck et al., 2018). Na prática, vemos um número crescente de *players* corporativos liderando serviços setoriais baseados em dados, mesmo que esses setores sejam predominantemente públicos (por exemplo, saúde, educação).

A árvore de plataformização exemplifica um sistema complexo que compreende uma variedade de atores humanos e não humanos que se misturam para definir o espaço público e privado. Ao contrário da metáfora da pilha, a árvore de plataformização mostra que a ordem e o acúmulo de plataformas não são aleatórios, mas sim o resultado de forças invisíveis moldando a árvore em sua forma atual: desde a circulação de seus recursos através de sua estrutura raiz e tronco intermediário até alimentar seus galhos e folhagens. A influência das plataformas operacionais dos atores privados em todos os níveis e camadas da árvore aumenta à medida que a árvore cresce. Há mais diversidade de jogadores nos ramos do que no tronco, assim como há ainda mais diversidade nas raízes infraestruturais do que no tronco. Na próxima seção, focaremos na dinâmica da plataformização, examinando a posição privilegiada das plataformas intermediárias como “orquestradoras na cadeia de valor da ecologia digital” (Mansell, como citado em Lynskey, 2017, p. 9).

## A DINÂMICA DA PLATAFORMIZAÇÃO

O processo que integra as plataformas infraestruturais, intermediárias e setoriais oblitera as distinções entre esses níveis. No entanto, enfatizar suas diferenças e hierarquia é fundamental para ver como e por que algumas plataformas obtiveram poder para definir e coordenar regras (Castells, 2009). As empresas que operam várias plataformas nos três níveis têm maior poder operacional; fortificando sua posição no tronco e desenvolvendo e consolidando seu poder de controle sobre o sistema. O que caracteriza plataformas intermediárias é que elas formam “pontos de passagem obrigatória” entre as raízes e ramos (Callon, 1986). Elas medeiam todos os tipos de interações entre usuários finais e fornecedores de serviços, acumulam inteligência a partir de dados e conteúdo de várias camadas, transformam fluxos de dados em valor monetário, aplicam *gatekeeping* e moderam fluxos de dados e conteúdo (Helmond et al., 2019). Os proprietários de plataformas intermediárias cruciais têm um poder extraordinário para definir as regras do tráfego de dados na rede global. As empresas de tecnologia que compõem o Big Five devem sua concentração de poder a pelo menos três tipos de dinâmica de plataformização: a integração vertical das plataformas, a infraestruturalização de plataformas intermediárias e a intersetorialização das plataformas. Detalharemos cada tipo melhor abaixo.

### Integração vertical de plataformas

Como já dito, a distinção entre plataformas infraestruturais, intermediárias e setoriais é cada vez mais fluida, permitindo que os fluxos de dados se movam através de seu sistema conectivo. A plataforma move o controle sobre os fluxos de dados em duas direções: do tronco para baixo em direção à sua camada infraestrutural e para cima em direção aos ramos das plataformas setoriais e aplicações incorporadas. Plantin et al. (2018) chamaram a primeira parte desse processo de *plataformização de infraestrutura*; a infraestrutura digital da internet é cada vez mais transformada em um modelo de serviço, ilustrado pela integração de serviços em nuvem, configuração de hardware e serviços de análise nas plataformas intermediárias. Pense, por exemplo, no Apple Pay, que possui um chip NFC embutido para uso exclusivo. Assim, outros sistemas de pagamento ou serviços rivais não podem utilizar o hardware em um iPhone. Dispositivos de hardware, chips de computador e arquiteturas em nuvem são, portanto, “plataformizados” para consolidar a posição de uma empresa como intermediária.

A plataforma também se move para cima, do tronco para uma grande variedade de setores. Dados de usuários fluem continuamente através das folhas; sugados por galhos e ramos, eles podem ser transportados integradamente ao tronco. O setor público de educação básica ilustra como isso funciona. O Google Suite for Education é um pacote de software baseado em algoritmos de aprendizagem personalizados e projetados para levar ferramentas de ortografia e matemática para a sala de aula. O pacote de aplicativos é incorporado em laptops Chromebook, que também são equipados com Google Search, Google Login, Gmail etc. A integração vertical das plataformas através das linhas padrão das empresas permite que os fluxos de dados fluam integradamente entre raízes, tronco e ramos, facilitando o fluxo de informações para cima e para baixo, canalizando os usuários para a pilha proprietária do Google. Assim, o fato de escolas dependerem de sistemas de informação proprietários efetivamente canaliza os dados que alunos geram em um contexto público em um fluxo de dados proprietário controlado pelas plataformas de uma corporação.

A integração vertical, muitas vezes promovida como a integração das plataformas para facilitar a conveniência dos usuários, na prática privatiza fluxos de dados, aprisionando tecnologicamente usuários e fornecedores (van Alstyne et al., 2016). Embora ainda possamos testemunhar uma diversidade de atores públicos e privados muito maior no nível setorial do que no intermediário, a presença crescente das plataformas Big Five em muitos ramos da árvore mostra como a sociedade depende cada vez mais delas. A integração vertical das plataformas ofusca as fronteiras entre infraestruturas e setores e entre plataformas privadas e públicas e afeta negativamente a necessidade de se desenvolver plataformas independentes,

somando-se a uma internet privatizada em que “as informações podem nunca ter que viajar através da infraestrutura pública” (Srnicek, 2017, p. 113).

### **A infraestruturalização das plataformas intermediárias**

Plataformas intermediárias estão cada vez mais próximas de se tornarem infraestruturas para usuários – um processo que Plantin et al. (2018, p. 306) chamaram de a *infraestruturalização das plataformas*. Infraestruturas normalmente se encontram na raiz, mas plataformas intermediárias no tronco têm cada vez mais obtido status de infraestrutura (Plantin & de Seta, 2019). Mark Zuckerberg muitas vezes chamou o Facebook de infraestrutura “social”. Com mais de dois bilhões de usuários, a rede social tornou-se um ponto de passagem obrigatória e vital para o fluxo de dados que atravessam o tronco, ganhando uma posição central, onde pode conectar fluxos de conteúdo e dados no *backend* invisível através de sua *família de aplicativos* (WhatsApp, Instagram, Messenger, Login, Advertising, Analytics)

Esse movimento horizontal à construção de uma presença mais densa em uma ou mais camadas no tronco fortalece a posição de uma empresa de tecnologia no sistema como um todo. O nível intermediário do ecossistema americano, operado por um punhado de grandes atores, constitui um núcleo auto-organizado e autogovernado. Pertencer ao tronco é crucial para que empresas exerçam sua influência para cima, para baixo e para os lados. Enquanto os fluxos de dados e conteúdo continuarem passando pelo tronco – fluxos que podem ser exclusivamente extraídos, processados, combinados e reaproveitados –, seus operadores definem a forma da árvore. Um tronco maior e mais alto significa maior controle sobre a árvore; menos operadores no tronco, uma coordenação mais eficiente.

O nível intermediário é bastante exclusivo e restrito. Acessar muitos usuários requer passar pelo Facebook; vender produtos em massa depende da rede de varejo da Amazon; baixar aplicativos inevitavelmente passa pelos gargalos das lojas de aplicativos da Apple e do Google e encontrar informações exige um mecanismo de busca do Google ou da Microsoft. Mas as Big Five também dependem uns dos outros: o iCloud da Apple é construído no Amazon Web Services e no Azure da Microsoft ao passo que o Facebook depende da permissão da Apple e do Google para colocar suas lojas de aplicativos em suas plataformas. Interdependências transformam as plataformas Big Five em *concorrentes coordenados* – uma forma de *coopetição* que facilmente evita agências reguladoras, que tendem a se concentrar em empresas individuais (Daidj & Egert, 2018; Kostis, 2018).

### Intersetorialização

A plataformização difunde-se mais à medida que empresas expandem sua influência entre setores. Este processo, chamado *intersetorialização*, permite que empresas coletem e conectem informações pessoais e dados comportamentais de vários setores. Por exemplo, a Amazon está concomitantemente aninhando-se no setor médico, de transportes e de seguros. Em 2018, a Amazon construiu uma plataforma de software para busca de arquivos médicos (Amazon Comprehend Medical) e adquiriu a gigante farmacêutica PillPack. Em parceria com outras duas empresas, abriu uma corretora de seguros (Haven) para oferecer seguros de saúde a 1,2 milhão de funcionários. A intersetorialização permite conectar não apenas serviços – a Amazon poderia se tornar um portal em que pedidos e entrega de medicamentos e diagnósticos pudessem ser feitos em um só lugar – mas também controlar informações sobre usuários ao combinar seus fluxos de dados. Quanto mais fluxos de dados puderem ser conectados, mais informações poderão ser derivadas do sistema e retroalimentadas a ele. Fluxos de dados são o oxigênio alimentando a inteligência algorítmica, fornecendo assim os nutrientes para a criação de valor.

Integração vertical, infraestruturalização e intersetorialização são as principais dinâmicas que impulsionam a plataformização. As três dinâmicas apontam para a uma concentração de poder no núcleo do sistema; os operadores da plataforma Big Five estão “tronqueando” a árvore, transformando-a em uma gigantesca sequoia californiana cada vez mais espessa e alta; mais espessa por alargarem sua estrutura anelada, um espaço que cada vez mais centraliza e exclui; e mais alta por ampliarem o tronco para cima e para baixo, incorporando raízes e ramos, apagando as distinções entre eles e obliterando as fronteiras entre os setores de mercado e não mercado. O poder da plataformização emana da capacidade das empresas Big Tech de se engajarem em uma forma sem precedentes de concorrência-com-coordenação, especialmente através de suas plataformas intermediárias. Elas se equilibram precariamente, reservando espaços para suas próprias funcionalidades ao mesmo tempo que se abrem para rivais em outras áreas, coordenando o espaço online com outros grandes *players* enquanto competem em outros segmentos e integrando suas próprias plataformas verticalmente, mantendo a concorrência nos mercados de plataformas “oligopolistas” (Dolata & Schrape, 2018). A lente da dinâmica da plataformização nos permite ver como as práticas regulatórias podem se aplicar a vários níveis e empresas, não isoladamente, mas em conjunto, o que nos leva à questão: o que torna os ecossistemas de plataforma tão difíceis de governar e por que a plataformização é aparentemente imune a forças regulatórias?



## GOVERNANDO O STATUS DESREGRADO DAS PLATAFORMAS INTERMEDIÁRIAS

É difícil intervir legalmente no ecossistema atual, especialmente devido à ontologia escorregadia e ao status desregrado das plataformas intermediárias. Elas constituem uma camada vaga e impermeável devido à sua *interposição*, uma posição liminar relativa tanto à sua funcionalidade quanto ao status de seus operadores, comumente chamados de *empresas de informação* ou *de tecnologia*. As empresas de tecnologia forçam deliberadamente suas plataformas a oscilar entre setores e infraestruturas, mercados e não mercados, interesses privados e públicos e o mercado de bens e serviços e o mercado de ideias ao mesmo tempo que adotam características de ambas as oposições. Além disso, exercem um poder sem precedentes sobre a vida das pessoas, afetando sua autonomia e a liberdade ao lhes impor seu modelo de arquitetura da escolha – poderes que antes eram atribuídos aos atores estatais encarregados de moldar instituições e decisões de governança. Esse posicionamento híbrido representa sérios desafios para reguladores e legisladores, que são obrigados a agir dentro das estruturas acessíveis a eles (direito concorrencial, leis de privacidade, direito antitruste e direitos fundamentais, por exemplo) enquanto outros regimes legais pertencem a responsabilidades setoriais de governança (bancárias, midiáticas ou educativas, por exemplo) ou infraestruturais (serviços públicos ou infraestruturas privadas, por exemplo). Cada um desses marcos legais tem um escopo e alcance limitados que normalmente focam em um único ator (empresas ou mercados, por exemplo) e defendem o interesse particular dos consumidores ou o interesse público dos cidadãos.

Ao analisarmos dois exemplos diferentes – um de direito antitruste e outro de direito à informação – podemos ilustrar como os estudiosos jurídicos têm usado abordagens compartimentalizadas para controlar o status *desregrado* de plataformas intermediárias. Lina Khan (2016), sob a perspectiva do direito concorrencial e antitruste, analisa meticulosamente a conduta da Amazon. Ela mostra como a capacidade da empresa de observar como seus clientes usam seus serviços online (Amazon Web Services – AWS) lhe permite detectar e obstruir o sucesso de empresas menores. Conectando fluxos de dados derivados do AWS aos da Amazon Marketplace e a serviços de entrega e produtos de varejo, Kahn argumenta como a Amazon distorce este patamar de igualdade e explora conhecimentos exclusivos de fluxos de dados para priorizar seus produtos e serviços. A fim de contrapor o poder da empresa, a autora propõe uma *proibição profilática* de tal integração vertical, bloqueando a exploração de infraestruturas online e serviços setoriais. Kahn também sugere que reguladores apliquem certas obrigações e deveres comuns às transportadoras a algumas plataformas cruciais – condições que tradicionalmente se aplicam aos serviços

públicos. Isso só funcionará se uma nova definição legal de *serviços essenciais* justificar uma funcionalidade restringida (Khan, 2016, p. 801). Mantendo-se dentro dos parâmetros de mercados e empresas individuais, Kahn ilumina vividamente aspectos da estrutura e conduta anticompetitivas da Amazon e ressalta deficiências na atual doutrina legal (Khan & Vaheesan, 2017).

A abordagem de leis de informação e mídia expõe um caso semelhante do status desregrado das plataformas intermediárias. Philip Napoli (2019) argumenta que o Facebook adota uma dupla legitimidade como praça pública e mercado para evitar prestar contas publicamente. A empresa evita o passivo dos setores de notícias, estabelecendo suas próprias regras de filtragem de discursos de ódio e notícias falsas. O Facebook deve seu *rostro-de-Jano* a uma manobra tática que lhe permitiu escapar das poucas proteções do interesse público inscritas no sistema legal dos EUA. A seção 230 da Lei de Telecomunicações de 1996 concede imunidade a várias formas de responsabilidade legal a provedores de conteúdo online por “conteúdo produzido ou disseminado na plataforma por terceiros, mesmo que eles se envolvam ativamente em várias formas de seleção editorial, filtragem ou curadoria” (Napoli, 2019, p. 158). Esta análise o leva a concluir que “o fato de a norma de interesse público não ter base regulatória na estrutura ou no comportamento das plataformas de mídia social significa que temos uma crescente desconexão entre motivações regulatórias e razões que precisa ser abordada” (Napoli, 2019, p. 153).

A partir de diferentes perspectivas legais, Kahn e Napoli concluem que marcos regulatórios estreitos inibem a capacidade governamental de regular os interesses sociais mais amplos em jogo nos casos da Amazon e do Facebook. No entanto, é difícil considerar suas contribuições isoladamente e é aqui que a metáfora da árvore pode oferecer um novo espaço imaginário. Se abordarmos a plataformização de forma mais expansiva, começaremos a ver como ela promove integração vertical, infraestrutura e intersectorialização em todos os níveis e camadas do ecossistema, transformando-o em uma constelação que mescla interesses corporativos, públicos e cívicos. Em segundo lugar, a árvore nos ajuda a notar que o poder da plataforma não jaz em empresas individuais, mas no poder que o ecossistema conectivo tem de coordenar e definir regras. E terceiro, a metáfora também pode nos ajudar a entender esses ecossistemas como construtos (geo)político-econômicos que interligam várias camadas nos três níveis. Elaboraremos cada um desses argumentos abaixo.

Em primeiro lugar, analisar os casos da Amazon e Facebook através da lente de árvore de plataformização nos ajuda a focar nos efeitos de sua dinâmica compartilhada. A Amazon, ao integrar fluxos de dados verticalmente, infraestruturalizar serviços em seu tronco (Amazon Web

Services) e intersetorializar extensivamente os produtos oferecidos (médico, de transporte, seguros etc.) consolida sua poderosa posição, lhes permitindo um enorme controle e vantagem sobre o ecossistema datificado à medida que ele evolui ao longo do tempo. Inadvertidamente alimentando nossa metáfora, o CEO Jeff Bezos disse em uma entrevista: “Nós nos sentimos confortáveis cultivando sementes e esperando que elas se tornem árvores” (Anders, 2012). O Facebook, por sua vez, “tronqueia a árvore” principalmente por mesclar fluxos de dados de plataformas de marketing (publicidade) com aqueles que oferecem principalmente informação política, deliberação pública e comunicação interpessoal (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Messenger). Podemos identificar mecanismos semelhantes em como o Google, a Apple e a Microsoft – cada uma à sua maneira distinta e curiosamente semelhante – operam suas plataformas em todos os três níveis, revelando um padrão de comando. Embora vários estudiosos tenham abordado adequadamente as respectivas estratégias de envoltório horizontal, vertical e intersetorial implantadas por empresas individuais, poucos têm buscado uma abordagem abrangente para a plataformização em todas as suas camadas (Dolata & Schrape, 2018). A árvore pode nos ajudar a imaginar por que o ecossistema não é mais uma coleção de pilhas ordenadamente divididas entre plataformas infraestruturais e setoriais, públicas e privadas, tendo adquirido sua atual forma hierárquica e “tronqueada”. O ecossistema de informações gradualmente assume um status monocrático se os interesses públicos se tornarem praticamente dependentes de infraestruturas privadas e os representantes estaduais ou civis influenciarem pouco as condições de sua arquitetura, *affordances* e funcionalidades.

A metáfora da árvore também nos ajuda a mudar o nosso foco de empresas individuais gerindo várias plataformas em um mercado competitivo para um conjunto de concorrentes que padronizam as regras técnicas e sociais de todo o tráfego online ao colaborarem entre si. No ano passado, Mark Zuckerberg afirmou que a proposta de fragmentar o Facebook, o Google ou a Amazon não só “ameaça a existência” dessas empresas como é incapaz de mudar o sistema “já que agora as empresas não *podem coordenar e trabalhar juntas* [ênfase adicionada]” (Stevens, 2019). Apenas os operadores de plataforma com a capacidade de implantar fluxos de dados *upstream*, *downstream* e *side-stream* têm a capacidade de controlar e organizar conjuntamente o sistema de informações. A plataformização funciona a seu favor quando as empresas de tecnologia podem alinhar suas funcionalidades cruciais de *gatekeeping* e monetização em infraestruturas e setores, mantendo seus fluxos de dados proprietários sem assumir as implicações dispendiosas da governança cívica. Ainda que atores públicos e civis estejam presentes nas raízes e ramos, eles não ocupam praticamente espaço algum em um tronco cada vez mais espesso

e mais alto, diminuindo a igualdade e diversidade dos atores operando no sistema. O argumento mais convincente a favor de um “oligopólio” corporativo que gira um ecossistema é que ele permite uma experiência entre usuários e consumidores “sem atritos” (Smyrnaois, 2018). Um argumento contundente contra ele é que o sistema integrado é virtualmente impermeável para pessoas de fora – sejam outras empresas, governos, atores não governamentais ou cidadãos. A dinâmica de plataforma molda o tronco alto e espesso da sequoia californiana, estipulando o crescimento de uma monocultura em vez de promover um ecossistema diversificado.

Finalmente, a metáfora da árvore nos permite ver as dimensões político-econômicas dos ecossistemas de plataformas globalmente interconectados, que dificilmente podem ser entendidos separadamente de suas *affordances* sociotécnicas. Os sistemas Gafam americano e o BAT chinês são os ecossistemas de plataforma dominantes. Apesar de suas diferenças ideológicas, as duas espécies são notavelmente semelhantes: tanto a sequoia californiana quanto o bambu chinês desenvolveram troncos consideravelmente altos; misturando interesses estatais e corporativos entre suas raízes, troncos e ramos em serviços integrados. Suas impressionantes semelhanças sociotécnicas permitem um emaranhado econômico generalizado. Como já dito, as tensões entre os três principais blocos (Estados Unidos, China e Europa) aumentam à medida que as lutas pelo poder geopolítico se tornam brigas por poder infraestrutural no espaço digital. Essas diversas contendidas provam como os ecossistemas de plataforma não são mais entidades separadas, e sim profundamente entrelaçadas – não apenas nas raízes, como ilustrado pelo papel contestado da Huawei no desenvolvimento da infraestrutura 5G, mas também no tronco e ramos. Por exemplo, enquanto a Apple ainda obtém 40% da receita de sua loja de aplicativos de usuários chineses, ela é agora pressionada pelo governo americano a transferir parte de sua produção de hardware de volta para os Estados Unidos. As conquistas da Alibaba e da Amazon nos mercados de varejo online na Europa estão lotando serviços nacionais e locais, gerando ressentimento. Quanto mais as sociedades são governadas por e através de ecossistemas conectivos operando globalmente, mais difícil parece ser para os órgãos reguladores governarem sua dinâmica desregulada. A falta de eficazes marcos regulatórios nacionais e transnacionais – quiçá globais – apresenta obstáculos a esforços abrangentes de governança.

## REFORMULANDO GOVERNANÇA PARA PROMOVER A DIVERSIDADE DE PLATAFORMAS

Esta seção nos traz de volta ao papel da Europa em reformular a governança de plataforma. Uma vez que os sistemas de informação no mundo são

predominantemente de propriedade e operação de empresas americanas e chinesas, pode caber aos legisladores e reguladores europeus agir como agentes globais de mudança. Embora não tenham a proeza tecnológica de qualquer um dos dois outros sistemas, a Europa controla o acesso a um enorme mercado continental, mercado este que visa proteger de acordo com seus ideais democráticos – mesmo sofrendo com difrações políticas. A questão principal, então, torna-se como a Europa pode passar de uma colcha de retalhos de estruturas fragmentadas para uma abordagem abrangente. Ou, como argumenta Owens (2019), precisa-se de um novo conjunto de regras para preencher a lacuna de governança global atual: “Os desafios que enfrentamos são sistêmicos, incorporados à arquitetura dos mercados de mídia digital. Portanto, a resposta de políticas públicas deve ser holística e evitar reações que resolvam um aspecto do problema, ignorando o resto” (p. 4). Dada a ambição da UE (citada no início deste artigo) de projetar uma nova infraestrutura de dados digitais que incentivará os fluxos de dados a serem compartilhados e utilizados para o bem comum, o que seria necessário para moldar tal agenda?

Até agora, a UE reagiu às consequências negativas da plataforma mobilizando principalmente seus marcos legais convencionais, como a concorrência e a regulação do mercado, a regulação de direitos autorais e de privacidade e as diretrizes de discurso de ódio e desinformação<sup>3</sup>. Mantendo-se dentro de seus limites estreitos, a Comissão Europeia levantou casos concretos contra empresas individuais. Nos últimos anos, muitas expressivas foram aplicadas ao Google por seu comprovado comportamento anticompetitivo. Mais recentemente, a Comissão iniciou uma investigação para avaliar se a Amazon está usando injustamente dados coletados por vendedores terceirizados para promover sua política de preços. Além disso, a loja de aplicativos da Apple e seu sistema de pagamento Apple Pay têm atraído a atenção da fiscalização antitruste. A introdução do regulamento geral de proteção de dados em 2018 transformou a lei de privacidade e da proteção de dados em parâmetros relevantes a um debate que antes era alimentado principalmente pelos princípios do mercado. Governos europeus (a Alemanha, por exemplo) pediram que as empresas de tecnologia se responsabilizem por remover conteúdo ilícito de suas plataformas, como discurso de ódio e declarações discriminatórias. Afirmando que a situação das empresas de tecnologia é idêntica à das organizações de mídia, esses governos ampliaram o espectro jurídico de suas leis da mídia, movendo o centro do debate do poder de mercado à responsabilidade social. Tal mudança pelo menos reconhece que a influência da plataforma excede as estruturas de mercado, afetando toda a sociedade (Nemitz, 2018). Assim, as disputas legais antes limitadas ao direito antitruste e concorrencial foram ampliadas para incluir outros marcos jurídicos relevantes.

<sup>3</sup> A Diretiva Europeia sobre Comércio Eletrônico, implementada em 2000, praticamente espelha a lei americana da Seção 230 da *Communications Decency Act* (Lei De Decência Das Comunicações Americana), afirmando que os provedores de hospedagem não são responsáveis pelo conteúdo que hospedam desde que se envolvam em “atos intermediários neutros de uma mera capacidade técnica, automática e passiva”. A diretiva foi atualizada em 2019 para responsabilizar os provedores por violações de direitos autorais se eles não responderem imediatamente às solicitações de retirada.

Eles podem muito bem continuar a serem estendidos e incluir direitos humanos e o direito público (Jorgensen, 2019).

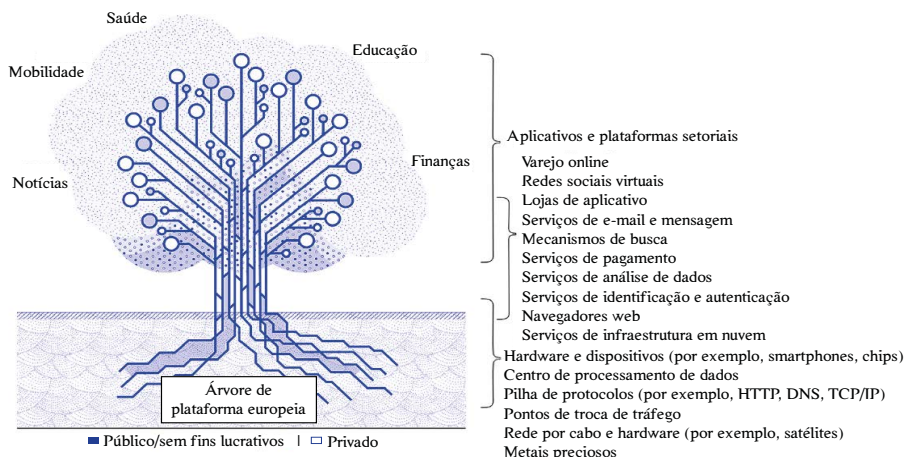
Cada uma dessas intervenções regulatórias e políticas enviou fortes sinais da desaprovação da Comissão Europeia às práticas das grandes tecnologias, mas nem as multas emitidas nem políticas únicas abrangentes resultaram em mudanças sistêmicas. Como alguns estudiosos argumentam, “precisamos reunir políticas díspares em um quadro geral coerente e uma arquitetura regulatória” (Tambini, 2019, p. 93). Outros afirmam que devemos passar da *regulamentação baseada em regras* para a *regulamentação baseada em princípios* (Nooren et al., 2018, p. 282). Mas isso é mais fácil de se dizer do que fazer com uma UE cujo poder global pode exceder sua influência política transnacional. Em vez de seguir várias políticas voltadas para a regulação de plataformas únicas, empresas individuais e questões isoladas, a Europa pode tentar uma nova estratégia que visa a dinâmica de plataformização como um ponto de partida importante para o contrapoder regulatório. As sociedades europeias têm uma longa tradição de organizar suas democracias com base na cooperação equilibrada entre atores de mercado, estado e sociedade civil (Mager, 2018). Assim, devem se sentir particularmente obrigados a voltar à estaca zero e articular um conjunto de princípios que priorizem o bem comum, capacitando cidadãos e organizações da sociedade civil a ajudar os governos a projetar um ecossistema aberto e diversificado.

Mais uma vez, a árvore de plataformização pode fornecer uma interessante lente metafórica para articular vários conjuntos de princípios normativo-jurídicos, técnico-éticos e democrático-civis, para citar apenas alguns. Para começar, princípios normativo-jurídicos poderiam ajudar a definir a distinção ontológica entre plataformas infraestruturais, intermediárias e setoriais que, por sua vez, podem esclarecer as várias condições legais para sua execução isolada ou conjunta e declarar as responsabilidades relativas à sua operação. Por exemplo, se serviços em nuvem fossem rotulados como infraestruturas digitais, eles poderiam ser obrigados a manter certos padrões de neutralidade e abertura; se rotulados como plataformas intermediárias, poderiam estar sujeitos a se responsabilizar por seu conteúdo. Da mesma forma, se redes sociais fossem categorizadas como serviços setoriais – como o são as organizações de notícias –, elas poderiam ser responsabilizadas pelo seu conteúdo de formas diferentes daquelas aplicáveis a serviços de infraestrutura, como telecomunicações. Uma questão normativa urgente decorrente de plataformas atualmente intermediárias será se elas receberão um status separado que vem com responsabilidades e passivos específicos ou se deverão escolher entre regimes infraestruturais e setoriais.

Por outro lado, princípios técnico-éticos podem ser emitidos para informar o design de dados e sistemas algorítmicamente orientados. Os princípios de

equidade, prestação de contas, interoperabilidade e responsabilidade – também conhecidos como princípios FAIR para a gestão e administração de dados científicos (<https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>) – podem ser aplicados para cima e para baixo nos três níveis, desde infraestruturas até plataformas setoriais. Buscar tais princípios pode aliviar esta assimetria de poder, permitindo que indivíduos controlem seus dados sem perder os benefícios da conectividade. Por exemplo, se a interoperabilidade da plataforma e a portabilidade de seus dados forem facilitadas em todas as plataformas, isso pode criar condições para proteger o tráfego interplataformas e promover a troca livre de fluxos de dados. A obrigatoriedade técnica desses princípios também pode apoiar regras legais destinadas a prevenir a integração vertical e a intersetorialização.

**Figura 2**  
*Árvore de plataforma europeia*



Nota. Projetado por Fernando van der Vlist.

Além disso, princípios democrático-civis baseados em valores públicos poderiam ser usados para informar uma arquitetura equilibrada. A árvore de plataforma mostrou como a obliteração do espaço privado, corporativo, estatal e cívico requer a reafirmação desses interesses distintos em uma estrutura online democrática. As plataformas de infraestrutura (como serviços em nuvem) oferecem serviços públicos ou privados e o que garante sua distinção? Se plataformas intermediárias (como redes sociais) são espaços públicos, quais responsabilidades e passivos pertencem à sua operação? Permite-se a incorporação de fluxos de dados gerados nos setores públicos (por exemplo, escolas, hospitais) quando eles podem ser conectados a fluxos de dados fora

do domínio público? O princípio da soberania de dados dá aos usuários a capacidade de controlar o armazenamento, acessibilidade e processamento de seus próprios (meta)dados. Ao alternar entre diferentes plataformas, os usuários poderiam escolher um regime de dados específico, podendo manter seus dados autogerados privados, doá-los anonimamente a um *data commons* ou disponibilizar seus dados a determinados operadores de plataforma. A iniciativa Solid (<https://solid.inrupt.com/>), de Tim Berners-Lee, exemplifica como esse conjunto de princípios pode estruturar a arquitetura de uma plataforma.

Fornecer uma descrição completa dos conjuntos de princípios excede o escopo deste artigo. Queremos apenas ilustrar como um novo imaginário pode ajudar a projetar um ecossistema de plataformas aberto e diversificado (Gorwa, 2019). No entanto, deve ficar claro que articular esses princípios pode moldar uma espécie diferente da sequoia californiana ou do bambu chinês. A árvore europeia não tem um tronco que fica mais alto e mais espesso ao ser alimentado por fluxos de dados proprietários, tendo uma forma *federada*, descentralizada. Ela possui nós de comutação entre e em todos os níveis e camadas, permitindo que usuários mudem de plataformas e definam como seus dados devem ser implantados em cada ponto. Tal árvore pode ajudar um tipo diferente de ecossistema a crescer – um que permita maior variedade, abertura e interoperabilidade em todos os seus níveis (Figura 2).

Manter a diversidade infraestrutural, intermediária e setorial é crucial para remodelar a arquitetura do ecossistema. De fato, as nações e União europeias devem se preocupar em proteger os valores e interesses públicos nesses três níveis e abrir espaço para que instituições independentes e atores da sociedade civil operem plataformas independentes. Em 2019, a chanceler alemã Angela Merkel solicitou um serviço público europeu de nuvem e o estabelecimento de padrões de computação em nuvem com base em valores públicos como privacidade, segurança e controle democrático. A recente iniciativa germano-francesa GAIA-X visa construir uma infraestrutura digital baseada em princípios de soberania de dados, responsabilidade pública, interoperabilidade e descentralização (*Project...*, 2019). Ambas as ações sinalizam a necessidade aguda de se remodelar a arquitetura do sistema para que ele reflita normas e valores europeus. Em vez de aumentar a tensão geopolítica, os formuladores de políticas europeus poderiam explorar sua posição para redirecionar seus esforços regulatórios e combater os efeitos adversos da dinâmica de plataformação.

Cultivar um ecossistema de plataformas diversificado e sustentável requer uma visão abrangente. A árvore nos permite visualizar uma constelação de plataforma que compreende múltiplos níveis, visíveis e invisíveis, sob ou sobre o solo. Permitir que um punhado de empresas de tecnologia defina os princípios de um ecossistema orientado pelo mercado lhes dá o



poder de estabelecer as regras dos ecossistemas de informação do mundo e governá-los. Focar em empresas, mercados ou plataformas individuais não levará a mudanças profundas e sistêmicas. Precisamos ver a floresta por suas árvores para entender como governar efetivamente suas estruturas conectivas escondidas em camadas de código. A árvore, embora apenas uma metáfora, expressa a urgência de se diversificar o ecossistema de plataforma para mantê-lo sustentável. É impossível cultivar uma floresta rica e nutritiva sem diversidade. Somos incapazes tanto de controlar seu crescimento desenfreado sem uma variedade de atores com papéis sociais distintos e respeitados como de governar sua dinâmica sem um conjunto de princípios. A mudança de um sistema começa com visão e visualização. ■

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# What Is Glocal? Conceptual Systematization and New Theoretical Considerations on the Most Distinctive Techno-Cultural Invention of the Media Civilization

## *O que é Glocal? Sistematização Conceitual e Novas Considerações Teóricas sobre a Mais Importante Invenção Tecnocultural da Civilização Midiática*

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### ABSTRACT

The article presents the fundamental characteristics of the glocalization phenomenon, from its most remote technological origins to its current digital manifestations. According to the proposal, *Glocal* – neither global nor local, but a mixture of both – refers to processes and tendencies observed in the irreversible track of electronic communication in real-time. Concerning epistemological and empirical dimensions, the argumentation captures the glocal and glocalization's social-historical significance, focusing on its *modus operandi*, internal diversification, and multilateral consequences. The reflection adds aspects to enrich the thesis of glocalization as a civilizing process and a mode of reproduction of capitalism.

**Keywords:** Media civilization, glocal phenomenon, glocal condition

### RESUMO

O artigo apresenta as características fundamentais do fenômeno da glocalização, desde suas origens tecnológicas mais remotas até suas manifestações digitais atuais. *Glocal* – nem global, nem local, antes mescla de ambos, sem redução a nenhum – se refere, nesta reflexão, a processos e tendências observados no rastro irreversível da comunicação eletrônica em tempo real. Abarcando o tema por dupla dimensão – epistemológica e empírica – a argumentação apreende a significação social-histórica do glocal e da glocalização, com foco em seu *modus operandi*, em sua diversificação interna e em suas consequências multilaterais. A reflexão soma novos aspectos a respeito para enriquecer a tese da glocalização como processo civilizatório e como modo de reprodução do capitalismo.

**Palavras-chave:** Civilização midiática, fenômeno glocal, condição glocal

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MATRIZES

# D

## What Is Glocal?

*There won't be a door. You are inside  
And at the castle it embraces the universe  
And has neither obverse nor reverse  
Neither external wall nor secret center.*  
-J. L. Borges, *Obras completas: 1952-1972*

<sup>1</sup> See on this subject Robertson (1994, 1995, 2002), Robertson and White (2003), Sedda (2004), Trivinho (2007, 2012, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> The reflection is based on the author's previous research trajectory, of which this text constitutes a re-scaled synthesis, for dissemination to heterogeneous audiences. The main steps of this epistemological production can be found in Trivinho (2007, Part III, chaps. 1 and 2, 2012, 2014, Introduction). This notation covers the conceptual markers of the exhibition, dispensing with the need for systematic referencing.

A synopsis of the text is planned to be published in a work developed by researchers from Cencib at PUC-SP and the Institute of Social Sciences at the University of Lisbon (ICS/UL). (The release of the book has no set date.)

For the reader interested in delving deeper into the theme, there are two registers. Different perspectives from the one presented here (focusing on the socio-technological nature of the glocal, according to note 6) can be found in the works of the authors cited in note 1, referenced in the bibliography. A theoretical discussion on the relations between local and global and on the semantic trajectory of the concept of glocal in the humanities and social sciences was accomplished in Trivinho (2012), contemplating other relevant authorships, in addition to those mentioned.

THE TERM *GLOCAL* is one of the most original neologisms in contemporary technological culture. Apparently, it appeared in Asia, specifically in the Japanese corporate jargon of automotive production, in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Subsequently, the word was adopted by the European geopolitical vision regarding ecological action. From this pragmatic circumscription to its insertion in universities in various parts of the world as an object of academic consideration in the humanities and social sciences, particularly in the area of communication studies, there was a relatively short chronological passage of no more than a third of a century<sup>1</sup>. Five decades after its appearance, the term has become as common as talking about its derivatives: *glocalization*, *glocalism* and *glocality*.

According to linguistics, defined lexical elements emerge at specific times, for generally determined reasons or desires, accumulate semantic expansion and variation, merge or commute with exogenous elements, go mad, and then wither. This performance, designed to encompass equally demonstrable phenomenal clippings, should discourage attempts at retroactive application (of signifiers and/or signifieds), especially regarding the risk of equivocation. It would duplicate historiographical exaggerations, for example, to mobilize the concept of glocal and/or glocalization to understand events and processes in pre-Homeric Greece, in the transition from the High Middle Ages to the *Quattrocento*, in the revolutionary upheaval that shook Europe at the end of the 18th century, or in the decades of Balzac and Marx. Concepts are not playful pieces to be fitted, with convenient joy, into any cavity of historical time.

Idiosyncrasies aside, one of the reworking threads of the term glocal connects it to real-time electronic communication processes and therefore inserts it exclusively in the sociomedia atmosphere unleashed from the late 19th century onward. The concept of glocal, as it has been configured in the field of communication<sup>2</sup>, refers to processes, phenomena, scenarios, events and/or trends observable only in this social-historical time period, inaugurated and unfolded to complexity in the wake of machines and communication networks, which the functioning of current life has concurred to make absolutely banal.

## SOCIOMEDIA EMERGENCE AND THE BASIC *MODUS OPERANDI* OF GLOCAL

Of the totality of machines bequeathed by modernity since the end of the 18th century – in the biomedicine, military, transportation, industry, commerce, household appliances areas, and so on – the most prevalent in a utilitarian sense for the majority of the population and that from this angle are decisively involved in all modes of group and individual appropriation, considering the production of history and civilizing directions, are the electronic technologies of communication and information in real time. Not for a different reason, from the socio-technological, economic and cultural points of view, the glocal phenomenon (from now on also referred to only by the substantiation of the adjective) has a strong impact on the organization and modulation of daily life, in compatibility with the multicapitalist model of existence<sup>3</sup>.

The social-phenomenological epic of the glocal begins, strictly speaking, with the first machine capable of approaching or equaling real time as understood in the sense of Bergson (2006), namely an ordinary and fluid time, as perennial duration, in the form-flow of a bubble of uninterrupted succession, as irreversible as it is immeasurable, and therefore internally changing at every nanosecond; an eventful time, in block and full *per se*, i.e., without *a priori* exogenous causation in its autopoietic and self-creating nature; a inscrutable *Chronon modus* in its elusive core and fundamentally dependent on the perceptive, mnemonic and conscious faculties of the human being (also determined by duration) to be with such characteristics. The aforementioned machine is the telegraph, more specifically its electric version. This invention inaugurated, as of the 1830s, the simultaneous articulation of two diverse places, under the same time zone or not, through a relatively instantaneous technical process of codification and decoding, in the *mimesis* of real time. The sociomedia posterity of this basic scheme is well known. Its *empeiria* bequeathed the conventional telephone, the radio (amateur, commercial and PX), television (open signal, cable and interactive), the Internet (late 1960s), the world wide web (early 1990s), the cell phone, the GPS, the smartphone and the smartwatch, among other devices – all with their respective networks, either intertwined or interconnected, or exclusive, as electromagnetic bands equivalent to fields of frequency, occupation and/or action by subjectivity. This trail goes from speakers (captive only to sound) to different audiovisual screens, from websites and blogs to videoconference spaces, from classic chat rooms to search platforms, relationships and participation in social networks.

As signaled before, the concept of glocal is more definite about the “real time”, now quoted to evidence and demarcate a crucial distinction: it is a time invented

<sup>3</sup>This fringe of the process exposes at the same time both its political (*lato sensu*) and transpolitical dimensions. Regarding the latter see especially the topic “The Great Glocal: Glocalization as a Civilizing Process”.

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<sup>4</sup>It is more precisely at 299.792.458 m/s.

by techno-scientific rationality, instantaneous time, time of the speed of light (at 300,000 km/s)<sup>4</sup>. An artificial chronic model, with an entirely captious profile: it plagiarizes the creative volley of nature and the daily course of history, restless in the *hic et nunc*. Equally incessant, it passes itself off as being the primal or original time itself, as well as the city and measurable time of minutes and hours, despite being a commodity offered by electronic communication companies, wired or wireless, by cable or satellite. It's worth explaining the evidence, for the sake of additional clarity: "real time" is not real time (either *in natura*, hermetic and unreachable, or given in the social-historical, as a process mapped by mathematical science). The social-media emergence of the glocal phenomenon has made these two types of time prevail in a regime of equivalence. The "real time" is as fluid and lived in and by the subject of perception as the plagiarized time and, not by chance, it is confused with it. The difference, subtle only to a fly-over analysis, is, in fact, gigantic and noisy: to round off the antipodean expressions, on one side, there is the immediate time of technology; on the other side, the autopoietic time of nature<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup>From this moment on, the argumentation will operate with both terms, "real time" and real time, the quotation marks indicating the mimetic socio-technical artifice, by connection to the media instantaneity; and the absence of the quotation marks, the originality of the natural layer of the continuous duration of perceptual data (in this last case, in general, the term appears preceded by the preposition "in" or by the locution "capable of": "in real time", "capable of real time", synonyms of "in network", "capable of network").

Analytically, for the glocal phenomenon to occur – i.e., as an apparently unison block, with internal factors mixed together – it is necessary, *strictly speaking*, to have three elements: communication technology, subject (from an individual to billions of them, as audience and/or interactants) and "real time"; in an empirical equation, it is necessary to have a network capable machine available to be used by individuals; and vice-versa, in another equation: that there be networked individuals from the appropriation of devices capable of real time. Such elements are already present in the communicational structure of the electric telegraph. These notes follow *strictly* because more recent trends of glocalization have abolished the subject. Machines, themselves, communicate with each other automatically and instantaneously, so that the *tout court* equations of before are now cumulated with another, that of machines and networks as *autonomous subjects* of the glocalization process, whether or not there are people (*as beneficiary object*) on the periphery of this automated concatenation.

For the purposes of this study, this characterization excludes from the list of glocalizing inventions both the vehicles and printed products (newspapers, magazines, books) and the film projector, the gramophone, the cassette tape, the video, the DVD and similar, due to the fact that none of them *per se* are capable of real time.

The regular pre-existence of instantaneous time mediation in social relations establishes a watershed in the matter. In its elementary classification, the process of glocalization involves two clear types:



1. the glocal *stricto sensu*, whose occurrence necessarily depends on the direct presence of technologies and/or communication networks for the interactions (with human and/or artificial alterities) to take place; and
2. the glocal *lato sensu*, whose sociocultural metabolism of relationship with the circulating media contents totally disregards, in the scope of the interactions, any technology capable of networks.

In the track of the irreversible ascendancy of electronic media over the others and without excluding mixed types of glocal in between the two markers above, the *stricto sensu* modality of glocalization has predominated for decades over the *lato*, dragging it towards or relating it to some closer techno-communicational object<sup>6</sup>.

From the most extensive social-phenomenological point of view, in the analytical ascertainment of its empirical details, the glocal *stricto sensu* is equivalent to a paradoxical hybridization between, on the one hand, the immediate perceptual site in which the body is and the consciousness acts, and on the other hand, the global dimension of the communication networks, embedded in the invisibility of the electromagnetic field. In the glocal, the site of the body, in particular, remains inextricably immersed in the web of communication as ambience, while the networks *flood* (entangle from within) the local. The observed hybridization self-demonstrates what it is all about: an amalgam that cannot be unraveled and, as such, is irreversible.

Exposed in an unfolded way, the glocal *stricto sensu* amalgamates two types of space: the conventional, historically and culturally inherited, and the invisible spatiality bequeathed by technological advances (cf. Ferrara, 2007, 2008; Virilio, 1984, 1993a, 1993b, 1995). This imbrication occurs favoring media surfaces – initially exclusively sound, in the wake of the telephone and the radio; and later, audiovisual, from the emergence of television; and currently, still with the predominance of various types and sizes of screen, fixed and mobile. Likewise, the glocal, as *mimesis* is, roughly speaking, the mixture of two social forms of time: that of the time zone, which encompasses the intensity of a temporal course intercepted and indexed by the universally accepted geophysical metric instituted by national states; and the time invented by technology as a specific area of knowledge. This imbrication tends to favor the overdetermination of “real time” in relation to the ordinary time of everyday life (the time of the clocks and the calendar, linked to the duration counted in successive steps). The two coordinates of imbrication – of space and time – are, in turn, merged in the hybrid bubble of inherent and inconvertible confusion of the glocal phenomenon, which is the predominant reality of human reference and/or performance for

<sup>6</sup> As this study focuses on the rule, the entirety of the argument will prioritize the glocal *stricto sensu*, without prejudice to the fact that some theoretical premises are also valid for the more volatile glocal, free from the technological imperative.

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all everyday purposes. The phenomenology of the glocal becomes compatible with its perceptual obliteration of the artificial shuffling of both coordinates, favoring an impalpable unitary composition that finally prevails *as if it did not exist* or, at least, let itself be apprehended only by its reverberations, outside the Cartesian-empirical pantheon. The whole shows itself as a *concrete metaphysical construction*: metaphysical, in the sense of the etymon, extra physical, but not chimerical or illusory; concrete, in the sense of *something* factual, effective and practical, stable and available, as a complex synthesis of several processual determinations (cf. Kosik, 1976), without being solid, compact or thick, materially tangible. It could be asked: where then is the glocal, if it cannot be seen or verified anywhere? The question has an equivocal or improper source, viciously physical, to ascertain or deduce an existent and/or to certify about it. Among so many forms and possibilities of existence in culture, a phenomenon, in order to exist, need not have a literal place in atomic reality. A fluid objective process among the objects of the world (not necessarily corporeal or palpable), the glocal will never equal the most banal and surrounding, furrowed in the density of matter, even being the most trivial of *objects*, camouflaged or clouded by the diversionism of supposed non-existence.

In the historically most recent socio-technological equation, the hybridization that engenders the glocal is hypostasized in the screen as a redoubt of intra-action in which the time zone experienced by the body is already presumed, with this important detail: this socio-technological spatialization, the active screen, is, deep down, time – real time tied with city time, both in the typical flow-form of “real time”. The fact that the screen as a reference surface is rather time and not merely space, contrary to any perceptive evidence, reveals *per se* in the simplicity of the manifestation of its own flow-entity: it is enough to turn off the screen to verify that, in a snap of a finger, the socio-technological spatiality disappears. In the glocal, time as the hegemonic coordinate commands the entire process, as it roots – with the power of life and death, so to speak – in the principle of every dynamic: as a technocultural construction, the glocal is *disconnectable*. The consciousness, seemingly freer than the body in the midst of all determinations, wanders in and through them: the technological conditions in real time, by allowing the consciousness to break with the limits of the local, also make it capable of *touching* others at a distance and producing multiple effects where they are.

This exemplification of the glocal by the metaphor of the temporalized socio-spatialization of the screen – a phenomenon that can be turned off by a simple act – contributes to the apprehension of an inherent injunction to the glocal that deserves to be emphasized. As signaled above, what at first sight, under

an exclusively descriptive concern appears as an inextricable integration between ultra-antiquity and cutting-edge technological modernity, conventional reality and the techno-scientific innovation, and the visible and the invisible, changes completely its silhouette the more the cognitive interest deepens its focus, searching for the fundamental under the sieve of criticality. Far from being the equivalent of any neutral synthesis, the glocal is not harmless either. It is the flagrant symptom, in scarred scar at the social-historical level, of the subtle technocultural subordination of ordinary space and time to the time created by teletechnologies, the industrious time of the false day so to speak (Virilio, 1993a, 1993b, pp. 22, 113), for all pragmatic purposes in social, political, and economic matters. Expressed in the opposite way, the hybridization subsumed in the glocal represents the authoritarian ascendancy of technological spatiality and “real time” over conventional space and time. The glocal freezes and eternalizes this verticalization in the improbable field of electromagnetic invisibility: for all its self-dissolving drawbacks, it is as if this diagonal power scheme does not effectively exist either.

This kind of inherent relationship covers, in turn, another fundamental feature of the glocal, one that pertains to its original identity and will accompany it forever. The glocal, as a technocultural invention of capitalism that was lately *industrialized*, is violence: it breaks the identity of the diverse and/or the dispersed in order to frame and unify all the factors in the molds of a unitary *construct* that publicity takes care of selling as unison, expunging under the carpet of history any and all tension involved. The liquefied ascendancy of the network over the time zone, synonymous with the imperceptible overdetermination of the global in relation to the local, is performed in the subsequent trail of mixing between the near and the far, the public and the private etc., without the occurrence of *stricto sensu* impositions. The invisible authoritarianism of the process dissolves itself in the acceptability of the phenomenon by all age groups, in all social class positions, in all domains. The social-historical legitimacy of the glocal passes, in the smallest inscrutable detail, through the desire for consumption and performance by each individual. This validation, rooted in the morality of days, is embedded from before the first trivial empirical act presupposed in it: that of acquiring a machine capable of real time, to be in force at the epicenter of what is lived, henceforth already from the body (in ultra-portable prostheses, mobiles), available for daily enjoyment. In this ambit – *in between* co-fusions – it will be up to the most politicized uses only to contest the mentioned subordination or overdetermination, in favor of its minimal reversal, always precarious, via instrumentalization of the network for purposes of opposition to the status quo – i.e., of the local against the global embedded in it, from inside the glocal itself; and also against the glocalized structural state of things.

**GLOCAL AS *EMPEIRIA* AND *EPISTEME***

The characterization of the basic aspects of the glocal phenomenon finds, at this point, a vortex of rescaling of the approach. The complexity of the subject requires that it be apprehended in greater depth.

Ironically integrated double-bladed paradox, the glocal is simultaneously *empeiria* and *episteme*. These two dimensions, each in its own way, were implicated in the course of the exposition, as they remain in the subsequent topics. They appeared, one in connection with the other, when the argument, focusing on the basic mode of being of the glocal, signaled its potential to unfold to the apex of its socio-technological complexity. Its worldwide spread independent of any political regimes, its presumed peculiar *modus operandi* in recent decades, cyberculture, here taken as a category of time. Likewise, they were also present when the argument, reangulated in prism, reported the incorporation of the term glocal into the human and social sciences, especially in the field of communication and cyberculture studies, a sign of radical semantic modulation of the word in favor of its elaboration as a concept, for theoretical tension with the mode of social-historical reproduction of advanced media civilization.

As *empeiria*, the glocal has been in the world since at least the commercial heyday of radio – a typical social-historical form, on a media basis in real time – unfolding the socio-technological traits and potentials pointed out: it is in force on all continents, in a more saturated and accumulated way in certain territories, more rarefied and scarce in others. As an *episteme*, it is a paradigmatic prism for the production of knowledge and, above all, criticism and dissection of this same world, based on entangled economic-financial plots, mostly capitalist. For the optimization of this analytical distinction, it is worth mentioning that, as an *empeiria* originated in instantaneous communication and the world mirrored in it, the glocal was born in the last third of the 19th century; as an *episteme*, especially in the human and social sciences, it begins its trajectory a century later, from the 1980s.

**GLOCALIZATION PROCESS AND ITS SOCIAL-HISTORICAL SIGNIFICATION**

The two sides of the question imply the perception that the glocal phenomenon, in its empirical stratum, galvanizes, in the limit – it is also worth remembering – an orb entirely permeated by *processes of glocalization*. This apex of social-historical significance, clearly civilizing in nature, is based on several inherent and correlated tracks that sustain its manifestation. The sequence of this reflection succinctly demonstrates this injunction.

The presumed social-phenomenal magnitude integrates the most antipodal references, from micro to macro: just as there is no current pattern of daily action that has not already been glocalized and/or accomplished via glocalization, there is no society that does not need this process, in some of its technological modalities and network reach. Even isolated societies marked by discretionary borders, such as North Korea and Iran depend on glocal resources, regardless of whether or not they are subjected to ideological censorship by the state or official religion.

Potentially representing the socio-technological suture of the totality of possible experience in the spatiality of communication networks, the extended glocalization indicates and marks a planetary model of civilization process whose essential characteristic is that, by veiled and *sine qua non* dependence, it can never dispense with communication technologies<sup>7</sup>.

The social-phenomenological goal of this overwhelming *empeiria* involves a re-reading of the millennia of human life based exclusively on the local materiality of existence: by making what is experienced happen irremediably and *allegedly* only at the core of intersection between this materiality and the *immateriality* of networks, in each hybridization between local and global, it would be a matter of moving towards a structural state of technological functioning equivalent to *real time existence*, even if this state is not exclusive and/or compulsory, but *imperatively* available.

As a civilizing process, the glocal, as it could only be, is the irreducible *modus operandi* of articulation and modulation of its own civilization – the macro-structural condition unfolded in the form of a real time civilization, the *glocal civilization*, today in a digital and interactive social-historical phase, based on miniaturized and mobile media, linked to the body.

<sup>7</sup> On glocalization as a civilizing process, see the topic “The Great Glocal: Glocalization as a Civilizing Process”.

### **Glocal phenomenon and the reproduction of capitalism**

The history of humanity, by material needs accessible to analysis, has allocated in Western culture, in its most recent time period, all the socio-technological developments subsumed in and represented by the glocal phenomenon.

As pointed out before, the glocal is a technocultural invention of capitalism. It is famous In Marx's (2005) work the perception that the business and interests of the 16th century emerging bourgeoisie, which founded the capitalist regime of labor and production in a break with the hitherto secular aristocratic system of feuds, have always been in line with the abolition of geographical boundaries. Such businesses and interests require not only the breaking down of physical boundaries, but also horizons of permanent expansion. The process of glocalization, subordinated to the liberal version of freedom, constitutes the

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most radical historical manifestation of this demand to overcome customs, whatever they may be: strictly speaking, the glocal is an invisible monument to free flows, regardless of the type of censorship that may restrict their reach.

The glocal emerges historically – it should be stressed – with the industrious reworking of real time, the technological simulation of *khrónos in natura* and of the ordinary time of everyday life: “real time,” immediate time, at the speed of light, is a commercial decal of autopoietic time, which flows unstoppably; it is, as such, a commodity. The hybridization presupposed in this technological simulation is a direct result of the ideology of progress forged in the late 18th century (not to go back to the Renaissance), at the most developed tip in which electronic media and their networks are inserted. As it could not be otherwise, the glocal is intended, from its inception, to expand the multilateral operating power of production relations and the realization of exchange value, as well as to perpetuate the capitalist social formation in historical time. Expressed more precisely – to emphasize it – the glocal is the *sine qua non modus operandi* of social-historical and technocultural reproduction of the civilization that is compatible with it. Its extensive and heavy infrastructure (in the wire that encloses satellites, electricity and fiber optic cables, city and residential antennas, and terminals), as well as the spiral of its symbolic production, respond to structural needs for the continuous expansion of capitalist modes of production, unequal distribution, and concentrated accumulation of wealth. In this sense, the glocal is implicated in both the originary basis and the consequences of all mediatized and/or real-time models of life in the glocal civilization. By reverse angle, the most recent social-historical reproduction of capitalism could never occur except through the extended process of glocalization, as grounded in, by, and from the diversity of possible *glocal practices*<sup>8</sup>. Furthermore, by the most robust planetary trends, the glocalization has supposedly become the only technological-structural mode of social-historical production and reproduction of human life, under whatsoever political regime this process occurs.

<sup>8</sup>The point is addressed in the item “Glocal Practices”.

<sup>9</sup>Pre-glocal or glocal preliminary conditions, so to speak (in historical perspective, considering today’s multiglobal saturation), since at the time of the German philosopher’s political militancy and writing, in the 19th century, the only machinic representation of real time was the electric telegraph.

### The great commodity

The reflection goes along with this evidence: the glocal is the great commodity of advanced media civilization. The commodity theorized by Marx (1983), based on exclusively local material conditions (in the dimensional sense of this study)<sup>9</sup>, corresponded to the millennial and conventional stratum of capitalism. *Mutatis mutandis*, the glocal relatively accomplishes the same instances in

strict correspondence with social and production relations *immaterialized* by real-time communication and information networks. The empirical needs for the perpetuation of capitalism conditioned the historical mutation of the state of the commodity, without essentially dehydrating its macrostructural function. In other words, the logic of the commodity, as an irreducible and decentered axis for the viability of social and production relations, prevails, in glocal conditions, relatively the same, but on different bases.

This mutation of state coincides with the edges of commodity *dematerialization*, a process by which not only is its macro-structural function removed from the field of vision, but also the commodity character itself is irreversibly cast into the invisibility zone. This *dematerialization* espouses, at times, an apparent absence of exchange mediated by general equivalents (money, check, credit card etc.) concerning the most cartoonish aspect of the commodity. The glocal as a commodity appears even where no strict economic relationship exists, just confirming the reality as deception. Thus, the glocal is a social product that is always paid for, even when access to it and the network to which it connects is widely promoted as *free*. Bargaining and advertising actions keep the tone of economic exchanges elsewhere, outside the immediate field of vision, allowing the glocal to dispense with any direct monetization by the consumer.

In this stratum of manifestation, the glocal, with explicit exchange value or not, is the historical proof of how much the commodity has assumed, throughout capitalism in the 20th century, an absolute and unimaginable abstract form, by installing itself in dimensions equally unimaginable centuries ago. There is also a major detail: the invisible occurrence of the glocal as commodity is only the operational shell of a social-historical event as profound as it is gigantic. The scene of this event, captive to closed curtains (but dotted with lateral micro-edges), is also buried under various mediations between part and whole and vice versa. The labor of the concept needs to dissect them in order to grasp a modest sign of the macro-structural resonance of what is preserved obliterated. The glocal as commodity-major, by infrastructurally articulating commercial, industrial, and post-industrial processes, moves all other forms of commodity, from its conception and circulation to the realization of its exchange value. The glocal is, at the social-historical and technocultural level, a general equivalent and, in this capacity, the great structurer and modulator of human life. Its event dimension indicates the scale of rooting of the glocalization process in history.

**GLOCAL CONTEXT AND GLOCAL CONDITION**

The preceding excerpt indicates that the planetary process of glocalization has made history enter a new phase. Since its origin, the glocal actually silently divides history into pre-glocal and glocal, without ever indicating whether the future of humanity holds any post-glocal society, in the sense of a social formation that, being technological, does not need, for the totality of its functioning, the instantaneous articulation between body location and satellite conduction. The social-historical time period that is subsequent to the aforementioned division has been fully realized in the diametrical scales envisaged, as follows.

The social-historical reproduction of human life based on the glocal as the major commodity carves, in the invisibility of the socio-phenomenal processes, two diagrams at the antipodes of the procedural and articulatory *empeiria* at play: one, microstructural, the *glocal context*, is inscribed in the concrete scene of the conductive body; the other, macro-structural, the *glocal condition*, reaches the dimension of history.

The concept of glocal context covers the environment of access/reception/transmission/radiation of contents circulating in communication networks in real time. As such, it corresponds to the concrete, pragmatic and obliterated arrangement of the glocal phenomenon in everyday life and, at the same time, to an immediate scenic symptom of the glocal condition of history, specifically in the network core (fixed or mobile) in which the body finds itself and from where subjectivity exerts material and symbolic influence (locally or elsewhere) on the world.

As a media redoubt, the glocal context is the daily *modus operandi* of the glocal condition. In its macro-scale diapason, this condition designates the universal and irreversible situation of the human adventure after the entire planet has entered the stage of multimediatization by real-time technologies and networks (mass, interactive or hybrid, taken in its unity or imbricated). The concept names the condition of history from the 20th century on, especially in the rapid post-World War II period. More precisely, its temporal cutout is equivalent to the technocultural condition of the present, invariably based on the almost compulsory fatal linkage among body, subjectivity, and technologies (mainly mobile) capable of instantaneous speed of interactive contacts. The glocal condition is a symbolic cell sculpted in the invisibility of nature' and historical time, its condition embraces the rooting of various types of "real time" in the scope of practical life, due to the multilateral social appropriation of these media from the daily fusion of human and machine, networks and action, screen and influence at a distance.

The glocal condition is self-legitimated in, through, and from the myriad of glocal contexts, i.e., the unique environments of networked practices (of audience,



dialogue, political intervention, irradiation etc.). Vice versa, the infinite myriad of glocal contexts underlies, at its roots, the glocal condition of history. More than that, this condition concerns the status of ongoing history in the arc of universal history. Thus, the glocal and its derived configurations appear as the unprecedented sign of electronic communication at the level of history, a watershed not computed by all historiographical strands, especially the official ones.

The historical continuity of the glocal condition, by rejecting or circumventing the threat of entropic self-desegregation of the social, in its autopoietic social-phenomenological sewing, supposedly supports the trans-generational wheel of perpetuation of cultures, projecting glocalization as a civilizing process.

The complete vicious circle is thus set in its tautological and self-legitimizing equation: the procedural, articulatory and invisible *empeiria* of the glocal, which spreads in the form-flow of planetary glocalization, anchors in the social-historical the glocal contexts of human action and introduces history into the glocal condition, ensuring the permanence of the glocal itself and its manifestations in favor of the social-historical reproduction of glocal civilization. In the thread of glocalization, which by multilateral appropriations links everything to media and hangs in networks to compensate for the physical isolation it conditions itself, the aforementioned mosaic of vicious socio-structural factors avows, by assumption, *glocal subjectivities and glocal practices, concatenated*<sup>10</sup>.

### Glocal subjectivity

As it could not be otherwise, the glocal mode of production and reproduction of the civilizatory process has repercussions in matters of the formation of its corresponding modalities of *conforming subjectivity*<sup>11</sup>. From the most conservative and adherent to the most politicized and tensional in relation to the conditions of the social media status quo, all of them are, as a rule, confluent towards a conformation such as the *glocal subjectivity*. Such subjectivity is (or tends to be), by nature and context of insertion, dromoapt, i.e., articulated, from the root, by speed and traversed by its demands and/or moved by direct interest in it.

The glocal dromoapt subjectivity has in the glocal context its captive locus of maturation and operation. Acculturated in the immediacy of the processes of this communicational redoubt, it obeys the principle of acceleration of practical life and, thus, the regime of urgency in terms of the production of results. A systemic ingredient of the multimedia civilization, the glocalized and dromoapt subjectivity is, evidently, subject to the principle of productivity, i.e., the achievement of goals in the shortest time possible. This detail, in fact, must be grasped in and from its historical scale. An illustrative example should cover the fundamental. At the

<sup>10</sup>In a simple architectural metaphor, applied to the current process of self-construction of the social, it can be said that the glocal phenomenon fulfills the role of a batch of bricks; the glocal context operates as the girder; and glocalization and its derivations (subjectivities, habits and conforming practices), as the general foundation; life intertwined under glocal conditions would amount to the immediate outcomes, at each stage of building; and the civilization guided by the Great Glocal, to the utopian maquette, the anticipated all-random prototype of a model of everyday life dependent on at least some kind of network-capable machine. The issue of the Great Glocal is resumed in the topic "The Great Glocal: Glocalization as a Civilizatory Process".

<sup>11</sup>The expression draws on two integrated theoretical strands: in the case of subjectivity, the biopolitics, coined by Foucault (2004, 2016), and the existentialist post-Marxism of Sartre (2015); another, the conception of social fields, by Bourdieu (1982, chapters "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field" and "Field of Power, Intellectual Field and Class Habitus," 1983, pp. 38-45, 122-155, 2002, chapter "The Genesis of the Concepts of *Habitus* and Field"), regarding the adjective used. The power of subjectivity, in the philosophical perspective of the first authors, is relatively submerged in the imperative of conservative adaptation dissected by the French sociologist. The qualifier *conform*, in Bourdieu, works as an indicator of systemic reproduction: it designates processes and practices in correspondence to a certain socio-structural dynamic (in the field of religion, art, sports etc.) in which they are inserted and to whose perpetuation they collaborate.

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time of the great maritime expeditions of the 16th century, a command missive from Europe to the colonies took more than a month to reach its destination and take effect. Currently, a click on a computer key, cell phone or tablet solves the transfer in seconds. For the current democratic standards of conforming subjectivity, a wait equivalent to the 16<sup>th</sup> century time interval constitutes absurdity. The spatio-temporal contraction of the present rereads, under the evaluative prism of an implacable impatience, the normal and extended experience of time of previous centuries. It is in this historical context that one must understand the fast, background character of glocal subjectivity. The banal aspect of the acceleration of the fulfillment of activities is not, in theory, the best angle to unravel what is at stake. In general, the extraordinary shrinking of space-time synthesized in the last four centuries, as in the example given, escapes this level of observation. As much as glocal democratic subjectivity concerns productivity or productive social practices of optimizing results in the shortest unit of time (whether in the sphere of work or leisure), events and processes at this level of mere task fulfillment can, for example, be subordinated to voluntary, functional, or accidental slowness, which confuses and impairs the apprehension of the fundamental meaning of the democratic character involved.

In practice, glocal subjectivity invariably concurs to legitimize everything that technological speed has socially conditioned: the recyclable excess of information, images, and data, the extreme fragmentation of knowledge and culture, the improbable fluctuation (in the sense of the etymon: unprovable) of factual veracity, and so on. As glocal (mass, interactive, or hybrid) landscapes prevail as the reference reality, glocal subjectivity often finds itself vulnerable to bubbles of fake news and similar symbolic factoids.

This subjectivity, along with the world subjectivation it animates, is culturally constituted, social-phenomenologically hypostasized, and historically resolves itself in glocal practices.

### **Glocal practices**

The epic of the globalization has significantly reconfigured the universe of social practices. Currently, most of these practices are in some way mediated by real-time communication technologies and networks. Similarly to the epochal type of subjectivity to which they attach, glocal practices (of political interaction and intervention, audience and entertainment, learning and aesthetic enjoyment, buying and selling, and acting in the financial market etc.) are those that historically corresponds to the needs of

social-historical perennialization of the glocal civilization. In the same vein, glocal practices are the praxeological-attitudinal core on which all modes of social-phenomenological appearance of the glocal are precipitated: both the glocal context of everyday experience and the glocal condition of current history find themselves sutured in them in invisible and irreversible dynamics, cemented, of course, by dromocratic demands.

In a generic sense in which empirical studies could cut out by specific sectors, glocal practices are equivalent to the renewed historical version of the social *habitus*, widely dissected by Pierre Bourdieu (1983, pp. 60-81, 71-73, 75-81, 2002, pp. 60-64, 2005, pp. 21-22), in the perspective of a critical sociology of praxeological processes. For the French sociologist, the *habitus* operates as a structured and structuring vortex, without a center, around which an entire epoch or social atmosphere revolves and with which and from which the world moves as such, a kind of decentered social axis in, with and through which a given society, reproduces itself in historical time by each specific field and the set of them. In one of Bourdieu's (1983) several thematizations on the subject, the *habitus* appears, within each individual, as a system of:

durable *dispositions* [emphasis added], structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as a generative and structuring principle of practices and representations that can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their purposes without presupposing the conscious intention of them, and the express mastery of the operations necessary to achieve them collectively orchestrated, without being the outcome of a conductor's organizing action. (pp. 60-61)

And further on:

a system of durable and *transposable* dispositions [emphasis added] which, integrating all past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions ... [a kind of] durably armed generating principle of regulated improvisations. (p. 65)

This characterization, whose scope and clarity should be retained along with the potential for openness and change (assumed in the last emphasis), shapes the axiomatic backstage of the sociomedia reconfiguration of *habitus*; and does so where it is materialized especially in compatibility with the alleged historical perpetuation of the socio-technological structures of the glocal

civilization and, with them, of the dynamics that enlarge and accumulate social inequalities (from the most classic to the most recent, referring to customized access, processes of speed and permanence in online participation spaces). The communicational reconfiguration of the *habitus*, in addition to signaling its mere mediatization, alerts to the deep bond between it and the glocalization process. The diversified and daily rooted development of the glocal has granted the *habitus* an almost compulsory setting, now expressed in the scene of a mobile in hand, in the subsequent trail to all sedentary glocal contexts. The *habitus*, thus interwoven by machines and/or “real time”, is supported by instruments for accelerating daily tasks to reproduce itself. Body, *habitus*, subjectivity, devices, glocal – all appears as a single pragmatic bubble: the media *habitus* inflates the conforming practices that make the communicational universe gravitate around the extended process of glocalization; and this, in turn, in the overall balance of practices and trends of conservation and contradiction, prolongs pluricapitalist relations in historical time – time, remember, suffocated in the immanence of a “real time” that blurs everything, converting becoming into a supposed agonistic presentism, i.e, exhausting at the same moment it is established. Nevertheless, glocal practices forge, from now on, in a randomly autopoietic and transpolitical way<sup>12</sup>, the multimedia becoming in the form-flow of a *telos*, rushing towards the diversified deepening of the glocal civilization.

<sup>12</sup>On transpolitics, see the topic “The Great Glocal: Glocalization as a Civilizing Process”.

## OTHER RELATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE GLOCAL PHENOMENON

From the preceding linkages, it is convenient to establish some multilateral social-phenomenological relations and extract important social-historical consequences. The glocalization process roots in the structural and functional basis of permitting and/or optimizing numerous (political *lato sensu*) *sine qua non* socio-anthropological phenomena in everyday life.

1. The glocal phenomenon engenders *multimedia visibility* (mass, interactive or hybrid), here understood as the set of signaling and expressive projections of all kinds of interests (class or group, collective or individual, governmental or corporate, political, economic, solidarity etc.), as well as these projections are made perceptible at the tip of communicational terminals in general, in real time or not (printed newspapers and magazines, radio speakers, television screens, digital ones etc.).
2. The glocal determines the possibility of *real time existence*, the communicational practice of presence at a distance and interaction with others

(human, machine or network), *hic et nunc*, under the mediation of network capable technologies. In this horizon, the glocal context, for example, remains occluded in the infrastructure of home office work, a professional arrangement that self-protective desertion (total or partial) in relation to city spaces overvalues in periods of scattered threat, as under pandemic, war or terror, weather conditions and natural catastrophe etc.

3. The glocal underpins surveillance, real-time electronic vigilance of any kind (ranging from a circumscribed scope, such as the systems deployed in companies, subway stations and public squares, to the national and global scale, with automatic verification of online access and traffic by banking and financial systems, and the control of network trails by algorithmic browsers and platforms based on artificial intelligence). Glocal is the cornerstone of possibility for the algorithmization of processes.
4. Glocal is at the origin of the systemic excess of information and images, in *ad infinitum* dynamics of fragmentary, tautological and self-recycling propagation. In this segment, glocalization is also a decentered conditioning beam of multiple appropriations of digital resources and networks with the purpose of dissuasion, through the irradiation (or *viralization*) of fake news and the production of radical fluctuation of meaning<sup>13</sup>.
5. The glocal is the technocultural foundation common to all so-called “social networks”. In the prodigal interactive arm, it is subsumed in the various modalities of smart mob and flash mob (and even of mob action), from the online motions and cybercultural activisms to the great globalization protests of the beginning of the 21st century, especially in the trail of the G7, G8 or G20 meetings, as they have been known since the 1970s, the transnational groupings with staggered agendas according to the priority focus of interests.
6. Among the social processes or practices mentioned above, there is not a single one that is not carried out in, with, through or from the structural thread of instantaneity, the social-historical configuration of communicational speed. The glocal is the prodigious *factory* of the immediate. An invisible sculpture fomented by political, economic and/or cultural interests in socio-technological speed (in general, as an operational emblem of *serious and consequent* productivism), in all fields of human activity, the glocal is the precondition for the acceleration of production, dissemination and/or irradiation of daily news, to the catastrophe of cascading decapitalization in stock

<sup>13</sup>The subject, which mass journalism has come to know as *post-truth* only in recent years, was extensively treated by Jean Baudrillard in works from the late 1970s and the following decade.

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exchanges around the world, to the *immaterial* workings of capitalism in banking and financial operations, in the negotiations of buying and selling, in providing services, in stock portfolio investment, in notarial registration of contracts, and so on.

7. At the same time, the glocal, in all its technological versions, delivers identical speed and functionality to solidarity campaigns for individuals, entities and causes, as well as to actions to rescue people in vulnerable situations, to free workers from slavery, to help and assist the sick, victims of violence, people with special needs, and similar initiatives.
8. For more than a century, this extensive *empeiria*, which is exclusively allowed by “real time”, has been increasingly optimized by the diversified military apparatus of national states, as demonstrated from the planning of repressive actions, effectiveness of public security programs and efficiency of the secret service, to the instrumental sophistication of information warfare, blackmail and deterrence strategies (guided missiles, satellite robotics, unmanned aircraft, drones, online viruses for destabilizing the enemy before air strikes and ground invasion etc.).

In the *a priori* presupposition of this technocultural scenario, the glocal is responsible for each and every fundamental trend of advanced media civilization.

### THE GREAT GLOCAL: GLOCALIZATION AS A CIVILIZATION PROCESS

The glocal phenomenon, by rereading the coordinates of time and space on a social-historical scale in favor of their permanent mixture in practical life – i.e., by temporalizing and liquefying space in “real time” and, simultaneously, spatializing ordinary time in technological instantaneity – also performs a social-phenomenological re-reading of the relationship with the city, the alterity, the body and the self, the materiality of existence and its objects, production and consumption, access to knowledge, education, culture, entertainment, and so on. The glocal rewrites human life and its epic in history: before, for millennia, exclusively in the geographical territory, in local redoubts; and presently, in this same stratum *and* in the telegeographic universe of communication networks.

In the trail of these markers, the process of glocalization, in turn, contains a macro-symptom: the main structural social tendencies, valid for everything and everyone, permeate each glocal context of access/reception/transmission/radiation, are encoded in it and, therefore, can be found in them. This injunction resets and redefines the old equation according to which what

belongs to the order of the macrostructure can be apprehended in the order of the microstructure and vice versa. In each glocal context, force relations are gathered and/or manifested rushing to define the distant tomorrow, without it being possible to precisely foresee or predict the contours of such future in the excessive spiral of information, images and data, as well as in the normal compulsion regarding them.

This postulate has an expressive octave on a social-historical scale: the current civilization, as it plays out in the daily glocal condition, at the time period of the last century, sets itself entirely in every peculiar body, perception, and consciousness glocal redoubt, in the space where they meet. The ascertainment of this immediate hypostasis shows nothing more than that the glocal, an invention with gigantic potential for socio-technical flora – a brick, a metropolis – founds, as said before, a civilizing process in its own image, according to the nature and stage of the technological infrastructure implied in each epoch. A way of regrouping humanity into *immaterialized* regional, national, and/or international territories (such as language, cultural life history, beliefs etc.); so, beyond the atomicity of lived redoubts, glocalization is this ongoing civilizing process.

It is worth remembering that the current glocal civilization is equivalent to a social-historical epoch in which several types of glocal contexts accumulate and coexist (from conventional fixed telephone to interactive mobile, interspersed by radio, television and computer). From the point of view of the articulatory scheme subsumed in the glocal phenomenon, the types of technology and network involved do not depend on the technological materiality of the ballast. There may be others in the future, as well as the forms of connection; however, the basic scheme, the inextricable hybridization between local and global, is always fundamentally valid.

As complexity reserves itself inscrutable factors, the aforementioned part-all macro-symptom, as far as one can grasp it, is social-phenomenologically teleological in its self-unfolding nature directly *hic et nunc*. The process of multi-glocalization expands – it seems – towards the Great Glocal, to reach it first in a perimeter of materially privileged countries, which often stipulate trends to drag the whole world afterwards, no matter how long the process takes. Electronic communication in real time brings the totalitarian glocalization of human life.

The Great Glocal constitutes a modality of heterodox utopia daily carried out in a praxeological, jointly random manner, i.e., with the decentralized pragmatic-utilitarian effort of millions of people around the world. Far from the classic teleological scheme of value transfer from the ideal world to a

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future place in historical time, the utopia of the Great Glocal is hypostatized right now, by the current glocal practices, under the decentered and collaborative cadence of everyone, as exclusively receptive audience and/or segmentation of acting public, in real time or not. (The social-functional prolegomena of this hypostasis correspond to the insertion of a network capable machine at home, at work, in the car, close to the body etc.) The teleology of the Great Glocal is nourished by each access to technological networks, especially the majority ones (mass, interactive or hybrid), with each decision or choice in real time, with each button press, virtual click and consumption and/or interaction path, per day or week. It is a typical social-historical trap that involves everything and everyone without allowing many alternatives to escape<sup>14</sup>, the Great Glocal is enhanced with and from each individual endorsement. This technoutopia involves the desire to exist in the glocal condition, to express oneself in and from glocal contexts, *to be glocal*, living in “real time” and in real time, as well as letting oneself be articulated in a network, with the network and/or for the sake of the network. This predisposition is equivalent to assuming, within the scope of either mass or interactive media, a conductive imaginary, a connective subjectivity, a behavior belonging, in short, a life that can be shared in the entanglement, through the mediation of mercantile-financial factors or in parallel with them. Strictly speaking, this propensity is forged outside conventional political frameworks; independent, for example, of political-party positions. Even the agreement to use the glocal context to tension the networked world – to mobilize it instrumentally to play against the glocal condition of present life – contributes to the unfolding of the Great Glocal.

This praxeological-immediatist utopia corresponds to a dynamic of social interactions in which and from which all possible everyday objects are capable of being networked (from personal items such as a wristwatch and eyeglasses to household appliances) or at least giving access to some kind of network. This social dynamic configures a socio-technical condition of greater exponential growth in the number of individuals, machines and collective instances (groups, governments, companies etc.) entangled and/or synchronized in real time or whose productive and informal life gravitates around it. This trend predicts that electromagnetic spectra from everywhere will be drained into the vortex of regular flows from all over the world and/or from the national territory<sup>15</sup>. The utopia of the Great Glocal is the entire planet literally glocalized, especially for communicational nomadism (stationary movement in networks) of economically favored social categories.

<sup>14</sup>This characteristic, due to its transpolitical nature (in the terms of the next item), suggests that the glocal condition is equated with the procedural *empeiria* of a *dispositive* in the perspective of biopolitics inaugurated by Foucault (1982, chapters “Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field” and “Field of Power, Intellectual Field and Class Habitus”, 1987, 2005, chapter “Social Space and Symbolic Space”, 2008a, 2008b) and explored by Deleuze (1991, 1996, 1999), Agamben (2005, 2006, 2009) and Žižek (2003). In the wake of these sources, the sequence of the argument, centered on the interaction between individual, technology and society, illustrates the tricky social-historical nature of the glocal as a dispositive, which remains as a thematic signpost for possible further deepening, since the matter is here only suggested.

<sup>15</sup>This record critically contextualizes the positivist nonsense called the *internet of things*, integrated into common sense journalistic jargon and acclaimed by the market.



### **Transpolitics of the glocal and of glocalization**

The current social-historical stage of glocal and glocalization subordinates them to the self-referential social-phenomenological logic that characterizes transpolitics. This framework is arranged in a specific sense, linked to joint coordinates of social rootedness and historical irreversibility: the epic of glocal and glocalization is beyond the capacity of control, management, and/or modulation by any political-regulatory instances bequeathed by the modernity of the 19th and 20th centuries. A phenomenon, process or trend is part of the transpolitics arc when, once unleashed, it can no longer be elided from the social-historical scope, i.e., it can no longer cease to exist, due to the fact that this social destination of life inexorably subordinates it to an apparently shielded randomness, far from any abolishing or even remodeling interference, in an extinguishing direction. The independent force of a transpolitical phenomenon, process and/or tendency resembles a self-regulated fetish, referenced in itself, spreading socially as if to find itself and develop its own potentials to the ultimate consequences. It is, therefore, subject to an autopoietic and indefinite duration, in slow or fast growth, depending on the material conditions at stake. The transpolitics of the glocal and the glocalization makes up the integral image of the social-phenomenological trap of a dispositive<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>16</sup>See note 14.

### **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

For all the above reasons, the rooting of the glocal phenomenon in daily life, combined with its transpolitical irreversibility supports, at least from the social-historical perception of the present and unless there is better judgment to the contrary, the postulate that tomorrow's societies will either be glocal or not. The overwhelming way in which such irreversibility and its reverberations take place in the world allows us to glimpse, with the same caveat and risks that the current political regimes and their economic-financial modes of production will hardly disappear without the glocal remaining as a legacy<sup>17</sup>.

The glocal civilization, in the daily articulatory zeal of the autopoietic teleology that grounds it, labors, from now on, the permanent self-defense against its own entropy. Thus, it fulfills – in its own tortuous and cartoonish way – the political-cybernetic idealization of Norbert Wiener (1948, 1996): the communication should be in force as a utopian parameter against the ideologies of barbarism, which led humanity to the Second World War (cf. Breton, s.d; Breton & Proulx, 1991). Although not supported by free flows of information (i.e., free from any kind of censorship) and not unlinked

<sup>17</sup>The periods of international combat against pandemic threats, through the procedure of mass physical isolation in glocal bunkers, plus social distancing compensated with multimedia processes, are, in this respect, beyond the overvaluation given to the glocal (as a functional balm), taken by the sociomedia status quo as important historical moments for the realization of macro-structural corrections and/or optimization adjustments in the technical fabric of glocalization as a civilizing process.

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to warlike processes (for example, informational and deterrence wars), as the North American anarchist mathematician and anti-nuclear militant wished, the transpolitical utopia of planetary glocalization poses itself, with its potential to make social and international tensions more flexible, as an axiological prototype capable of avoiding or, at least, postponing the end of humanity. This prospective feat confronts what liberalism (representing Western capitalism), Marxism-Stalinism (equivalent to the *actually existing socialism* of the former Soviet bureaucracy and satellite countries) and Nazism (in the name of the Third Reich) did in technological conflagration, and how their derivatives can do it again. In the face of all effects of the social disaggregation in the universe of a fatal network integration (for good and/or bad), the transpolitical process of glocalization contributes to preserving modes of minimal social-functional aggregation modes, even under intense physical confinement of individuals (as in the case of widespread disease, curfews, alarms of dangerous situations, in addition to war and terror etc.). In this direction, glocalization would correspond, at the social-historical level, to the viability of a long delay in the transit toward the capitalist demise of the human vis-à-vis the concession of more breath for the performance of this model of life in time, in the form of a stopgap solution in the immanence of the ongoing historical dynamics. The glocal, a technocultural invention of industrial capitalism at the end of the 19th century, insinuates itself supposedly as the possible socio-technical salvation of tomorrow's world, in large satellitized societary blocs that can be either national or transnational, and capitalist or not. ■

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# Construindo a teoria da comunicação a partir da cibersemiótica<sup>a</sup>

## *Building Communication Theory from Cybersemiotics*

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### RESUMO

A Comunicação Social tem apresentado um grande problema em definir o que é comunicação, do que trata a comunicação e o que ela descreve em contextos biológicos, humanos e mecânicos. A visão mecanicista vê a comunicação como um processo de troca de informações, enquanto a visão humanista a conceitua como produção, entretanto, nenhuma delas tem funcionado como base comum para a construção teórica ou como uma forma de identificar o que é ou não um fenômeno de comunicação. Minha resposta a este problema é a consideração da comunicação como um conceito transdisciplinar e, ao fazê-lo, abordarei duas propostas teóricas: o metamodelo da teoria da comunicação de Robert T. Craig e a cibersemiótica de Søren Brier.

**Palavras-chave:** Comunicação, teoria, cibernética, metamodelo, cibersemiótica, significado

### ABSTRACT

Communication sciences have had a significant problem defining what communication is, what communication is about, and what it describes in biological, human, and mechanical contexts. The mechanistic view sees communication as a process of information exchange while the humanistic view conceptualizes it as meaning production, however, none of them has functioned as common ground for theoretical construction or as a way to identify what is or what is not a communication phenomenon. My answer to this problem is the consideration of communication as a transdisciplinary concept and in doing this I will address two theoretical proposals: Robert T. Craig's metamodel of communication theory and Søren Brier's cybersemiotics.

**Keywords:** Communication, theory, cybersemiotics, metamodel, cybernetics, meaning

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EM SEU DISCURSO DE ABERTURA da reunião anual da Associação Internacional de Comunicação em 2005, Wolfgang Donsbach salientou que, apesar de a comunicação como campo de pesquisa ter visto o maior crescimento de provavelmente todos os campos acadêmicos nos últimos trinta anos, ela ainda está carecendo e perdendo identidade, mesmo no momento em que a discussão girou em torno da própria natureza da comunicação como um esforço científico. Para alguns acadêmicos, a comunicação é de fato um campo acadêmico; para outros, é uma ciência integradora, uma ciência sinóptica, e até mesmo uma interdisciplinaridade. Entretanto,

todos os três termos têm uma conotação ligeiramente diferente: como ciência integradora, usaríamos as teorias e métodos de qualquer disciplina que tenha algo a oferecer para descrever nosso objeto de comunicação. Como uma ciência sinóptica, utilizamos o conhecimento de qualquer disciplina. Como uma interdisciplinaridade, faríamos as duas coisas. Mas qualquer que seja o termo que usamos, isso não nos salva do problema de não termos uma identidade clara. (Donsbach, 2006, p. 439)

Além disso, para Robert T. Craig (2008), as disciplinas são comunidades de conversação com uma tradição particular de argumentação, que estão todas envolvidas em uma comunidade de conversação mais ampla com suas próprias tradições de argumentação, de modo que estas disciplinas não são baseadas em categorias fixas de conhecimento, mas são formações discursivas que emergem, evoluem, se transformam e se dissipam na conversação contínua entre as disciplinas. No caso dos estudos de comunicação,

o que explica principalmente a emergência disciplinar do campo é sua relação significativa com a comunicação como categoria de prática social, e é reconstruindo suas tradições intelectuais em torno da categoria que o campo pode esperar não apenas tornar-se mais intelectualmente coerente e produtivo, mas também mais útil para a sociedade. (Craig, 2008, p. 9)

Assim, a necessidade de uma reflexão mais sistemática sobre a teoria e a pesquisa da comunicação não está relacionada apenas ao problema da identidade do campo, como Donsbach apontou, mas também à necessidade social e acadêmica de novas formas de abordar os processos de comunicação contemporâneos, como sugere Craig. Embora os estudos de comunicação tenham se concentrado em vários objetos de estudo, muitos dos quais estão intimamente ligados aos meios de comunicação de massa, a pesquisa feita em suas próprias estruturas teóricas, metodológicas e epistemológicas não tem sido suficiente.

A consequência do desequilíbrio entre a pesquisa teórica e o que é chamado de pesquisa aplicada é o surgimento do relativismo teórico. Enquanto o relativismo conceitual aceita que é possível ter um número infinitamente grande de diferentes sistemas de representação para apresentar e representar os fatos da realidade social, ele não aceita a liberdade conceitual, uma vez que qualquer teoria pressupõe um sistema conceitual e um princípio construtivo no qual sua natureza explicativa faz sentido. Como consequência, o relativismo teórico implica a eliminação das condições epistemológicas nas quais todas as formulações explicativas são fundamentadas, e como cada conceito funciona apenas dentro de um quadro teórico particular, sua separação deste quadro também enumera a separação entre o conceito e sua natureza significativa, e no final, a separação entre o conceito e os fenômenos sociais ou naturais que se pretende explicar. Então temos palavras, mas não conceitos: um vocabulário comum, mas não estruturas teóricas compartilhadas (Vidales, 2013).

Este é um fenômeno particular que Donsbach (2006) chamou de erosão epistemológica, que Robert T. Craig (1999) chamou de raízes da incoerência, que Gregory Shepherd, Jeffrey St. John e Ted Striphas (2006) chamaram de pluralismo teórico, e o que eu considero relativismo teórico (Vidales, 2013). Todos os termos que enfocam problemas de uso, construção e desenvolvimento da teoria da comunicação em sua relação com o estudo dos fenômenos sociais. Neste sentido, o clone de pesquisa de Jennings Bryant e Dorina Miron (2004) é um bom exemplo das consequências deste problema. Em suas pesquisas, eles se concentraram no reconhecimento das teorias de comunicação mais citadas em artigos relacionados à comunicação de massa em três revistas: o *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, o *Journal of Communication* e o *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. Em seu estudo, os autores estudaram 1806 artigos (576 deles relacionados com a comunicação de massa) nos quais encontraram mais de 1393 referências feitas a 604 teorias diferentes, o que significa uma média de 2,42 teorias em cada artigo analisado. Entretanto, entre essas teorias identificadas, os autores também argumentam que 48% delas foram utilizadas como mera referência; 26% como marco teórico; 7% como comparação; 4% como crítica; 3% como nova proposta; 2% como argumentos de apoio; apenas 2% delas foram testadas; apenas 1% delas foram utilizadas para serem expandidas como marco teórico; e apenas 0,85% foram utilizadas como nova aplicação. Portanto, na teoria da pesquisa em comunicação é usada principalmente como mera referência, mas não como um arcabouço teórico em particular.

A comunicação social observa constantemente a realidade social buscando objetos de estudo, mas raramente se volta para seus próprios processos de produção de conhecimento, para a avaliação e compreensão de suas estruturas

epistemológicas, para as suposições ontológicas sobre a comunicação que são tidas como garantidas em sua prática de pesquisa, ou para os efeitos que os pesquisadores, como observadores, têm sobre a realidade social que estão tentando explicar. Não é uma prática comum na pesquisa em comunicação refletir sobre como observamos, ou sobre as consequências epistemológicas dos métodos e teorias que utilizamos, ou nossa implicação nos processos de pesquisa e na validade de nossas estruturas teóricas, condição que torna difícil reconhecer que, hoje em dia, o relativismo teórico é, de fato, um problema na prática da pesquisa.

Da mesma forma, Shepherd et al. (2006) reconhecem a necessidade de reabrir a discussão sobre a teoria da comunicação, principalmente sobre sua natureza ontológica. Eles argumentam que o livro não é um exercício ou exemplo de pluralismo teórico, mas diferentes maneiras de conceituar a comunicação e se afastam da crença de que, dado que cada teoria é construída e guiada por um objeto particular de conhecimento, todas as teorias têm igual mérito se compreendidas e apreciadas em seus próprios termos. Esta ideia principal levou os autores a criticar aqueles que acreditam que o pluralismo teórico é desejável, “é uma rejeição deliberada da afirmação tácita na comunicação contemporânea de que uma pluralidade indiferenciada de teorias é de alguma forma uma coisa boa” (Shepherd et al., 2006, p. xiv). Neste sentido, considero que o problema não é apenas que o pluralismo da teoria não é desejável, mas que o pluralismo da teoria é de fato uma das características que identificam a pesquisa em comunicação nos dias de hoje. Como resultado, a pesquisa em comunicação enfrenta o pluralismo teórico, a erosão epistemológica, as raízes da incoerência, e o relativismo teórico, novamente, todos os termos intimamente relacionados com o uso, construção e desenvolvimento ou teoria da comunicação. De acordo com Shepherd et al. (2006),

os teóricos são rápidos em defender as dimensões práticas de seu estudo da teoria, argumentando que nosso conhecimento acumulado das teorias de comunicação tem tração “lá fora”, no mundo real. Mas a frustração que normalmente acompanha essa defesa, juntamente com o vigor com que tendemos a fazê-la, nos entrega na maioria das vezes. Como podemos dizer o que pensamos ser melhor para a prática da comunicação se não estamos dispostos a pensar no que é melhor na teoria da comunicação? O julgamento, então, é um componente integral da teoria e da prática da comunicação e, em um sentido mais amplo, da manutenção de uma disciplina de comunicação vibrante e socialmente relevante. (p. xiv)

Portanto, se a comunicação social fosse capaz de observar seus próprios processos de observação e produção de conhecimento, e a forma como as teorias



têm sido utilizadas em sua prática de pesquisa, então ela seria capaz de criar sua própria identidade acadêmica através do estabelecimento de seus limites epistemológicos, teóricos e ontológicos, o que pode levar a comunicação a um verdadeiro diálogo com todas as ciências (Martín-Serrano, 2007).

Não é minha intenção explorar a teoria produzida a respeito dos meios de comunicação de massa, dos processos de comunicação interpessoal ou da história da teoria da comunicação; ao contrário, vou concentrar minha atenção em duas propostas únicas que poderiam influenciar fortemente os processos de construção e pesquisa da teoria da comunicação no futuro, devido às possibilidades que ambos têm na construção da comunicação como um conceito transdisciplinar.

De acordo com a *International Encyclopedia of Systems and Cybernetics*, a transdisciplinaridade é uma característica geral dos conceitos, métodos e modelos cibernéticos e sistêmicos que fornecem aos especialistas uma metalinguagem para o estudo em comum de situações complexas (François, 2004). Neste contexto, Peter Cheekland considera que o que precisamos são conceitos transdisciplinares de arco, que servem para unificar o conhecimento, sendo aplicáveis nos arcos que atravessam as trincheiras que marcam as fronteiras acadêmicas tradicionais (Cheekland, 1976, como citado em François, 2004). Do meu ponto de vista, a comunicação é uma candidata clara para ser considerada como um conceito transdisciplinar, mas primeiro temos que definir seus limites. Nas palavras de Craig (2008):

A comunicação é apenas um tema nominal que conecta frouxamente uma série de disciplinas e profissões de outra forma não relacionadas? A comunicação é realmente um campo interdisciplinar no qual o progresso no conhecimento só é possível através de estreita cooperação e sinergia entre várias disciplinas distintas que compõem o campo? A comunicação é realmente (apesar de sua aparente fragmentação), ou pelo menos potencialmente, o objeto de uma disciplina intelectual distinta em seu próprio direito? Cada uma destas interpretações do campo pode ser verdadeira em alguns aspectos? (p. 676)

Ao definir a comunicação como um conceito transdisciplinar, minha intenção não é abordar um problema particular em um determinado campo de pesquisa - como comunicação de massa, comunicação mediada pela tecnologia, comunicação interpessoal, ou similares - mas explorar as possibilidades que duas propostas em particular podem oferecer para a criação de um terreno teórico comum para definir a comunicação, um que crie um conceito transdisciplinar que possa ser aplicável em todas as áreas listadas antes e depois. Penso que estas duas propostas atravessam as trincheiras marcadas pelas fronteiras acadêmicas tradicionais,

a partir das ciências humanas e sociais, com a possibilidade de expandir para outras áreas de pesquisa como os reinos biológico, químico ou físico.

Especificamente, as duas propostas que vou analisar são o metamodelo constitutivo proposto por Robert T. Craig, e a proposta cibersemiótica de Søren Brier. Como mostrarei com mais detalhes nas seções seguintes, considero que mesmo que estas propostas tenham objetivos muito diferentes, ambas podem ser consideradas complementares, uma vez que ambas conceituam a comunicação como um processo constitutivo ou construtivo de produção de sentido, e ambas reconhecem as mesmas tradições teóricas. Entretanto, enquanto a intenção de Craig (1999) é apenas organizar a principal tradição teórica dentro dos estudos de comunicação, a intenção de Brier é integrar em uma estrutura transdisciplinar algumas das tradições teóricas também reconhecidas e organizadas por Craig, a fim de criar uma teoria geral de cognição, significação, comunicação e informação (Brier, 2008).

#### **DO METAMODELO CONSTITUTIVO À PROPOSTA CIBERSEMIÓTICA**

No primeiro caso, Robert T. Craig (1999) argumenta que a teoria da comunicação ainda não existe como um campo de estudo identificável e sugere que o potencial da teoria da comunicação como um campo pode ser melhor realizado não em uma teoria unificada de comunicação, mas em uma matriz disciplinar dialógico-dialética, um conjunto de suposições comumente entendido que permitiria uma argumentação produtiva através das diversas tradições da teoria da comunicação, em outras palavras, o objetivo não deveria ser alguma teoria quimérica e unificada da comunicação, mas o diálogo entre perspectivas teóricas.

É por isso que Craig está interessado na reconstrução da teoria da comunicação como um metadiscurso teórico engajado no diálogo com o metadiscurso prático da vida cotidiana, uma posição que também pode ser vista como uma oportunidade para a teoria da comunicação contribuir no cultivo da comunicação como uma prática social e, finalmente, no desenvolvimento da comunicação como disciplina prática. Craig (1999) considera que cada uma das várias tradições da teoria da comunicação oferece formas distintas de conceituar e discutir problemas e práticas de comunicação e que é precisamente no diálogo entre essas tradições que a teoria da comunicação pode se engajar com o discurso prático contínuo sobre comunicação na sociedade. Desse ponto de vista, Craig (1999) sugere uma matriz teórica ou um modelo constitutivo de comunicação como metamodelo.

O modelo constitutivo da teoria da comunicação busca uma coerência dialógico-dialética, ou seja, uma consciência comum de certas complementaridades e tensões entre os diferentes tipos de teoria da comunicação.

O que temos então é a possibilidade de organizar teorias já produzidas a fim de explorar como a teoria da comunicação pode ser reconstruída e definida dentro de uma disciplina prática para revelar tais complementaridades e tensões. Claramente não é uma teoria geral de comunicação, mas uma matriz geral para organizar a teoria da comunicação com base em um princípio dialógico-dialético. Entretanto, apesar da proposta de Craig de uma matriz disciplinar sobre uma teoria geral da comunicação - e suas rejeições da ideia de uma teoria unificada - considero que, de fato, é possível desenvolver ambos os caminhos, já que trabalhos recentes mostraram a possibilidade de uma teoria unificada da comunicação (Aguado, 2003; Brier, 2008; Galindo, 2008; Lanigan, 1992, 2008; Piñuel & Lozano, 2006; Vidales, 2013). Assim, encontramos uma forma alternativa de organizar a teoria da comunicação - que busca propósitos diferentes - na proposta de Søren Brier onde a comunicação é definida do ponto de vista da produção de significados. A proposta de Craig considera que o potencial da teoria da comunicação como um campo pode ser melhor realizado não em uma teoria unificada de comunicação, mas em uma matriz disciplinar dialógico-dialética, enquanto a proposta de Brier é realmente uma teoria geral e unificada de comunicação. Mesmo quando estas duas propostas parecem ser opostas, sob nossos olhos, elas realmente se complementam, como mostrarei com mais detalhes, já que essas teorias reconhecidas por Craig são aquelas usadas por Brier para desenvolver uma teoria geral de cognição, significação, informação e comunicação, que pode ser vista como um próximo passo no metamodelo de Craig. E, mais adiante, ambas definem a comunicação como um processo de formação de sentido constitutivo.

De acordo com Brier (2008), a fraqueza da comunicação tradicional e dos estudos de informação baseados em teorias de dados de informação tem produzido problemas gerais na compreensão de como os sistemas de conhecimento são construídos e organizados. E, com base na cibernética de segunda ordem e na semiótica peirceana, Brier (2008) propõe a cibersemiótica,

como um projeto inter e transdisciplinar que analisa os esforços modernos para chegar a uma estrutura conceitual unificada, englobando o complexo campo das ciências da informação, da cognição e da comunicação e os estudos semióticos - campos que, juntos, são frequentemente chamados de ciências da informação. (p. 3)

Mesmo quando sua ideia principal é o desenvolvimento de uma estrutura geral do que ele considera os fundamentos das ciências da informação, ele reconhece que ao discutir a possibilidade de uma ciência da informação universal, uma ciência universal de comunicação e cognição também deve ser incluída, uma vez que uma abordagem lógica e mecanicista não pode oferecer por si só

uma compreensão do significado humano ou das raízes das relações biológicas, psicológicas e sociais. Assim sendo,

ao discutir as possibilidades de uma ciência universal da informação (que deve incluir uma ciência universal de comunicação e cognição), é importante analisar a natureza das áreas temáticas que uma ciência universal da informação deve incluir, tais como física, biologia, ciências sociais, ciências humanas, biblioteca e ciências da informação, informática, cibernética, comunicação e linguística. (Brier, 2008, p. 36)

Para a cibersemiótica, a ciência da informação relativa aos sistemas vivos e ao ser humano não é capaz de explicar aspectos vitais da comunicação e da cognição, tais como aqueles relacionados com o surgimento de significado no domínio particular do contexto social e no domínio geral da reprodução e sobrevivência dos seres vivos. Esta omissão de uma explicação significativa na cibernética e nas teorias da informação é o que levou o autor à integração da semiótica no quadro teórico da cibernética e da teoria da informação. Para Brier (2008), o paradigma do processamento da informação (baseado na teoria da informação) tem sérios problemas ao descrever problemas fundamentais relativos à mediação semântica de mensagens, pois também é incapaz de levar em conta os aspectos fenomenológicos e sociais da cognição. Então, a ideia de uma integração da semiótica peirceana com a cibernética de segunda ordem é uma oportunidade para expandir as possibilidades de observar o processo de fazer sentido desde sua natureza física, química e biológica até suas condições psicológicas, fenomenológicas e sociais.

Em resumo, ambas as propostas (Craig's e Brier's) têm entendimentos muito diferentes sobre o papel que a comunicação tem na teoria e a forma como a teoria da comunicação pode ser organizada. Minha intenção é, portanto, explorar as consequências que ambas as perspectivas têm na proposta de uma teoria geral de comunicação, a fim de desenvolver a comunicação como um conceito transdisciplinar. Agora, a fim de explicar, com mais detalhes, as diferenças, semelhanças e complementaridades das propostas de Brier e Craig, vou explorar cada uma delas nas seções seguintes.

## UM MODELO DE SEGUNDA ORDEM DA TEORIA DA COMUNICAÇÃO

De acordo com Craig (2008), os estudos de mídia e comunicação surgiram mais ou menos independentemente de muitas fontes que levaram à formação do campo da comunicação a partir da convergência de várias disciplinas e áreas de pesquisa que se cruzam de formas complexas, todas relacionadas em algum

sentido com o fenômeno da comunicação, mas nunca integradas em um corpo coerente de pensamento. A diversidade das tradições intelectuais nos estudos de comunicação não é um desenvolvimento recente, mas uma condição que caracteriza o campo através de sua própria história; as tradições intelectuais presentes no campo hoje vieram das humanidades e ciências sociais, onde a comunicação foi um tema geral até seu processo de institucionalização - um processo no qual foi necessário incluir perspectivas das ciências naturais e da engenharia. Por esta razão, Craig (2008) afirma que a comunicação como disciplina pode ser entendida em termos de sua contribuição ao conhecimento de uma tradição intelectual particular, e sua relevância para a comunicação pode ser entendida como uma categoria sociocultural constituída de problemas e práticas, uma vez que as disciplinas são de fato uma comunidade de conversação geral com suas próprias tradições de conversação que emergem, evoluem e se transformam durante os processos de conversação. Desse ponto de vista, a comunicação pode ser considerada como uma disciplina prática. De acordo com Craig (2008),

o termo *disciplina prática* refere-se a um tipo de disciplina que cultiva de forma recorrente a própria prática social que constitui o assunto específico da disciplina. As disciplinas práticas dependem necessariamente da relevância sociocultural como uma fonte especialmente importante de legitimidade. Uma disciplina prática emerge tipicamente e é considerada importante não por causa de algum avanço intelectual que de repente revela toda uma nova gama de problemas de pesquisa.... Em vez disso, uma disciplina prática cresce porque se propõe, de forma verossímil, a ser útil para tratar de uma série de preocupações práticas já reconhecidas como tal na sociedade. (p. 9)

Ao considerar a comunicação como uma disciplina prática, uma possibilidade é transformar a comunicação em um campo acadêmico, a fim de torná-la mais relevante socialmente. Além disso, para que a comunicação seja considerada uma prática particular, “deve haver um conceito cultural de comunicação referente ao tipo geral de prática em que as pessoas estão envolvidas sempre que se comunicam” (Craig, 2006, p. 41). Quando vemos a comunicação como prática em nossa cultura, não é apenas normal assumir que nos comunicamos com outros ou que temos práticas comunicativas, mas também o fato de que essas práticas se tornaram significativas para nós (Craig, 2006). Entretanto, o reconhecimento da comunicação como uma prática significativa na sociedade é apenas o primeiro passo na construção de um campo acadêmico, já que o segundo passo, e talvez o mais importante, é a criação de explicações sobre essa prática em particular. Falamos de comunicação no nível do senso comum

e, depois disso, criamos discursos sobre esses discursos ou metadiscursos. Como Craig (2006) defende,

estas formas comuns de falar de comunicação dão à prática da comunicação a gama específica de significados que ela tem para nós. Em nossa cultura, este discurso normativo sobre comunicação se desenvolveu a tal ponto que uma disciplina acadêmica de estudos de comunicação, com suas práticas tecnicamente sofisticadas de metadiscursivo (compreendendo o que chamamos de teoria da comunicação), foi instituída e agora desempenha um papel ativo no cultivo da prática da comunicação na sociedade. (p. 41)

Há uma relação entre o bom senso e as maneiras que usamos para falar da comunicação de forma técnica e sofisticada, porém, este fenômeno tem sérios efeitos na pesquisa em comunicação, principalmente porque o que é usado na prática da pesquisa é precisamente o discurso originado no bom senso e não no contexto técnico e sofisticado (Bryant & Miron, 2004; Vidales 2013). Isto é o que foi anteriormente chamado de relativismo teórico. Portanto, é compreensível a necessidade de uma visão de segunda ordem da teoria da comunicação, e também por que é tão importante e pertinente continuar este tipo de reflexão no início do século XXI, reflexões que também estão relacionadas à ideia de comunicação como uma disciplina particular. E, como já foi dito anteriormente, isto supõe que o potencial da teoria da comunicação como campo pode ser melhor atingido. Porém, não em uma teoria unificada de comunicação, mas em uma matriz disciplinar dialógico-dialética, um conjunto de suposições comumente entendidas que permitiria uma argumentação produtiva através das diversas tradições da teoria da comunicação. De acordo com Craig (1999),

nenhum campo ativo de pesquisa tem uma teoria totalmente unificada. Um campo perfeitamente coerente seria um campo estático, um campo morto, mas a prática da comunicação em si está muito viva e em constante evolução em um cenário mundial de contingência e conflito. A teoria da comunicação, a teoria desta prática, muito provavelmente nunca chegará, portanto, a uma forma final e unificada. O objetivo, de fato, deveria ser.... diversidade teórica, argumento, debate, mesmo à custa de ocasionais lapsos acadêmicos. O objetivo não deve ser um estado no qual não temos nada a discutir, mas um estado no qual compreendemos melhor que todos nós temos algo muito importante para discutir. (pp. 123-124)

É por isso que Craig (1999) está interessado na reconstrução da teoria da comunicação como um metadiscorso teórico engajado no diálogo com o

metadiscorso prático da vida cotidiana, uma posição que também pode ser vista como potencial para a contribuição da teoria da comunicação no cultivo da comunicação como uma prática social e, finalmente, no desenvolvimento da comunicação como uma disciplina prática. E, é a partir desta posição que Craig (1999) sugere uma matriz teórica ou um modelo constitutivo de comunicação como metamodelo.

Tomo o modelo constitutivo como um modelo metamodelo que abre um espaço conceitual no qual muitos modelos teóricos diferentes de comunicação podem interagir. Logicamente, um modelo de comunicação de primeira ordem é uma perspectiva de comunicação que destaca certos aspectos do processo... Um modelo de segunda ordem, ou metamodelo, é uma perspectiva de modelos que ressalta certos aspectos dos modelos. Um metamodelo constitutivo de modelos de imagens de comunicação como diferentes formas de constituir simbolicamente o processo de comunicação para propósitos particulares. (Craig, 1999. pp. 126-127)

Ao construir seu metamodelo, Craig (1999) propôs dois princípios de citação relevante. O primeiro é a consideração do metamodelo como um modelo constitutivo de comunicação em contraste com seu oposto dialético, o modelo de transmissão ou informação de comunicação, um modelo que considera a comunicação como um processo de enviar e receber mensagens ou transferir informações de uma mente para outra. Como este modelo tem sido fortemente criticado ao longo dos anos devido à sua consideração linear dos processos de comunicação e à incompreensão de seus fundamentos matemáticos (Deetz, 1994; Martín-Serrano, 2007; Pearce, 1989; Peters, 1999; Ritchie, 1991; Taylor, 1997; Vidales, 2013), Craig (1999) considera que “ele deve pelo menos ser complementado, se não totalmente suplantado, por um modelo que conceitua a comunicação como um processo constitutivo que produz e reproduz um significado compartilhado” (p. 125). Como consequência, “um metamodelo constitutivo de modelos de imagens de comunicação como diferentes formas de constituir simbolicamente o processo de comunicação para fins particulares” (p. 127).

O segundo princípio é a consideração da teoria da comunicação como um metadiscorso, principalmente porque a comunicação não é apenas algo que fazemos, mas também algo a que nos referimos reflexivamente de maneiras praticamente interligadas com o que fazemos dela, como já foi explicado anteriormente. É então a partir destes dois princípios que Craig (1999) desenvolve seu modelo de segunda ordem para organizar o metadiscorso produzido sobre comunicação no qual ele sugere sete tradições como metadiscursos sobre comunicação: (1) a Tradição Retórica (comunicação como arte prática do discurso);

(2) a Tradição Semiótica (comunicação como mediação intersubjetiva por sinais); (3) a Tradição Fenomenológica (comunicação como experiência de alteridade); (4) a Tradição Cibernética (comunicação como processamento de informação); (5) a Tradição Sociopsicológica (comunicação como expressão, interação e influência); (6) a Tradição Sociocultural (comunicação como (re)produção da ordem social); e (7) a Tradição Crítica (comunicação como reflexão discursiva).

Com base no metamodelo proposto por Craig, é possível iniciar o processo de construção da teoria tomando como base fundamental a dimensão ontológica que a comunicação tem em cada tradição. Como resultado, temos sete conceptualizações de comunicação: (1) comunicação como arte prática do discurso; (2) comunicação como mediação intersubjetiva por sinais; (3) comunicação como experiência de alteridade; (4) comunicação como processamento de informação; (5) comunicação como expressão, interação e influência; (6) comunicação como (re)produção de ordem social; e (7) comunicação como reflexão discursiva. É importante mencionar que todas as dimensões não são independentes umas das outras, mas estão intimamente relacionadas. Temos então um caminho claro para identificar o que uma teoria geral de comunicação deve incluir se pretendemos cobrir todas as formas já reconhecidas de comunicação como um fenômeno humano, natural, mecânico e social. Além disso, é muito importante ressaltar que o metamodelo de Craig não é uma proposta de teoria da comunicação; ao contrário, é um princípio geral para organizar a teoria da comunicação com base na implicação prática que as teorias podem ter na prática social.

Entretanto, desta perspectiva é possível considerar que todas as definições de comunicação que Craig sugere são apenas diferentes formas nas quais a comunicação é expressa e fundamentada teoricamente, definições que também geram diferentes formas nas quais a comunicação é definida ontologicamente e estudada na prática. Da minha perspectiva, as sete definições de comunicação podem ser vistas num sentido mais geral como processos de criação de sentido. A comunicação como uma arte prática do discurso, como mediação intersubjetiva por sinais, como a experiência da alteridade, como processamento de informação, como expressão, interação e influência, como a (re)produção da ordem social e, como reflexão discursiva; todas estas são diferentes formas nas quais o processo de criação de sentido é expresso. Este é um passo muito importante para a constrição da comunicação como um conceito transdisciplinar. No entanto, algo importante a apontar é o fato de que a proposta de Craig está limitada ao processo humano de comunicação ou ao processo de comunicação nas sociedades humanas. A ideia de considerar expressões gerais como processo



de criação de sentido é um argumento epistemológico que poderia expandir o estudo dos processos de comunicação para além do âmbito humano.

Em resumo, Craig conceitua a comunicação como um processo constitutivo que produz e reproduz um significado compartilhado; portanto, o metamodelo propôs modelos teóricos de imagens de comunicação como diferentes formas de constituir simbolicamente o processo de comunicação para fins particulares. O modelo constitutivo da teoria da comunicação busca uma coerência dialógico-dialética, ou seja, uma consciência comum de certas complementaridades e tensões entre diferentes tipos de teoria da comunicação; e rejeita a ideia de uma teoria unificada da comunicação. O resultado de seu metamodelo é o delineamento de sete tradições a partir das quais a comunicação é definida, e sugere que é possível desenvolver mais tradições no futuro, como uma tradição feminista, uma tradição estética, uma tradição econômica, e uma tradição espiritual. A partir deste metamodelo, minha proposta é considerar todas estas definições em um sentido mais amplo, como expressão de um processo geral de criação de sentido.

A definição de comunicação como produção e reprodução de significado, e o metamodelo como modelo constitutivo de comunicação, são duas ideias intimamente relacionadas com a proposta de cibersemiótica feita por Brier. Entretanto, Brier não está interessado na comunicação como um campo nem como uma disciplina prática, mas no desenvolvimento de uma teoria integrada de comunicação, cognição e informação. Assim, explorarei a proposta do Brier com mais detalhes na seção seguinte.

## **A PROPOSTA CIBERSEMIÓTICA DA COMUNICAÇÃO**

De acordo com Brier (2008), as ciências da informação sobre sistemas vivos e seres humanos não são capazes de explicar aspectos vitais de comunicação e cognição, nem aqueles relacionados ao surgimento de significado no domínio particular dos contextos sociais e no domínio central da reprodução e sobrevivência dos seres vivos. A omissão de uma explicação que explica a significação na cibernética e nas teorias da informação foi o que levou Brier a integrar a semiótica no quadro teórico da cibernética e da teoria da informação. Para o autor, o paradigma de processamento da informação (baseado na teoria da informação) tem sérios problemas para descrever as questões fundamentais relativas à mediação semântica de uma mensagem, pois também é incapaz de levar em conta os aspectos fenomenológicos e sociais da cognição. Portanto, a ideia de integrar a semiótica peirceana à cibernética de segunda ordem é uma

oportunidade para expandir nossas possibilidades de observar a própria natureza dos processos de comunicação. Em suas próprias palavras,

a cibersemiótica constitui uma base realista para uma compreensão abrangente das ciências naturais, da vida e sociais, bem como das ciências humanas, e que pode proporcionar uma compreensão mais profunda das diferenças nos tipos de conhecimento que produzem e mostrar por que cada um e todos são necessários. (Brier, 2013, p. 223)

Neste ponto, podemos dizer que existe uma clara conexão entre a tentativa de Brier de gerar uma consciência comum das complementaridades e tensões entre diferentes tipos de teorias e a proposta dialógico-dialética de Craig; no entanto, também encontramos uma das principais diferenças. Enquanto isso, o metamodelo de Craig pretende apontar e criar consciência dessas complementaridades e tensões entre diferentes teorias de comunicação dentro dos estudos de comunicação, Brier também pretende expandi-las através de diferentes campos e áreas de pesquisa. Nas palavras de Brier (2013),

Estou tentando traçar um mapa no qual uma infinidade de pontos de vista pode ser traçada e suas áreas temáticas caracterizadas e comparadas com outras abordagens. Ao fazer isso, espero expandir o diálogo entre as ciências exatas, as humanidades, as ciências sociais e a filosofia. (p. 223)

Do ponto de vista da cibersemiótica, uma teoria consistente de informação, cognição e comunicação deve integrar as ciências sociais e humanas, mas também as ciências biológicas e físico-químicas. Os problemas de produção de sentido e significado nos sistemas vivos tornaram evidentes alguns limites da cibernética, mas também abriram a possibilidade de uma integração epistemológica com outras ciências como a semiótica, criando então a cibersemiótica, uma teoria geral que pode ser sintetizada como a busca das raízes biológicas, psíquicas e sociais da necessidade humana e biológica de sentido e auto-organização no processo de observação e conhecimento do mundo, e as explicações feitas sobre ele (Brier, 2008). A cibersemiótica é uma visão nova e não-reducionista da cognição e da comunicação baseada no desenvolvimento da biossemiótica, o que implica ampliar nossa compreensão da evolução da informação em animais, máquinas e seres humanos, assim como os processos de organização sistêmica e auto-organização. Esta nova visão é um ponto de vista interdisciplinar que integra vários metadiscursos que fornecem as condições para a emergência de uma nova visão não apenas sobre a vida e os processos cognitivos, mas também sobre a comunicação e sua natureza epistemológica (Brier, 2008).

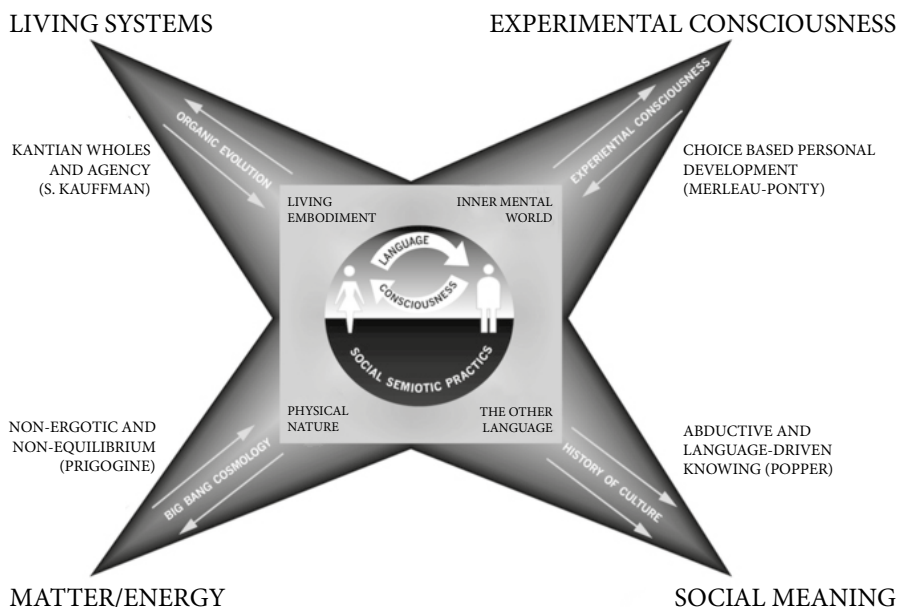
Mesmo quando a proposta da cibersemiótica parece promissora, é importante que nos perguntemos: esta é uma nova matriz para estudos de comunicação? Esta é uma nova meta-modelo da teoria da comunicação? Quais são seus limites? Esta é finalmente uma teoria geral e integradora da comunicação? Esta é uma proposta que integra as sete tradições já reconhecidas por Craig? Do meu ponto de vista, a cibernética é uma perspectiva teórica fundamental que constrói a comunicação como um conceito transdisciplinar fundamentado em sua consideração de um processo de criação de sentido. E talvez esta seja uma de suas principais características, já que, segundo Paul Cogley (2010),

A cibernética é um projeto verdadeiramente transdisciplinar. Nem tanto que atravesse as ciências e as humanidades e invoque o conhecimento de ambas (embora o faça), mas é transdisciplinar porque explora, por meio da perícia em filosofia da ciência, conceitos que têm uma compra em toda a natureza e cultura. (p. 2045)

Para deixar claro este argumento, vou apresentar a estrela cibersemiótica, o diagrama que Brier constrói para expressar em forma gráfica sua proposta teórica.

**Figure 1**

*A estrela cibersemiótica*



Nota. Extraído de *Can cybersemiotics solve the paradox of transdisciplinary knowing?*, escrito por S. Brier, 2015, XI Cenoscopic Semiosis.

Em seu trabalho, Ole Nedergaard Thomsen (2011), explica a natureza da estrela cibersemiótica, um diagrama que resume a concepção cibernética da realidade e sua observação em quatro dimensões ou domínios epistemológicos irreduzíveis: natureza físico-química, vida e encarnação, mundo mental interior e sociedade e linguagem. Assim, o tema da primeira dimensão é baseado e evoluiu a partir da matéria, energia e informação,

o tópico da segunda dimensão é baseado na «vida e sistemas vivos», na evolução orgânica a partir da primeira célula, a origem das espécies; o tópico da terceira sobre vida interior anti-consciência no desenvolvimento existencial pessoal; e o tópico da quarta dimensão sobre sentido e significado na história da(s) cultura(s) humana(s). (Nedergaard Thomsen, 2011, p. 30)

As pernas da estrela estão unidas por um retângulo que representa a realidade tal como a conhecemos, e por trás dele encontramos a realidade do sistema observado, conseqüentemente, o círculo representa o sistema de observação com suas mentes encarnadas em interação. O retângulo, o universo do conhecimento e do discurso, é uma esfera de significação científica da comunidade científica, e finalmente, no círculo centralizado (o sistema científico observador) nós, os observadores e comunicadores, somos representados dentro dele como uma figura cultural em um terreno físico. Nas palavras de Nedergaard Thomsen:

Como foi dito acima, o conhecimento da realidade tem quatro dimensões epistemológicas irreduzíveis nos quatro cantos do retângulo, ou seja, novamente da esquerda para a esquerda: primeiro, Físico-químico-informacional (natureza «morta»); segundo, Biológico (natureza «viva»); terceiro, Fenomenológico-psicológico-existencial; e quarto, Sociológico-cultural-linguístico. Estas dimensões, também conhecidas como pesquisas tradicionais ou disciplinas/faculdades, “cobrem” os correspondentes aspectos ontológicos complementares da realidade. Nós, os observadores e usuários da linguagem, participamos assim deste universo, e através de nós o universo se observa. (Nedergaard Thomsen, 2011, pp. 32-33)

Para levar em conta as quatro pernas da estrela, a cibersemiótica integra em uma matriz transdisciplinar a cibernética e a semiótica e, mais particularmente, a cibernética de segunda ordem (a cibernética da cibernética) e a biossemiótica; sendo a cibernética a ciência dos sistemas circular e comunicacional autorreguladores, e a biossemiótica como a ciência dos processos de sinais vivos envolvendo mente e consciência (Nedergaard Thomsen, 2011). No entanto, esta integração está baseada nas possibilidades que a semiótica tem de fornecer

uma teoria de significado e produção de sinais à cibernética e às ciências da informação, pois, segundo Brier (2008), existe um problema primário em relação aos paradigmas da informação e da semiótica, uma vez que ambos estão relacionados à cognição, informação, significado e comunicação, mas com abordagens muito diferentes, o que torna necessário esclarecer essas perspectivas. O primeiro, frequentemente chamado de paradigma de processamento de informação, foi construído a partir de uma concepção objetivista da informação combinada com uma abordagem computacional em sentido algorítmico, o que o torna um paradigma mecanicista e racionalista. No entanto, Brier considera que esta abordagem mecanicista não pode oferecer uma compreensão do significado humano ou de suas relações biológicas, psicológicas ou sociais, o que torna evidente a necessidade de uma ciência universal da informação, incluindo sua capacidade de incluir, implicitamente, uma ciência universal de comunicação e cognição. Isto é o que levou Brier (2008) a questionar

se a pesquisa funcionalista e cibernética deve ser vista como complementar a uma linha fenomenológico-hermenêutico-semiótica de teorização sobre significação e significado que ignora questões ontológicas fora da cultura, ou se estas podem estar unidas dentro de uma estrutura paradigmática através de uma revisão dos fundamentos ontológicos e epistemológicos das ciências clássicas e modernas, como tenta Peirce. (p. 37)

A teoria matemática da comunicação, a primeira proposta integradora na história da teoria da comunicação, definiu a informação como uma propriedade estatística de uma determinada mensagem, mas foi muito claro ao apontar que a dimensão significativa de uma mensagem era irrelevante para a teoria. Em sua proposta, Shannon (1948) argumentou que o problema fundamental da comunicação era a reprodução em um ponto - exatamente ou aproximadamente - de uma mensagem selecionada em outro ponto, mas mais importante era seu reconhecimento de que mesmo quando a mensagem reproduzida ou transmitida tem significado, isto era irrelevante para a própria teoria, uma vez que ela se concentrava principalmente em um problema de engenharia. O aspecto significativo foi que a mensagem real é aquela selecionada a partir de um conjunto de mensagens possíveis, o que implica que um sistema deve ser projetado para operar para cada seleção possível e não apenas para aquela que será realmente escolhida, uma vez que isto é desconhecido no momento do projeto. Como consequência, o aspecto significativo das mensagens e da comunicação foi irrelevante para a teoria, que pode ser considerada como a primeira particularidade conceitual herdada pela teoria. Entretanto, ao mesmo

tempo, a teoria matemática propôs um conceito de informação dentro de uma estrutura muito clara, que pode ser vista como uma de suas contribuições mais importantes para as modernas ciências da informação.

Além disso, paralelamente ao desenvolvimento da teoria matemática da comunicação, Norbert Wiener propôs a cibernética em 1948, uma teoria alternativa que pode ser vista como o segundo antecedente na história da teoria e epistemologia da comunicação. Entretanto, esta proposta era muito diferente da matemática, pois mesmo quando a cibernética foi proposta como a ciência de controle e comunicação no animal e na máquina, seu propósito não era o estudo das coisas ou das máquinas reais, mas as formas como elas se comportam, ou seja, ela não estava interessada no que as coisas são, mas no que elas fazem (Ashby, 1957). A cibernética foi assim uma tentativa de gerar um princípio capaz de explicar tanto o funcionamento das máquinas quanto o funcionamento do sistema nervoso humano, a fim de criar uma teoria geral de comunicação e controle em máquinas e organismos vivos, pois, segundo Wiener (1954), não há uma diferença real quando damos uma ordem a uma máquina ou a um ser humano, pois é possível afirmar que a ordem foi emitida dado o sinal confirmando que a ordem foi recebida. Neste sentido, o fato de o sinal em seus estágios intermediários ter sido transmitido através de uma máquina ou através de um ser humano é irrelevante e não afeta nossa relação com o sinal em si. Além disso, segundo o autor, os sistemas nervosos e as máquinas automáticas são fundamentalmente parecidos, pois são estruturas que tomam decisões com base em decisões que tomaram no passado. Em suas palavras,

Minha hipótese é de que o funcionamento físico do indivíduo vivo e o funcionamento de algumas das máquinas de operação mais recentes são precisamente paralelos em suas tentativas análogas de controlar a entropia através de feedback. Ambas têm receptores sensoriais como uma etapa em seu ciclo de operação: ou seja, em ambas existe um aparelho especial para coletar informações do mundo exterior a baixos níveis de energia, e para disponibilizá-las na operação do indivíduo ou da máquina.... Em ambos, sua ação realizada no mundo exterior, e não apenas sua ação pretendida, é relatada de volta ao aparelho regulador central. Este complexo de comportamento é ignorado pelo homem comum e, em particular, não desempenha o papel que deveria desempenhar em nossa análise habitual da sociedade; pois assim como as respostas físicas individuais podem ser vistas deste ponto de vista, o mesmo pode acontecer com as respostas orgânicas da própria sociedade. Não quero dizer que o sociólogo desconheça a existência e a natureza complexa das comunicações na sociedade, mas até recentemente ele tendia a ignorar até que ponto elas são o cimento que une seu tecido. (Wiener, 1954, pp. 26-27)

Isto levou a Wiener (1945) a propor que a informação não está relacionada apenas à entropia, mas também à negentropia, um caso especial de ordem e organização, e a considerar que a informação é informação e não matéria ou energia. Este foi também o argumento no qual Tom Stonier (1997) baseou sua proposta de negentropia como o poder organizacional de criar sistemas e estruturas na natureza. Mais tarde, da perspectiva da cibernética surgiu o que Heinz von Foerster (2002) chamou de cibernética da cibernética, ou cibernética de segunda ordem, o que foi um passo importante na transformação do objeto de estudo do estudo dos sistemas para o estudo dos sistemas de observação, que também foi uma tentativa de incluir o observador no processo reflexivo. Segundo von Foerster, podemos considerar a cibernética de primeira ordem como a cibernética dos sistemas observados, e a cibernética de segunda ordem como a cibernética dos sistemas de observação. Então, enquanto a proposta da Wiener estava focada na comunicação e controle, a cibernética de segunda ordem está focada em questões relativas aos sistemas de observação e sua influência no próprio processo de produção de conhecimento, o que o levou a incluir conceitos como auto-referência, auto-organização e circularidade, o primeiro relacionado a uma operação lógica na qual uma operação é em si mesma um objeto de estudo, por exemplo, quando falamos de linguagem, quando pensamos em nosso pensamento, ou quando tomamos consciência de nossa própria consciência.

A transformação fundamental que a informação gerada no campo acadêmico, e a transformação cibernética gerada como epistemologia geral, implicou na necessidade de refletir não apenas sobre o mundo observado, mas sobre a importância dos sistemas que observam esse mundo, um grande passo no campo da epistemologia, já que, segundo Marcelo Pakman (1991, como citado em von Foerster, 2006), passamos de questionar o princípio da objetividade a assumir que todas as nossas noções não são independentes de nossa natureza como observadores, e também, que esta relação não é apenas uma condição geral para todos os observadores, mas uma condição para todos os sistemas observados. Além disso, foi isto que levou Ross Ashby (1957) a identificar duas virtudes científicas peculiares da cibernética:

A cibernética oferece um conjunto de conceitos que, por terem correspondência exata com cada ramo das ciências, podem assim trazê-los para as relações exatas entre si... E pode fornecer a linguagem comum pela qual as descobertas em um ramo podem ser prontamente utilizadas nos outros. (p. 4)

Em seu trabalho, von Foerster (2006) demonstra que se um organismo é modelado como uma máquina, não pode ser uma máquina trivial, uma vez

que não é possível gerar uma descrição matemática e determinista de seu comportamento e, como consequência, organismos e sistemas vivos devem ser descritos como máquinas não triviais: sistemas que se organizam e produzem seus próprios elementos. A capacidade de auto-organização dos sistemas vivos em sua dimensão histórica é uma condição muito importante para considerar os organismos como máquinas não-triviais. Então, para Brier (2008), este é um processo importante envolvido no surgimento de significado, porque quando observamos a linguagem em termos de informação, fica claro que o surgimento de significado depende da organização do sistema vivo e seu ambiente, o que é diferente no caso da linguagem de computador, onde o ambiente não desempenha um papel importante. É por isso que Brier (2008) reconheceu a necessidade de uma teoria diferente e mais sofisticada capaz de incluir o ponto de vista da cibernética, bem como uma teoria de significação em uma estrutura coerente e integrada, e esta é a proposta cibernética, uma estrutura geral que inclui a semiótica e a biossemiótica de Peirce. Em seguida, como Brier (2008) argumentou,

tal teoria deve ser complementada por uma teoria dos sinais e significados, bem como por teorias sobre aqueles sistemas biológicos e sociais para os quais a diferença pode fazer a diferença, já que a cibernética trata em grande parte da circularidade das diferenças nos sistemas auto organizados... para aprofundar a compreensão do processo, devemos analisar todo o processo de produção de sinais, como faz C. S. Peirce em sua semiótica. (p. 94)

Para que, após as propostas da cibernética e da cibernética de segunda ordem, no final do século XX Søren Brier desenvolveu a cibersemiótica, uma teoria geral que integra a cibernética de segunda ordem com uma teoria geral de significação. Nas palavras de Brier (2008),

As duas estruturas transdisciplinares da cibernética de segunda ordem e a semiótica triádica de Peirce parecem promissoras para desenvolver um diálogo entre sistemas sociais (Luhmann) e o conhecimento da cognição e produção de significação em sistemas biológicos (autopoiesis e acoplamento estrutural). A cibernética de segunda ordem abandonou a ideia objetivista da informação, mas ainda não desenvolveu um conceito de signo. A semiótica estuda cientificamente a significação como uma dimensão básica e universal da realidade humana. A semiótica de Peirce também aborda sinais não intencionais e tem um conceito de sinal triádico de segunda ordem, evolutivo e orientado a processos, ou seja, todas as partes dos sinais de semiose. No entanto, falta-lhe conhecimento da auto-organização da cognição e do acoplamento estrutural dos observadores. Sugere-se que estas duas estruturas poderiam ser



integradas através de algo como o conceito de jogos de linguagem de Wittgenstein, e que sistemas biológicos de prelinguagem produzem significação poderiam ser entendidos como jogos de sinais. *Os significados comunicativos são gerados por sistemas autopoieticos em jogos de linguagem e de sinais.* (p. 101)

A partir desta posição, a comunicação está intimamente associada ao próprio processo de produção de sinais e significados, mas não restrita ao escopo humano, mas conectada em um sentido mais geral com todas as formas vivas, uma posição consistente com a compreensão da biossemiótica da frente de vida, ou seja, como um fenômeno fundamentalmente fundamentado em processos semióticos (Hoffmeyer, 2008). Em resumo, o significado é um conceito-chave que devemos levar em conta no processo de construção da teoria da comunicação, e é o princípio básico que podemos utilizar para construir a comunicação como um conceito transdisciplinar. Além disso, a comunicação entendida como processo de fazer sentido é o que as propostas de Craig e Brier compartilham e é também uma condição que, para alguns autores, define a natureza humana (merrel, 2013). Em resumo, a cibersemiótica “oferece uma abordagem multi e transdisciplinar integradora, que usa o significado como princípio geral para compreender o complexo arca da ciência da informação cibernética para a natureza e as máquinas E a semiótica da cognição, comunicação e cultura de todo sistema vivo” (Brier, 2013, p. 222).

## SIGNIFICADO E COMUNICAÇÃO NA CIBERSEMIÓTICA

Brier (2008) considera que algumas das pesquisas feitas em sistemas, cibernética e ciências da informação são construídas sobre noções metafísicas que levaram a resultados que são um tipo vago de funcionalismo, e que não tomam uma posição clara sobre a experiência na primeira pessoa, a qualia da percepção e das emoções, e o problema do livre arbítrio.

As versões modernas do paradigma pan-informacional frequentemente combinam o funcionalismo com termodinâmica não-equilibrada, dinâmica de sistemas não-lineares, teoria do caos determinista e matemática fractal como ferramentas descritivas. Mas novamente, raramente encontramos uma reflexão sistemática sobre como estas versões diferem das visões mecanicistas ... ou sobre a natureza de um conceito de significado e como a significação surge em mente. (Brier, 2008, pp. 39-40)

É por isso que uma teoria de significação é necessária e a razão pela qual Brier integra os paradigmas semióticos e informacionais, já que a semiótica,

como descrita por Peirce, é a doutrina da natureza essencial e das variações fundamentais da possível semiose (Peirce, 1998, EP 2:413).

A importância do paradigma semiótico é que ele se concentra nas possibilidades de comunicação significativa nos sistemas vivos e sociais através da busca de respostas sobre comunicação e produção de sentido na dinâmica cultural e histórica e também nas condições biológicas de emergência de sentido. Neste sentido, Peirce fundou a semiótica como uma lógica geral que integrou uma teoria geral de produção de sinais, que por sua vez tornou possível a expansão da semiótica além do escopo humano em processos de sinais dentro de todos os tipos de sistemas, incluindo, é claro, os sistemas vivos. Para Peirce,

Parece estranho, quando se trata de refletir sobre ele, que um sinal deixe seu intérprete para fornecer uma parte de seu significado; mas a explicação do fenômeno está no fato de que todo o universo, e não apenas o universo dos existentes, abarca todo aquele universo mais amplo, abraçando o universo das extensões como uma parte... é perfundido por sinais, se não for composto exclusivamente de sinais. (Peirce, 1998, CP 1.573 574)

Entretanto, Brier (2008) sugere que na filosofia semiótica de Peirce, sentimentos, qualia, formação de hábitos e significação são constituintes ontológicos básicos da realidade, o que significa que o paradigma semiótico deve ser capaz de penetrar além da química e da física, um movimento que foi seriamente desenvolvido na pesquisa biossemiótica (Hoffmeyer, 2008; Martinelli, 2007; merrel, 1996; Sebeok, 2001a, 2001b).

Segundo Brier (2008), informação, matéria e energia são os três elementos básicos da realidade, o que implica que a informação natural e objetiva tem que estar presente antes da emergência da mente humana e, neste sentido, a informação é algo independente do observador

ou de seu intérprete. “A informação é vista como uma coisa objetiva e universal, determinada pela lei, que tanto o ser humano quanto as máquinas absorvem em suas mentes a partir da natureza, mudam pelo pensamento e a trazem à sociedade através da linguagem” (Brier, 2008, p. 54). Entretanto, a fim de explorar esta possibilidade, é necessário explorar a mente humana, a inteligência e a comunicação significativa em termos de informação, consciência e produção de sentido como reais, ou a realidade da consciência em primeira pessoa.

Isto implica que as ciências da informação devem incluir o que as ciências cognitivas já desenvolveram a fim de resolver alguns dos problemas epistemológicos gerados por esta integração empírica, especialmente porque as ciências da informação na área temática dos sistemas vivos não serão capazes de explicar

aspectos vitais dos fenômenos de cognição e comunicação, tais como o significado e as limitações do contexto social. Então, para Brier (2008), a diferença entre conhecimento e informação é o fato de que a informação é vista apenas como um aspecto dos sistemas de conhecimento, no entanto, eles precisam de um processo de interpretação semiótica para serem significativos, e assim não é possível considerar o significado da informação sem o processo de significação. “Poderíamos acrescentar à declaração da Wiener que (em si) ‘informação é informação, nem matéria nem energia’ - que informação também não significa até que tenha sido interpretada por um sistema vivo” (Brier. 2008, p. 76).

Como Brier (2008) argumentou, temos que nos aprofundar no entendimento do processo de criação de significados, uma maneira de fazê-lo é analisando todo o processo de criação de sinais, como faz C. S. Peirce em sua semiótica. Para Peirce, a única maneira de alcançar ou adquirir o pensamento é através da mediação de sinais, e assim, o único pensamento cognoscível existente é aquele em sinais; por extensão, o pensamento não cognoscível não existe. Isto é o que permite a Peirce organizar os diferentes modos em que as coisas (reais ou não) são apresentadas em relação aos elementos do que quer que seja a qualquer momento diante da mente, sob qualquer forma. Estes modos são, a) o ser de possibilidade qualitativa positiva, b) o ser ou fato real, e c) o ser de lei que governará os fatos no futuro, cada um relacionado a *a primeiridade, secundidade e terceiridade* respectivamente Peirce, 1955.

Para Peirce, a primeiridade é um modo de ser que consiste em uma mera possibilidade.

Primeiridade é o filme do ser que consiste no fato de seu tema ser positivamente tal como é, independentemente de qualquer outra coisa. Isso só pode ser uma possibilidade. Enquanto as coisas não agirem umas sobre as outras, não há sentido ou significado em dizer que elas têm qualquer ser, a menos que sejam tais em si mesmas que talvez possam entrar em relação com outras. O modo de ser uma *vermelhidão*, antes que qualquer coisa no universo fosse ainda vermelha, era, no entanto, uma possibilidade qualitativa positiva. (Peirce, 1955, p. 76)

A primeiridade está relacionada às possibilidades, mas também compreende as qualidades dos fenômenos e, como consequência, é possível argumentar que onde quer que haja fenômenos há qualidades, de modo que quase poderia parecer que não há mais nada nos fenômenos. Entretanto, não é possível dizer algo sobre uma determinada qualidade até que ela tenha sido atualizada, uma vez que antes desse momento é apenas uma possibilidade positiva referida às qualidades específicas dos fenômenos. Assim, a primeiridade é a categoria das qualidades.

Por outro lado, a secundidade está relacionada a fatos reais.

As qualidades, na medida em que são gerais, são um tanto vagas e potenciais... As qualidades são preocupadas em fatos, mas não constituem fatos. Os fatos também dizem respeito a assuntos, que são substâncias materiais. Não os vemos como vemos qualidades, ou seja, não estão na própria potencialidade e essência do sentido. (Peirce, 1955, p. 77)

Assim, a secundidade é um modo de estar relacionado a fatos reais e não a possibilidades ou qualidades como a Primeira Classe. De acordo com Peirce (1955), qualidade é um aspecto dos fenômenos, e fato, ação e atualidade são outros. Finalmente, a terceiridade está relacionada às leis.

A terceira categoria de elementos dos fenômenos consiste no que chamamos de leis quando as contemplamos apenas de fora, mas que quando vemos os dois lados do escudo, chamamos de pensamentos. Os pensamentos não são qualidades nem fatos. . . Assim como a ação requer um tipo peculiar de sujeito, matéria, que é estranha à mera qualidade, também neste caso é a mente, como um tipo peculiar de sujeito estranho à mera ação individual. O direito, portanto, é algo tão distante tanto da qualidade quanto da ação como estes são distantes um do outro. (Peirce, 1955, p. 78)

Desta perspectiva, é possível reconhecer possibilidades, qualidades, fatos reais e leis como as principais características da primeiridade, secundidade e terceiridade, e também como as principais características da produção de sinais.

Os modos de ser propostos por Peirce também são importantes para a compreensão dos três componentes dos sinais da proposta de Peirce, uma vez que ele considera que um sinal ou representação I é algo que representa alguém ou algo em algum aspecto ou capacidade, o que cria na mente de uma determinada pessoa um sinal equivalente ou um sinal mais desenvolvido que Pierce chama de interpretante (I) do primeiro sinal. Um sinal representa algo, seu objeto (O). Um sinal pressupõe uma relação triádica entre um representante (R), um objeto (O) e um interpretante (I) e três condições básicas: (1) que algo tem uma qualidade; (2) que algo está relacionado a um existente; e (3) que algo tem que ser compreendido ou traduzido por outra coisa. Um sinal também está relacionado com os três modos de ser, ou seja, a primeiridade está relacionada com o representado, a secundidade está relacionada com o objeto, e a terceiridade está relacionada com o intérprete, o que indica quais qualidades, fatos e leis são também propriedades dos componentes do sinal.

Então, se integrarmos a semiótica de Peirce com a cibernética de segunda ordem, é possível assumir a secundidade como a primeira distinção feita por um observador marcado por um sinal primário, o representado. Assim, para se tornar informação, as diferenças devem ser vistas como sinais pelo observador ou, num sentido diferente, as diferenças são informações quando um intérprete as vê como sinais. De acordo com Brier (2008), a cibernética vê a informação como um critério interno de um sistema autopoietico em resposta a uma perturbação, mas “somente no acoplamento estrutural estabelecido os sinais podem adquirir significado”. A cibernética de segunda ordem traz para a semiótica a ideia de fechamento, acoplamento estrutural, interpretação e linguagem” (Brier, 2008 p. 99). Aqui os sistemas autopoieticos são entendidos da mesma forma que Maturana e Varela (1980) definem as máquinas autopoieticas, ou seja,

uma máquina autopoietica é uma máquina organizada (definida como unidade) como uma rede de processos de produção (transformação e destruição) de componentes que produzem os componentes que a produzem: (i) através de suas interações e transformações regeneram e realizam continuamente a rede de processos (relações) que os produzem; e (ii) a constituem (a máquina) como uma unidade concreta no espaço em que eles (os componentes) existem, especificando o domínio topológico de sua realização como tal rede. (pp. 78-79)

Neste sentido, um paradigma de informação, cognição e comunicação também precisa integrar a consciência em primeira pessoa incorporada em um contexto social no processo de produção de sentido, em sua tentativa de construir uma estrutura capaz de integrar informação, cognição, sentido e comunicação significativa. Para conectar a informação e a consciência humana à sua natureza biológica, é necessária uma teoria de significação, assim como uma teoria de como o significado é produzido nos sistemas vivos. Este é exatamente o principal interesse da biossemiótica, uma proposta que integra a semiótica de Peirce com uma teoria biológica da vida e da evolução. A biossemiótica é uma resposta à impossibilidade da cibernética e das ciências da informação de incluir a consciência e o mundo fenomenológico, e pode ser declinada como um “projeto científico interdisciplinar que se baseia no reconhecimento de que a vida está fundamentalmente fundamentada em processos semióticos” (Hoffmeyer, 2008, p. 3). Nas palavras de Brier (2010),

Depois de trabalhar cerca de 30 anos dentro da cibernética e dos sistemas e seus conceitos de informação e evolução emergente, minha principal crítica é que eles não conseguiram teoricamente integrar uma abordagem fenomenológica

de primeira pessoa e consciência intersubjetiva em sua teoria transdisciplinar de sistemas direcionados por objetivos, nem mesmo na fraca forma de ter apenas a capacidade de ter aquelas experiências sensoriais que todos os sistemas vivos parecem possuir e os robôs parecem incapazes de ter. Assim, quanto a uma teoria transdisciplinar de informação, cognição, comunicação e interpretação deve ir em conexão com nossas atuais habilidades sociais às nossas origens físicas evolucionárias na natureza, não somos capazes de “fazer com que os fins se cumpram” de uma maneira consistente interna e externa. (p. 1905)

A consequência destas omissões é que as ciências humanas, naturais e sociais são transformadas em sistemas de conhecimento incapazes de explicar seus próprios fundamentos e ignorar as origens evolucionistas das habilidades humanas cognitivas e comunicativas e o papel que um observador desempenha no processo de observação, o que gera, por sua vez, um mundo sem o sujeito consciente. É por isso que é muito importante argumentar que consciência, significado e comunicação são também fenômenos naturais que estão intimamente relacionados dentro de um *continuum*, ou seja, dentro de um tipo particular de conexão entre mente e matéria, mas também entre natureza e cultura. Em seguida, para Brier (2010),

somos forçados a substituir a antiga versão da ciência cognitiva baseada no uso do modelo da ciência da informação física e desenvolver teorias que podem nos levar a um nível além dele, até sistemas vivos, sensíveis e dispostos a viver com cognição espontânea. O objetivo é desenvolver uma estrutura mais ampla, transdisciplinar e evolutiva para estudar o desenvolvimento da cognição, da comunicação e do conhecimento no mundo da vida humana. Isto é necessário para integrar o conhecimento das ciências com o conhecimento produzido nas ciências humanas e sociais sobre comunicação, significado e linguagem, a fim de obter uma compreensão mais profunda da produção social do conhecimento e da racionalidade. (p. 1912)

Como argumentado anteriormente, é possível assumir que o significado de um determinado tipo de informação é definido pela *diferença* que um sistema experimenta através dela, e diferença entendida no sentido batesoniano (Bateson, 1972). Ou seja, o significado pode ser concebido como um termo que implica a percepção de sinais e a compreensão da comunicação, o que implica, por sua vez, que o significado é uma diferença realizada no mundo por um sinal que representa algo em algum aspecto ou capacidade, como argumentado por Peirce. Então, o conceito de informação de Shannon é útil para a comunicação no campo da engenharia, mas não na tentativa de formular uma base científica

para uma teoria geral da informação. É por isso que Brier (2010) conclui que há um campo de informação no mundo cibernético, mas não há campo de significado, e também reconhece a importância da semiótica como uma teoria geral de emergência de significado e produção de sinais. Como resultado, a questão da emergência do significado foi deslocada das ciências sociais para a biologia e desenvolveu um novo campo sob o nome de *biossemiótica*, um projeto científico interdisciplinar que se baseia no reconhecimento de que a vida está fundamentada fundamentalmente nos processos semióticos (Hoffmeyer, 2008).

A questão do significado implica uma transformação na forma como é estudada, já que a reflexão passa de uma visão das condições físicas de sua produção para as condições comunicativas, sociais e cognitivas de seu surgimento. Os sinais emergem como processos parciais de produção de sentido, mas o sentido emerge como produto da ação dos sinais: o processo da *semiose*. Temos então, um princípio geral para construir a teoria da comunicação baseada na cibernética e sua noção de produção e emergência de significados nos sistemas vivos. E, portanto, isto pode nos levar ao desenvolvimento da comunicação como um conceito transdisciplinar, no sentido explicado acima, num futuro próximo.

### CONSIDERAÇÕES FINAIS

Comunicação é hoje uma palavra que implica significados diferentes, vários dos quais não só ambíguos, mas também contraditórios. Ela está associada a tantos fenômenos naturais e sociais que sua natureza explicativa parece desaparecer por trás de sua condição polissêmica. O bom senso adotou a comunicação como uma excelente metáfora para designar processos, situações, condições e até problemas sociais, todos eles ligados de alguma forma a uma determinada forma, manifestação ou expressão dos fenômenos comunicativos. Seu poder de nomear diferentes fenômenos foi estendido além do âmbito humano para incluir as formas gerais de vida, a interação entre humanos, objetos e ideias e, em um sentido geral, nas fronteiras de como um organismo conhece e se relaciona com o mundo que o cerca. No entanto, esta condição também gerou um sério problema em relação a sua natureza teórica. A teoria da comunicação parece extremamente ampla de um ponto de vista (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009) e muito restrita de outro (Vidales, 2013). Então, minha intenção neste artigo é apenas delinear as conseqüências que estas duas diferentes propostas podem ter no possível desenvolvimento da comunicação como um conceito transdisciplinar e não a comparação exaustiva entre as propostas teóricas ou a evolução da teoria da comunicação no tempo. Pelo contrário, minha intenção tem sido mostrar como a comunicação pode ser vista como um fenômeno geral ligado ao processo

de produção de sentido em sistemas vivos e como um meta-modelo, duas posições que estou certo que poderiam criar e um enorme consenso no campo da comunicação em relação a sua natureza ontológica, axiológica, epistemológica e metodológica. Ao definir a comunicação como um processo de significação (a partir da semiótica e da cibernética), estamos também definindo seus limites epistemológicos e ontológicos. A ideia é definir a comunicação

de tal forma que sua natureza conceitual possa expandir seu escopo além do campo da comunicação para outros campos e disciplinas acadêmicas, mas de uma forma clara e lógica. Esse é o desafio, mas é também o convite. ■

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# Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty: Cinema in its Continuous Rebirth

## *Deleuze e Merleau-Ponty: O Cinema em seu Renascimento Continuado*

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### ABSTRACT

Some of the most innovative and influential ideas in film theory in recent years are indebted to the works of Gilles Deleuze and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. It is possible to feel the presence of their philosophies and respective investments in the theory of cinema throughout the affective and sensory turns that have taken over the reflection on the seventh art. However, Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty are generally seen as opposites. Our bet is in the reverse direction. Throughout the article, we trace a slippery movement which draws the philosophers close and distances them and, at the end, outlines a kind of alliance. What is envisioned is a way of seeing and venturing through cinema in its continuous rebirth.

**Keywords:** Cinema, Deleuze, Merleau-Ponty

### RESUMO

Algumas das ideias mais inovadoras e influentes da teoria do cinema nos últimos anos estão em dívida com as obras de Gilles Deleuze e Maurice Merleau-Ponty. É possível sentir a presença de suas filosofias e respectivos investimentos na teoria do cinema ao longo das reviravoltas afetivas e sensoriais que tomaram de assalto a reflexão sobre a sétima arte. Contudo, Deleuze e Merleau-Ponty são em geral vistos como opostos. Nossa aposta se faz no sentido contrário. Ao longo do artigo, traçamos um movimento escorregadio de aproximação e distanciamento que, ao final, esboça uma espécie de aliança. O que se vislumbra é uma maneira de ver e se aventurar pelo cinema em seu contínuo renascimento.

**Palavras-chave:** Cinema, Deleuze, Merleau-Ponty

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SOME OF THE most innovative and influential hypotheses, paths, and ideas in film theory in recent years are indebted to the works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Gilles Deleuze. Focusing on perception as an embodied and rooted experience, the first philosopher identified a convergence between phenomenology and cinema: a common intention to make us relearn how to see the world. The second imagined cinema not as a reflection or reproduction of something that already exists, but something like the emergence of a visionary critical activity, open to the Bergsonian universe of energies, processes, and intensities. It is possible to feel the presence of their philosophies and respective investments in film theory throughout the affective and sensorial upheavals that took reflection on the seventh art by storm.

What is curious is the blatant lack of interest in exploring a movement of approximation between these philosophers. In fact, Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty are generally seen as opposites. Deleuze (1985, p. 77) himself saw cinema as a radical alternative to the phenomenological theory of perception, rejecting the phenomenological accounts of cinematographic experience because, according to him, they equate *cinematographic perception* with *natural perception*. Phenomenology, in Deleuze's words, would be *pre-cinematographic*. The author of *The Movement-Image* (1985) and *The Time-Image* (1995) is right about alerting us to the foundationalist aspect that embarrasses Merleau-Ponty's initial phenomenology. And, in fact, Merleau-Ponty's approach in "The Film and the New Psychology" (1983)<sup>1</sup> emphasizes the interaction, continuity, and transition between the filmmaker, the cinema, and the spectator, although the philosopher is always looking for a plane in which these terms are intertwined – without ever meaning the same thing.

Despite Deleuze's comments and references to phenomenology in his film books and in some interviews, this article argues that, although, in general, Deleuze does not follow a phenomenological logic, at certain moments he crosses with phenomenology. With Bergsonian and Peircean inspiration, Deleuze's cinematographic approach explores the image by two explanatory prisms – the movement-image and the time-image – which, in turn, are broken down into several subdivisions (image-perception, image-affection, crystal-image, etc.). According to Deleuze (1985) himself, his work is stated as "an attempt at the classification of images and signs" (p. 7) as in the elaboration of a taxonomy, that is, a classification of cinematographic images and signs. However, phenomenology, as Boaz Hagin (2011) tells us, "is not absent from Deleuze's Bergsonian taxonomy of images" (p. 264), and Deleuze even goes so far as to claim that Bergson mischaracterized cinema and that "phenomenology is right" (Deleuze, 1985, p. 12).

Furthermore, if we take as a starting point Deleuze's requirements for a good transcendental philosophy – in short, immanence and difference –, we will be

<sup>1</sup> Conference presented by Merleau-Ponty at the Institut des Hautes Études Cinématographiques (IDHEC) in Paris on March 13, 1945, the same year of publication of his most famous work, *Phenomenology of Perception*. This famous essay shares with the first two works by the philosopher – the other is *The Structure of Behavior* (2006b) – a posture of questioning about the legacy left by modern rationalism, about the split between the corporeal and reflective thought, about the abandonment of the seeing and feeling in the name of the thought of seeing and feeling.

led to recognize that Merleau-Ponty's work is not homogeneous from beginning to end, and that at the end of his life, the phenomenologist realized that his first works had not been able to conceive the unity of the phenomenal body and the objective body, and outlined a different rapprochement with cinema. The subject, decentralized in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1994), is dissolved in *The Visible and Invisible* (2000). This is one of the reasons why the latter Merleau-Ponty should be situated on the limits of phenomenology (Barbaras, 2014) and would be best described as related to ontology.

I am aware that proposing this approximation/articulation is risky, and I am always tempted to see analogies – which, on a more rigorous level, do not hold up – or to describe the theories of one with the idiom of the other, betraying them both. But as slippery as the intersection between these authors may be, the enterprise is absolutely fertile, not only because it sheds new light on the reach and scope of these theories, but also because, with regard to cinema, Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty may become powerful allies. What is on the horizon is the possibility of an ontological account of cinema, particularly emphasizing its non-mimetic aspect as an ambiguous (Merleau-Ponty) and paradoxical (Deleuze) opening to the simultaneity or partial coincidence of all things.

### A SLIPPERY ENDEVOUR

Michel Foucault (1977, p. 79) once said that Deleuze's *Logic of Sense* (1974) “can be read as the most alien book imaginable from *Phenomenology of Perception*”. If Foucault is right, then the philosophies of Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty, at least as expressed in these two works, would be radically opposed to each other. This article aims, albeit briefly, to question this hypothesis in an investigation on the resonances between the two thinkers. The task is far from obvious, not only because we contradict Foucault's interpretation but above all because we also distance ourselves from how Deleuze himself characterized his relationship with Merleau-Ponty, in particular, and with phenomenology, in general. In fact, Deleuze rarely discusses Merleau-Ponty: among all of the former's books, there are about a dozen references to the latter, almost always negative. Furthermore, although Deleuze published his first text on Bergson in *Les Philosophes Célèbres*, 1956, edited by Merleau-Ponty, there was never, as far as is known, any other significant contact or exchange of ideas between the two thinkers – although another philosophical authority closer to Deleuze, Paul Virilio (1997, p. 42), has said in an interview that the author of *The Movement-Image* had enormously appreciated Merleau-Ponty's last and unfinished work, *The Visible and the Invisible*<sup>2</sup>.

It is also not uncommon to resort to the different conceptual backgrounds from which the works of these two philosophers developed as a way of denying

<sup>2</sup> A book on which Merleau-Ponty was working shortly before his death in 1961, aged 53. Originally entitled *The Origin of Truth* but published under the title that the author adopted at the end, the work, of which only the first part and some notes were written, testifies to an effort to give a new expression to the phenomenologist's thought.

any possible resonance between them. If Deleuze belongs to a generation of thinkers who were inspired by Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud, Merleau-Ponty's frame of reference is headed by Hegel and Husserl. Which is not to say that the phenomenologist did not know Nietzsche, Marx, or Freud, nor that Deleuze was not familiar with Hegel or Husserl; on the contrary, from 1943 to 1948, when Deleuze was a student, the so-called "three Hs" (Hegel, Heidegger, and Husserl) formed the dominant focus of philosophical instruction in French universities. His source of inspiration, however, came from elsewhere even though he was guided by experts on Hegel (Jean Hyppolite) and Heidegger (Jean Beaufret).

A possible and curious counter-argument to the above is the fact that Deleuze (as well as Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault) turns to Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud in an effort to find answers to problems raised, among others, by phenomenologists. It would certainly be an exaggeration to align myself with Alain Beaulieu (2004, p. 11), who claims that phenomenology is the background against which all Deleuzian concepts are intelligible. However, it seems to me that phenomenology, the problems that drive it, and the holes into which it slips also served as inspiration, motivation, and struggle for the so-called "critical thinkers".

The most important argument in favor of resonance between the two thinkers must be – at least initially – philosophical. Therefore, before going to the cinema, it seems to me necessary to at least sketch an approximation with the thinking of Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze. And, in general, both thinkers could be united around a transcendental project. Both examined the conditions of thought, which is to say that they are not motivated by a strictly epistemological issue. Furthermore, their primary interests are not the empirical causes of thought: they do not spend much time discussing, for example, the rules according to which thought works, or should work, in order to reach the truth. The central question of their work revolves around what must be presupposed for a phenomenon such as thought to be possible.

What these two transcendental projects share is precisely the fact that they situate the condition of thought in the empirical: they are guided by immanence. An ontological consequence of this understanding is that if the condition is to be situated within the conditioned, it cannot belong to a being that is fundamentally different from the being of the conditioned. These projects' philosophies are built on this idea of the immanence of the condition, which allows us to think that being is not situated beyond being, but on the same plane as being. Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty agree: the condition is not transcendent, but immanent to the conditioned. In other words, their projects evolve towards an ontology and reject the classical conception of the transcendental condition and the dualism inherent to it: the condition can no longer be associated with the perfect, the infinite, the immutable, or the original, nor can it continue to oppose the imperfect,

finite, changeable, and secondary character of the conditioned. Both thinkers trade this dualism for an immanent being, a being without hierarchies and fundamental differences. Judith Wambacq (2017) corroborates this argument – not without alerting us to the curious fact that Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze use the same notion, *expression*, to describe the immanent relationship of the condition with the conditioned.

Moreover, both understand the relation between the condition and the conditioned as a relation of expression: the essence, which is how the condition is often understood, is expressed by or in the conditioned. As we will see, this suggests that the ontological primacy of the condition is complemented by the epistemological primacy of the conditioned, and also that the ontological power is distributed over the condition and the conditioned. (Wambacq, 2017, p. 3)

It is following this path that Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze arrive at their perhaps most important notions, *flesh* and *virtual*, respectively. The flesh and the virtual combine unity and difference: the flesh/virtual is an event of indefinite differences, always open by a kind of fundamental void. Both authors emphasize that this emptiness or openness (what Deleuze considers as the problematic nature of the virtual and Merleau-Ponty as the invisible or divergent nature of the flesh) is not a contingent absence. It is not something that is really empty, but is potentially complete, it is not something invisible to us, but something visible to someone else. It is, therefore, an opening that is not opposed to closing, but that goes beyond this opposition. It is fundamentally open – it must remain open – because it is the condition of the visible and the real. An opening that necessarily implies an uninterrupted process of individuation.

The term “individuation” was not thrown here by accident. Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze describe individuation, or the production of concepts and things, whether living or inanimate, from the flesh or the virtual, as a process of differentiation of a pre-individual field. Instead of being a mere copy or imitative concretization of the ontological basis, the real/visible is a true creation. Therefore, it is curious that both thinkers also use the notion of *crystallization* to denote this process of differentiation. By understanding individuation as crystallization, Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze therefore indicate that the relationship between the current and the visible, on the one hand, and the virtual and the invisible, on the other, implies creation, conservation, difference, and immanence.

It is well known that individuation and crystallization are central terms for Gilbert Simondon and that they inform Deleuze’s work. But there is also a link between Simondon and Merleau-Ponty: the former was a student of the latter and dedicated

the first part of his doctoral dissertation, *The Individual and its Physico-Biological Genesis*, to the teacher. This dedication involves more than a gesture of reverence for the master. Their works, while seemingly crossing different fields, resonate at a number of points. Barbaras (2004), for example, refers to the fact that Simondon e Merleau-Ponty describe the individual as starting from individuation, and not vice versa. This suggests a *radical ontological reversal*, namely, the fact that Being can no longer be characterized as a substance subject to the principle of identity but must, on the contrary, be understood “on the basis of the possibility of the individuating processes, that is, as ‘not consisting solely in itself,’ ‘more than a unity,’ capable of ‘being out of phase with itself, to overflow itself here and there from its center’” (Barbaras, 2004, p. 185)<sup>3</sup>.

In other words, neither Deleuze nor Merleau-Ponty see this immanence of being as the annihilation of difference. This is well known in the case of Deleuze – he is, after all, the thinker of difference – but Merleau-Ponty, contrary to what Deleuze himself sometimes implied, is not far off.

Despite the resonances just sketched here<sup>4</sup>, one must never neglect the irreconcilable elements of the philosophers’ respective systems. One might ask, for example, whether Merleau-Ponty’s non-identical unity is really similar to Deleuze’s notion of a unity that can only be said as difference. In fact, we find in Merleau-Ponty (2006a) several passages that confirm the differential nature of the unity of the flesh – the sensible is “being through difference and not through identity” (p. 382) – as well as moments that seem to go against it – “since they are all differences, extreme distances from the same thing” (Merleau-Ponty, 2000, p. 87). There is no denying, for example, that Merleau-Ponty’s ontology focuses more on immanence than, as is the case with Deleuze, on difference, nor ignoring that Deleuze’s theory of individuation is much more developed than Merleau-Ponty’s.

### MERLEAU-PONTY, DELEUZE, AND CINEMA

Let’s go to the movies. After all, what interests us above all is how this movement of approximation and distancing between Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty inevitably leads us to Henri Bergson<sup>5</sup> and to the question of time and cinema. And, as I argue in this article, although people still insist today on having Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty as opposites, the philosophers’ advances in film theory remain close in many ways. Both Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology and Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism dismantle epistemological systems based on non-corporeal acts of meaning or cognition. The impulse to determine a clear dividing line between subject and world, perception and perceived reality, subjective and objective experience, is alike suspended and consequently undermined. Merleau-Ponty’s and Deleuze’s cinematographic advances are based on the continuity of the human body and the world, on the non-representative

<sup>3</sup> Barbaras (2004, p. 185) goes even further and underlines that Simondon’s notion of transduction, which designates something like the process of unification of beings as this process proceeds from the very difference between them, would be an inheritance of the term “dimensionality” by Merleau-Ponty.

<sup>4</sup> To read more about this dialogue in a movement of approximation and distancing between the philosophical projects of Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze, see Wambacq (2017).

<sup>5</sup> Wambacq (2017) invests more deeply in this dialogue between Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze with the intercession of Bergson. The author even goes so far as to underline that what Merleau-Ponty puts forward as an alternative to Bergson actually corresponds to what Deleuze claims to find in Bergson: “This convergence finds its strongest proof in the fact that in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Deleuze situates his understanding of depth in the tradition that informs Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of it” (p. 127). Although, for Wambacq, there is no Merleau-Pontian equivalent for the conception of time found in Deleuze’s second film book, based on aion (p. 129).



emphasis of cinema, on a sensorial and affective approach to the world – replacing the purely mental and visual methods of the disembodied cogito. What can be seen after the lasting influence of Deleuze’s cinema books and the rediscovery of a cinematographic theory of phenomenological inspiration<sup>6</sup> is a certain protagonism of notions such as body, virtual, sensation, sensitive, and affect, among others, largely replacing the semiotic-structuralist, psychoanalytic, ideological-Marxist, and cognitivist models in mainstream film theory.

First of all: despite the many affinities among Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty, it is once again important to recognize the differences between the two philosophers. Deleuze himself contrasted his Bergsonian theory of cinema with a phenomenological conception of cinema on several occasions in the first volume of his work on the seventh art, *The Movement-Image*. Given Deleuze’s comments in some interviews in relation to phenomenology, it is common to develop a reading that denies the possibility of an approximation between the philosopher of *The Time-Image* and Merleau-Ponty. Deleuze blames phenomenology for understanding cinematographic experience exclusively in the light of natural perception, taking as a starting point the subject’s natural anchoring in the world and subsequently interpreting movement as a pure “Gestalt” organized in a subject’s perceptual field.

In general, the vast majority of authors, having in mind, as Deleuze does, only the first phase of Merleau-Ponty’s work, usually reproduce this criticism. While for Merleau-Ponty sensation and affect are subjective phenomena that arise from an intentional and individualized relationship with the world and from a non-qualitative notion of time, Deleuze considers the sensational and the affective as material flows whose individuation and exchange do not rest on subjectified intentions, but on the functioning of an anonymous and non-organic force or life. But does this criticism really hold up? On a closer look, wouldn’t it be possible to identify moments in cinema books in which Deleuze himself seems to take the side of phenomenology? Moreover, was not Merleau-Ponty himself, towards the end of his life, engaged in a redescription of his project towards an ontology?

Contributing to this confusion are works that have tried to combine Deleuze’s works with phenomenology or have noted a similarity between the two, but have done so ambivalently or without sticking more directly to the consequences of their positioning. For example, in her work on the cinematic experience, Jennifer M. Barker (2009) very briefly suggests various “intersections,” “possible convergences”, or a “possible overlap” between Deleuze and phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger. However, the author also adds that “any easy alignment” between the existential phenomenological approach and a Deleuzian approach would be “impossible” (p. 165).

<sup>6</sup>To read more about the long period of quarantine imposed on phenomenologically inspired film theory, see Andrew (1978).

An additional example can be found in the first chapter of Vivian Sobchack's seminal *Address of the Eye* (1992). She writes that Deleuze affirms the meaning of cinematic movement and images "phenomenologically" (p. 31) and that his work "stands in some relation" and "parallel" to her own phenomenological study "in many respects" (p. 30). However, she dedicates only one paragraph to this discussion, in which she admits that Deleuze criticizes phenomenology, finding differences between the two projects that seem to overcome any affinity. Sobchack never elaborates on the value that Deleuze's work can have for a phenomenology of cinema. The author of *The Movement-Image* is not mentioned again in *Address of the Eye* and appears as extremely marginal in Sobchack's later phenomenological work.

Laura Marks (2000) is perhaps the one that best balances Deleuze's work and diverse phenomenological insights. Although she recognizes that his work is "deeply theoretical" (p. xiv), she says she is far from the "rigor of academic knowledge" (p. xvii). Averse to more rigid theoretical frameworks, which could – she fears – give her work a totalizing impetus, Marks does not like the idea that her commitments to objects and ideas need to "eventually give way to a coherent critical structure" (p. xiii). In other words, she sees no problem in working with Deleuze's concepts in one paragraph and then embarking on phenomenological texts in the next, and she does not feel committed to investigating the theoretical implications of this methodological and philosophical conjugation.

A good way to untangle this node and tackle the problem is precisely to explore how Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty read and use Bergson, a philosopher they knew very well and to whom they often referred in their own works. Bergson is at the basis of Deleuzian thinking about cinema and his philosophy could not be absent from the discussions about memory and time present in Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* and *The Visible and the Invisible*. However, it might seem at first glance that this attempt to use Bergson to look for resonances between Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze's views on cinema is threatened by the following statement by the author of *The Movement-Image*:

It was necessary, at any cost, to overcome this duality of image and movement, of consciousness and thing. Two very different authors were to undertake this task at about the same time: Bergson and Husserl. Each had his own war cry: all consciousness is consciousness of something (Husserl), or more strongly, all consciousness is something (Bergson). (Deleuze, 1985, p. 83)

In this often quoted passage in the fourth chapter of *The Movement-Image*, Deleuze describes an almost mythological birth of Bergson's theory

and Husserl's phenomenology as both tried to overcome the conflict between materialism and idealism, which, according to the author, had reached a moment of crisis. It is precisely in this context that Deleuze offers his brief commentary on phenomenology and cinema – after misleadingly suggesting that Husserl never mentions cinema<sup>7</sup> and incorrectly claiming that Sartre does not cite the cinematographic image in *The Imaginary*. And, according to Deleuze, Bergson's attempt to overcome the “duality” of image (or consciousness) and movement (or body) is fundamentally cinematographic while Husserl's phenomenological attempt must be considered pre-cinematographic. Bergson's strategy, in other words, would be radically different from phenomenology. Why?

The notion of image, defined as something that acts and reacts in relation to other images in all their elementary parts, is central to Bergson's argument. An image is thus defined by the movements it undergoes and exerts. An image is nothing more than movement. For Bergson, things and consciousness are images and, therefore, the dualism between them would be dissolved. And since moving images are the instruments of cinema, Deleuze argues that this overcoming of dualism is absolutely cinematographic. Unlike Bergson, who was against cinema and what he saw as an attempt to restore time through a succession of positions in space, Deleuze believes that, although movement is artificially reproduced by cinema, the spectator perceives it as “pure”. If the means of recomposing movement are artificial, the result is not. In other words, movement cannot be seen as an addition to the image. It is in the image.

Merleau-Ponty, for Deleuze, thinks in an absolutely different way. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, the phenomenologist understands movement as the passage of immobile and privileged moments, except that, for him, these moments are no longer essential, but existential. Movement does not invoke intelligible forms, but perceptible Gestalts, which organize one's field of perception according to their being-for-the-world so that this being-for-the-world constitutes the anchoring point of perception. For Deleuze, phenomenology would deny movement any creative character. After all, according to this view, the moving thing differs from the immobile thing only insofar as it occupies a different spatiotemporal position. Time is thus reduced to a homogeneous line – it is the same at all times and evolves linearly. Time is an independent variable. It is spatialized because it is understood as the juxtaposition of arbitrary, immobile, and external moments. In other words, in Deleuze's opinion, phenomenology would be pre-cinematographic.

In addition to this spatialized view of time initiated by the modern natural sciences, Bergson mentions another “wrong” conception of movement, namely that offered by the ancient Greeks. The Greeks, like the moderns, do not attach

<sup>7</sup> As Hagin remembers, in a posthumous collection of articles by Husserl (2005) published in the 1980s, the father of phenomenology cites the seventh art a few times.

a constitutive value to time; instead, they conceive of it as neutral, again like the moderns. Ultimately, what matters to the Greeks are infinite and immovable Essences or Ideas, so movement is reduced to the transition between these Essences. In other words, time is irrelevant in itself. Deleuze places Merleau-Ponty in this same tradition and underlines that, therefore, the phenomenologist could only see cinema as an ambiguous ally. Cinema would emerge against the anchoring of the perceiving subject of the world. In this way, by raising natural perception as a norm, phenomenology would constitute a static focus, based on an intentional awareness in a situation. This is what Gilles Deleuze (1992) comments in an interview with *Cahiers du Cinéma*:

It's very odd. I have the feeling that modern philosophical conceptions of the imagination take no account of cinema: they either stick to movement but lose sight of the image, or they stick to the image losing sight of its movement. It's odd that Sartre, in *The Imaginary*, takes into account every type of image except the cinematographic image. Merleau-Ponty was interested in cinema, but only in relation to the general principles of perception and behavior. (p. 64)

This privileged notion of natural perception would make the phenomenologist see movement as successive “poses” that vary according to the perceiving founding subject and situation. For Deleuze, phenomenology sticks to pre-cinematographic conditions, which would justify its embarrassment and ambiguity in relation to cinema – sometimes denouncing the cinematographic movement as unfaithful to the conditions of perception, sometimes exalting it as a new narrative, capable of approaching the perceived and the perceiver, the world and perception. This is what the philosopher contests in *The Movement-Image*:

Cinema can, with impunity, bring us close to things or take us away from them and revolve around them, it suppresses both the anchoring of the subject and the horizon of the world. Hence it substitutes an implicit knowledge and a second intentionality for the conditions of natural perception. It is not the same as the other arts, which rather aim at something unreal through the world, but makes the world itself something unreal or a tale [récit]. With cinema, it is the world which becomes its own image, and not an image which becomes world. (Deleuze, 1985, p. 77)

The movement that interests Merleau-Ponty is that of the gaze focusing on an object (or a part of it), which the author compares with the movement of the camera as it approaches any object. And the author, in fact, writes that the canvas has no horizon and that the horizon makes things meaningful and gives them their identity (Merleau-Ponty, 1994, p. 82). In *Phenomenology*

of *Perception*, cinema appears in a discussion about the perception of objects in what the philosopher calls natural perception. According to it, one directs their gaze to an area to reveal it. This revelation brings the area and its objects to life, excluding other areas and relegating them to the background or periphery, making them dormant. Merleau-Ponty (1994) says:

To see an object is either to have it on the fringe of the visual field and be able to concentrate on it, or else respond to this summons by actually concentrating upon it. When I do concentrate my eyes on it, I become anchored in it, but this coming to rest of the gaze is merely a modality of its movement: I continue inside one object the exploration which earlier hovered over them all, and in one movement I close up the landscape and open the object. (p. 82)

However, Merleau-Ponty also says that in cinema something else occurs, and the perception it offers is completely different. According to him, in natural perception, when one's gaze plunges into an object, the surrounding objects over which their gaze hovered before recede to the periphery and become a horizon, whereas in cinema, as the camera approaches an object, the objects around it are no longer visible on the periphery of our gaze. In one, the horizon guarantees the identity of the object. In another, the canvas "has no horizons".

When, in a film, the camera is trained on an object and moves nearer to it to give a close-up view, we can remember that we are being shown the ash tray or an actor's hand, we do not actually identify it. This is because the screen has no horizons. (Merleau-Ponty, 1994, p. 104)

It never ceases to be curious. Several works written in the wake of Deleuze's film books have criticized phenomenologically-inspired approaches to cinema and particularly pointed out that human experience is incommensurable with perception in cinema, while a phenomenology of cinema would argue otherwise. Steven Shaviro (1993), for example, punishes André Bazin for taking for granted "the anthropocentric structures of phenomenological reflection", saying that "film dislodges sensation from its supposed natural conditions" (p. 30). Jean Ungaro (2000, pp. 52-53), in turn, explains that the way we perceive things, according to Husserl, is at odds with the way we perceive things in cinema. While the perception of a thing happens through a flow of different sketches that one experiences or apprehends during the perception, in cinema, the sketches are no longer one's own, but created by the film's director.

Deleuze himself claims that Merleau-Ponty distinguishes very clearly between natural perception and cinematic perception, that the phenomenologist never

tries to eliminate this distinction. And it is precisely this understanding that leads Deleuze not only to say that Merleau-Ponty sees cinema in a dubious way (always contrasting it with natural perception) but also to take the side of phenomenology to the detriment of Bergson. Cinema is not an affront to the Merleau-Pontian project and there is no difficulty or conflict between cinema and analyses that consider the differences between the two types of perception. Deleuze makes it clear that phenomenologists do not try to impose natural perception on the film or its spectators, and it is Bergson who mistakenly believes that cinema reproduces the same illusion as natural perception. According to Deleuze (1985), “phenomenology is right” (p. 12) in this regard, and it was Bergson (although, it is worth repeating, the philosopher of *Matter and Memory* is Deleuze’s conductor in cinema) who misunderstood the true nature of cinematic viewing.

Also curious are some of the reasons Deleuze describes to explain his disagreement with Bergson. The former claims that the technical means by which cinema works – still frames at a certain speed – are not what is given to “us” spectators. We never see the individual still frames, but rather an intermediate image to which the movement belongs as an “immediate datum”. What appears for us, spectators, is “movement-image” (Deleuze, 1985, p. 12). This resource given to the spectator is surprising because, among other reasons, it is often said that Deleuze’s cinema books do not seem to have much interest in spectators. In a book released in the early 2000s and very well received in the Anglo-Saxon world of film studies, Barbara Kennedy states, for example, that Sobchack’s arguments are “dangerous” as they still maintain the privilege usually granted to notions such as “meaning” and prioritize “subjectivity”. Kennedy (2000) explains:

Sobchack’s work is predominantly a phenomenological explanation of the cinematic experience and whilst it provides a stepping stone in my argument, it does not go far enough because it is based on a theory of “natural perception” (that is the body and mind being separate entities) rather than on a molecular coagulation of perception and the materiality of the brain/body/mind imbrication. Sobchack does, however, break down the traditional oppositions between subject and object, mind and body, the visual and the visible object, arguing that film has always been both a dialectical and a dialogical engagement of viewing subjects. But this still maintains a concern with subjectivity, with “viewing subjects”. It still is locked into identitarian thinking and concern with psychic constructions of subjectivity as a fundamental element of the filmic experience. Nonetheless, her argument is still in danger of maintaining a prioritization of “signification” and “meaning” and the fundamental importance of subjectivity. She says, for example, “any film, however abstract or structural-materialist, presupposes that it will be understood

as signification”. I want to move further away from signification to seeing film as “event”, as “affect”, or as “becoming”. (pp. 56-57)

This excerpt reveals nothing more than Kennedy’s unfamiliarity not only with phenomenology and its various ramifications but also with the tradition of film theory that Sobchack drew from this source – not to mention a certain intellectual arrogance present in the suggestion that it would be necessary to overcome the concern with subjectivity which still exists in Sobchack’s work. Kennedy parades throughout his book an absolutely inexplicable aversion towards any analysis that crosses the subject of subjectivity, as if this would be a bad starting point to think about cinema, to the experience of watching a movie, or perhaps, an uninteresting issue.

The question of subjectivity is certainly not the origin or the end of Deleuze’s cinema books; however, it is possible to identify moments in which the question of the subjective perception of cinema and of some specific films becomes important guidelines for the author<sup>8</sup>. In other words: contrary to what is still widely said today, phenomenology is not absent from Deleuze’s Bergsonian taxonomy of images. In fact, it plays an important role in *The Movement-Image*, when Deleuze discusses spectators and where he claims – conjugating a phenomenological argument about spectators’ passivity with a Bergsonian understanding of movement – that cinematic spectators are not easy prey for “cinematographic illusion”. Deleuze also makes use of phenomenological concepts in several passages. The Heideggerian notion of *being with*, for example, is used to discuss the status of the image-perception in relation to the perception of characters (Deleuze, 1985, pp. 72, 74).

Deleuze is right to call our attention to the foundationalist aspect that embarrasses Merleau-Ponty’s early phenomenology. This embarrassment, however, does not jeopardize the phenomenologist’s assertions about the kinesthetic character of perception. At no time, whether in “The Film and the New Psychology” or in *Phenomenology of Perception*, does Merleau-Ponty make any reservations about cinematographic art or denounce its movement as unfaithful to the conditions of perception, nor does he conceive movement in cinema as a succession of poses. On the contrary, like Deleuze, Merleau-Ponty considers image and movement as inseparable. The cinematographic image, says the phenomenologist, is a temporal form in movement, a “new reality” that cannot be reduced to a simple sum of the elements used.

In his only text dedicated exclusively to cinema, “The Film and the New Psychology”, Merleau-Ponty insists that the uniqueness of the seventh art lies in its power to bring together different views. The author describes at length the

<sup>8</sup> Joe Hughes (2008) even goes so far as to say, “it seems that Deleuze’s study of cinema is just as much a study of subjectivity” (p. 25).

# D

<sup>9</sup>The same inexpressible close-up of an actor is successively mounted with different shots (a table served with food, a child's coffin, a naked woman etc.). The montage leads the spectator to perceive and interpret the actor's expression differently.

<sup>10</sup> Ismail Xavier, organizer of the book *A Experiência do Cinema* (1983), which contains the Portuguese translation of Merleau-Ponty's text by José Lino Grünewald, explains that Pudovkin was the one who publicized Kulechov's works in France, where the author had carried out a conference series. Hence the philosopher's mistake.

Kulechov effect<sup>9</sup> (which he refers to as the “Pudovkin effect”<sup>10</sup>) and gives unreasonable praise to editing, understood as the essential characteristic of cinema. At no point does Merleau-Ponty approach a critique of classical decoupage, much less a defense of the use of the depth of field or the long-shot. On the contrary, the phenomenologist celebrates the convergence of his philosophy with the reflections of montage theorists, something that would be discussed only as a negation by other important authors at that time such as Bazin, Amédée Aysre, and Michel Mourlet. “The Film and New Psychology” is one of the first essays to engage in a dialogue between cinema and phenomenology. Its originality, as observed by Fernão Ramos (2012), is even manifested by an absence: neorealism. If, on the one hand, we can say that Merleau-Ponty's text predates the explosion of this movement in Europe, on the other hand, it is not very difficult to see the philosopher's lack of familiarity with the then contemporary cinematographic production.

In fact, Merleau-Ponty's target in his essay was not exactly cinema but the new psychology, a theme that would pave the way for his most famous work, *Phenomenology of Perception*, also published in 1945. Cinema in this essay is always treated in its generality, and Merleau-Ponty cites a few films without ever having more frank clashes with them. Although the notion that the seventh art tacitly deciphers the world and men has taken root, the “unequal balance that leads cinema to serve as a counterweight in a brilliant analysis of contemporary psychology” is clear (Ramos, 2012, p. 54).

But does Deleuze's presentation of Merleau-Ponty's conception of time – as a neutral container that must be assumed in order to think about the transition from one existentially fixed Gestalt to another – actually make sense? Does time in Merleau-Ponty have no ontological reality, no intrinsic relationship with the things that move and the way they move? It seems to us definitely incorrect to present Merleau-Ponty's view of time as a container, as something in which things happen. For the author, it is not that things are in time, it is time that is in things themselves – just as perception must be situated not in the observer, but in the perceived. It also cannot be said that Merleau-Ponty's time is merely a conceptual notion, something that must be assumed in order to think about transition in space. And, although Merleau-Ponty's time has a unitary function, working as an anchor point, reference point, and distribution, it is not itself a unit. That is to say: Merleau-Ponty's time is certainly more immanent than Deleuze presents it. If we consider Deleuze's philosophy as a developed articulation of Bergson's philosophy of time, we may have to recognize a difference between Merleau-Ponty's and Bergson/Deleuze's anti-dualism, but this is not the difference cited by Deleuze.



While in *Phenomenology of Perception* the analysis of the perceptual phenomenon allows Merleau-Ponty to describe the experience by pointing out the coupling between subject and object, between the body and the world, starting from the duality between these poles and reconciling them in the unity of the experiential field, in *The Visible and Invisible*, this formulation is revised. In his unfinished book, the experience is described as dehiscence, as fission where, from the primordial unity of the flesh, one gives rise to the other, body and world, observer and observed, me and the other. In other words, from identity the philosopher arrives at difference. With the introduction of the notion of flesh – of a properly ontological nature –, Merleau-Ponty radicalizes his movement of refusal of dualisms. This notion indicates at the same time the reversible nature of the body (which transits between the positions of body-subject and body-object) and the primordial unity between body and world. Reversibility then becomes more than a mark of the relationships between subject and object, being described as what defines the flesh.

It is precisely with the concept of flesh that Merleau-Ponty inscribes temporality at the center of his reflection on being – and he does so using a term resistant to the abstraction that the term “time” easily induces. The temporal dimension of flesh is revealed by a long and curious list of temporal metaphors that describe flesh as genesis: “emergence”, “transcendence”, “dehiscence”, “pregnancy of possibilities”. By introducing time as a structural dimension of experience, Merleau-Ponty circumvents the undesirable effect of the spatializing vocabulary, which so easily leads us to two-dimensional conceptions of being. And, in this way, temporality gains a prominent place in the Merleau-Pontian description of experience. Perhaps we can say that it basically becomes the fundamental center of gravity of experience since temporality is the field in which the dimensions of world and subject are implicated.

“Time must be understood as a subject, and the subject must be understood as time”, states Merleau-Ponty (1994, p. 566). The subject cannot be understood as an entity that preexists time and relates to it “from outside”, it is only in time. Thus, time is not just a notion on which one reflects, or a flow of events in which one locates themselves, it is “a dimension of our being” (p. 557). Time is also not a real process, a succession of events that the subject would limit himself to recording. It is born from the subject’s relationship with things in the world. Without this presence of the subject, time cannot be recognized as such. Time, in other words, is not the container where events happen: it is itself the place of events. It is the production of qualitative differences, not quantitative variation.

Although Merleau-Ponty was unfair in his criticisms of Bergson, it should be noted that the phenomenologist’s conception of time depends heavily on some crucial

Bergsonian insights. Bergson occupies a central place in Merleau-Ponty's reflections on time in *The Visible and the Invisible*. Like Bergson, Merleau-Ponty is opposed to the explanation of the passage of time as a succession of instants. And, again, like Bergson, Merleau-Ponty reflects on the coexistence of present and past and even goes so far as to suggest that time is what explains all differences, itself being nothing more than differentiation. The phenomenologist even uses Bergsonian metaphors, such as subtraction, to explain the relationship between time and its different updates. Together, these elements show that Merleau-Ponty cannot easily be associated with the group of philosophers who think of time as a neutral vessel.

And it is in this redescription of the sensible, in this movement towards a new ontology, that Merleau-Ponty also sketches another approach to cinema. In some of his last work notes, it is possible to identify his desire to incorporate cinema into the reflections he had been developing on literature and painting. This rapprochement crosses the question of vision as the reversibility of the flesh, "this precession of what is about what is seen and makes one see, of what is seen and made to be seen about what is, [as] an encounter, at a crossroads, of all aspects of Being" (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 44). Although he does not go in-depth into his comments on cinema, the phenomenologist's notes and last essays seem to hint, or at least make us infer, the orientations according to which the last phase of Merleau-Ponty's thought could have developed an ontological account of cinema, emphasizing, above all, its non-mimetic character, as a presentation of the unrepresentable.

We thus glance at one more affinity: art has as its basic reference the invisible forces that move our world. Deleuze (2007) writes: "In art, both in painting and in music, it is not about reproducing or inventing forms, but capturing forces" (p. 62). Merleau-Ponty (2004) agrees: painting, he says, "gives visible existence to what profane vision believes invisible" (p. 16). It is notable that they both cite Cézanne. According to Deleuze (2007), Cézanne does not paint what a mountain looks like, but how "the bending force of mountains" is active; he does not even paint what an apple looks like, but the "germinal force of the apple" (p. 68). Merleau-Ponty (2004), in turn, praises Cézanne for not having painted an apple when determining its contours and thus fixing its essence, but considering the contour "the ideal limit towards which the sides of the apple flee in depth" (p. 103). The painter could say that he painted the apple event. Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze, in short, consider Cézanne a painter who manages to make visible the invisible process that gives rise to something instead of being content by making the static essence that outlines something.

This is the cinema that Deleuze wants and that the second Merleau-Ponty, in his analysis of painting and vision, makes us infer: a cinema that expresses

the desire to restore confidence in the world and rediscover the possibilities of a body in an encounter with the unthinking. The issue at stake here is not that of the presence of bodies but, as the philosopher and author of *The Image-Time* explains through Jean-Louis Schefer, to describe the ways in which it is possible to restore world and body in cinema from the point of view of their absence. That is to say: cinema does not have as its objective the reconstitution of a presence of bodies, in perception and action, but rather the effectuation, the putting in motion, of a primordial genesis of bodies in the name of something like the beginning of the visible – which is still neither figure nor action.

It is not very different from what the latest Merleau-Ponty seeks: a return to perceptive faith. From an unshakable adherence to sensible certainties, he aims to suspend the instrumental view of the world, breaking with the philosophical tradition of the starting point and leading the philosopher to lose his sovereignty, to restore the experience as an initiation to the mysteries of the world. The power of experience is to open us to what is not us. It is an exercise of what has not yet been subjected to subject-object separation. It is promiscuity of things, bodies, words, ideas.

It is the elaboration of a theory that maintains a search effect that is on the agenda of both philosophers. Image as a dynamic principle endowed with certain powers and potency that engender forms of life and thought. Image as an indivisible, undecidable amalgam that gives birth to and radiates the world, reorganizing the concrete and the abstract, the animate and the inanimate, the actual and the virtual, the general and the particular. A cinema that shapes (the term, more associated with Deleuze, is not there for nothing) rather than reflects reality, that does not clarify a reality that already exists but sheds light on one that is in the process of taking shape. A cinema that is neither an appreciation nor a judgment of the world, but belief and faith in its continued birth.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

By way of conclusion, although the general principle of organization of Deleuze's cinema books does not follow a phenomenological logic, it seems to me a mistake to understand Deleuze's comments as a pure and simple rejection of Merleau-Ponty. On the contrary, Deleuze's cinematic Bergsonism is neither exactly phenomenological nor entirely averse to phenomenology, as has often been argued. The two approaches can meet and forge additional connections between each other. This is because Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty definitely do not examine art in terms of what it says about being nor what it means or says about itself. In fact, we could go even further and say that for both philosophers there

is no fundamental difference between all the arts and all the human sciences. These are all forms of thinking. More specifically, they are all forms of creative and speculative thinking.

It is quite true, as we have seen, that there are divergences with regard to the philosophical principles that guide the efforts of these authors in the seventh art. Their interests and backgrounds, however, are not necessarily exclusive. Reading Merleau-Ponty with Deleuze in mind and vice versa clearly reveals a possible continuity between the two philosophies. And this curiously implies changes in relation to how tradition presents these philosophies individually, whether by extracting Deleuze from the triumvirate in which he is usually mentioned (Foucault, Deleuze, and Derrida) and offering new ways to expand his reach or by affirming ontological immanence as a central theme in the philosophers' accounts of perception, art, and language – which contradicts the idea of thinking or experiencing the subject as a condition of possibility of perception, art, and language but also replaces the question of the relationship between thought and experience, on the one hand, and being, on the other, with the question of the relationship between thought and experience.

Despite the immanent and differential inspiration of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, we must recognize that, apparently, Deleuze does not consider this inspiration enough to sympathize with the phenomenologist. Deleuze is certainly not always the most careful – or fair – reader of Merleau-Ponty, having missed some elements that would make the author of *The Visible and the Invisible* an ally. Yet it is not unimaginable, for example, that Deleuze realized the importance of a properly developed differential theory of individuation when criticizing what he called “perverted” theories of immanence – including the work of Merleau-Ponty. Against this light, the fact that Deleuze replaces “structure” with “machine,” that he abandons “langue” and “parole” completely, that he develops the concept of “force,” that he defines time as the power of differentiation, and so on, should only be considered a fine-tuning of earlier theories of immanence and difference. All this to say, with the help of Wambacq (2017), that despite the regrets, “ultimately, Deleuze travels further down a road that, as I have tried to show in this book, they shared for at least part of the way” (p. 223).

In short, both Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze invested in a philosophy of immanence. This immanence, however, does not imply, in either project (although the issue is more elaborated in Deleuze), that the difference between the condition and the conditioned is dissolved. It is, shall we say, curious: in the impossibility of an absolute coincidence between ground and ground, the partial nature of this “coincidence” is precisely what allows us to access the ground, as Merleau-Ponty would say. Deleuze would not be that far from this formulation, although

he would use other terms. That is to say, the impossibility of apprehending the virtual in its entirety is exactly what allows the infinite flow of updates to continue. “The difference between the dynamic, open, nonidentical, non-positive ground and the static, closed, identical, and positive grounded is not imposed from outside but has a transcendental reason”, explains Wambacq (2017, p. 216). It is precisely in this sense that it can be said that Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy has a “differential” inspiration. In his thought, as in Deleuze’s, difference plays a central role as it explains why the expressions that shape the background cannot, and must not, coincide with the background. There is a rift that must remain open, “a dynamic”, adds Wambacq, “that cannot be stopped, and an ambiguity (Merleau-Ponty) or paradox (Deleuze) that cannot be disentangled because they are the ground of the expressions” (p. 216).

Philosophy, for Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty, exists in the interrogative mode. It answers a question that must forever remain open, must reject any possible endpoint – ask and answer, again. And so, each and every work has a certain unthought, that is, what through it, only through it, comes to us as not yet thought. This unthinking does not belong to Merleau-Ponty or Deleuze, much less to their fervent followers and their respective followers. To think, as the phenomenologist tells us, probably with the endorsement of the philosopher from *The Time-Image*,

is not to possess the objects of thought; it is to circumscribe through them a domain for thinking that we do not think yet. As the perceived world endures only through the reflections, shadows, levels, horizons between things, which are not things and not nothing, but on the contrary delimit themselves the fields of possible variation in the same thing and the same world – so the works and thought of a philosopher are all certain articulations between things said, for which there is no dilemma of objective interpretation and arbitrariness, since they are not objects of thought, since, like shadow and reflection, they would be destroyed by being subjected to analytic observation or insulating thought and since we can be faithful to and find them only by thinking again (Merleau-Ponty, 1991, p. 176). ■

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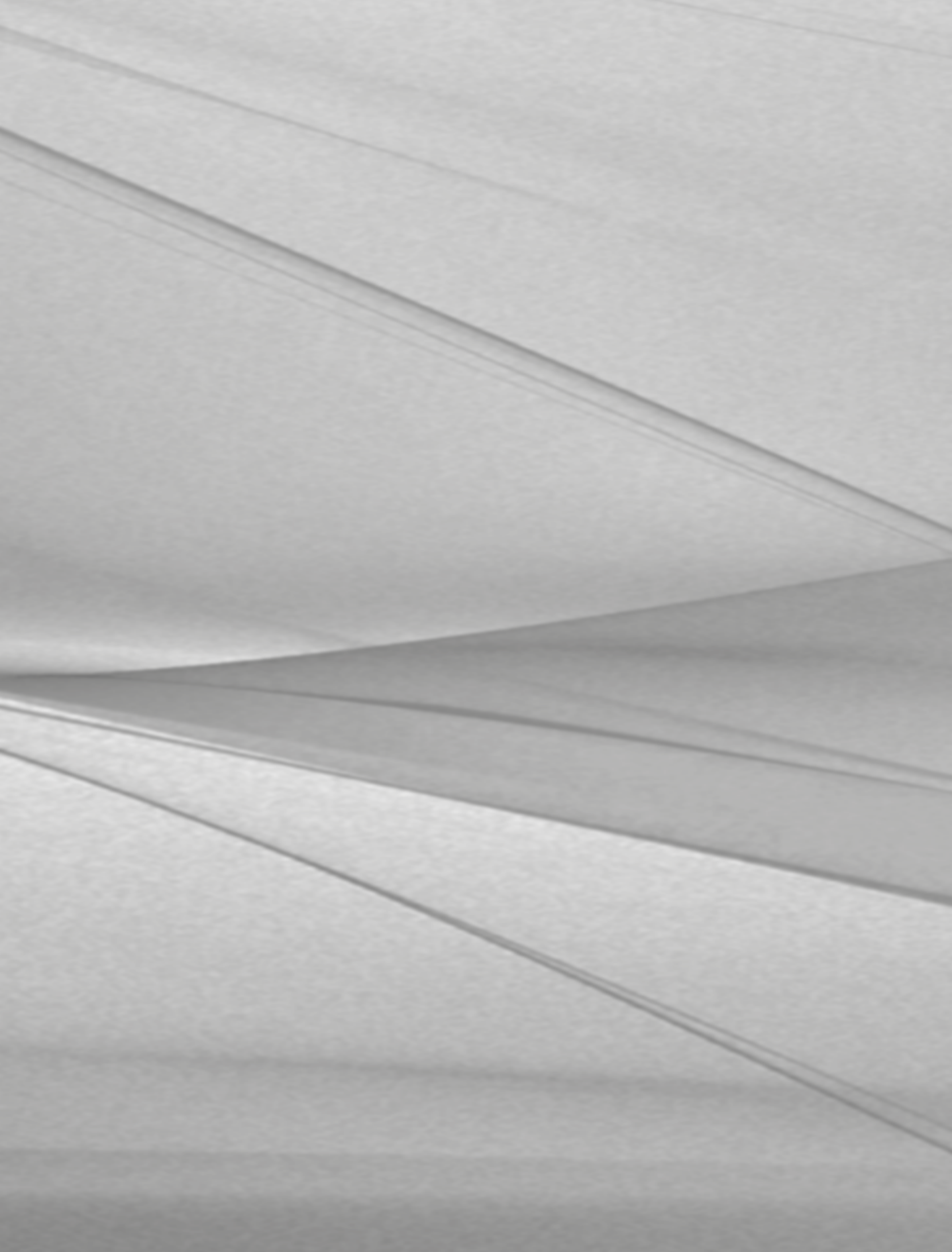
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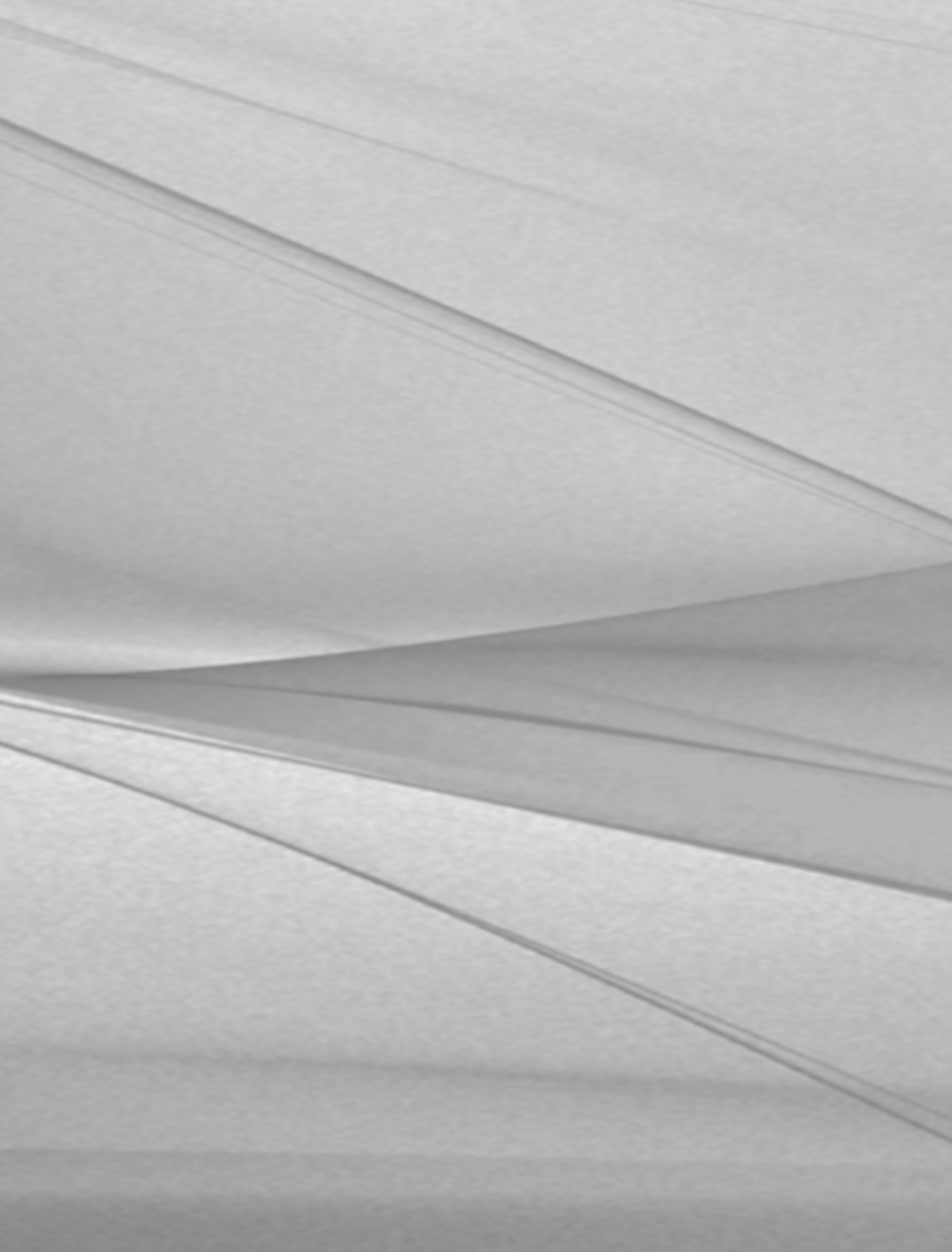






**ENTREVISTA**

**EL**



# Norval Baitello Junior: from iconophagy to the ecology of communication – images and the body in communication and culture

*Norval Baitello Junior: da iconofagia à ecologia da comunicação – as imagens e o corpo na comunicação e na cultura*

Interview with NORVAL BAITELLO JUNIOR<sup>a</sup>  
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PROFESSOR NORVAL BAITELLO JUNIOR, Ph.D. from the Free University of Berlin, has been a reference in Communication Sciences, Cultural Sciences, and Media Theories for more than three decades, focusing on topics such as the image and the body in communication. The reflections, concepts, and theoretical propositions derived from his studies can be considered theories that provide a necessary airing for the area of communication. Such airing is not only due to the dedicated work of thinking about these two themes and innovatively relating them but also promoting true archeology of concepts, reviving them to meet the demand for understanding contemporary communication and its effects. Therefore, the professor has turned with emphasis on the ecology of communication.

We can also consider that, since the beginning of his career as a scholar and theorist, Baitello has contributed to the studies of communication in Brazil, presenting authors little studied here, having created frequent dialogues with many of them in centers such as Berlin, Vienna, and Japão. He has been promoting events and courses providing direct access in Brazil to influential theorists of Communication Sciences, Cultural Sciences, or Image Anthropology, such as Harry Pross, Ivan Bystrina, Hans Belting, Gunter Gebauer, Christoph Wulf, Dietmar Kamper, Ryuta Imafuku, among others. We cannot fail to emphasize, evidenced

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in his conversation with **MATRIZes**, that Norval Baitello Junior continually brings out projects such as those by Aby Warburg and Vilém Flusser, revealing the importance of keeping them in the sights of studies on communication.

The professor received us for this interview with the same generosity he showed when creating spaces and structures at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP) to share knowledge with the entire academic community. For example, the Interdisciplinary Center for Semiotics of Culture and Media (CISC), in 1992, the courses in Communication and Body Arts and Communication, and Multimedia, created in 1999 when he was director of the School of Communication and Letters at PUC-SP, and the Vilém Flusser São Paulo Archive, opened in 2016.

**MATRIZes:** Your book *A era da iconofagia* (2014), also published in Spain, brought a new approach to the debate on the media. How does the iconophagy concept dialogue with the body theme you bring to the reflection of communication?

**Norval Baitello Junior:** Iconophagy means: bodies devour images. We live in a time of rampant proliferation and, consequently, significant consumption of images. The numbers of this production are now astronomical, thanks to the new technologies of production and distribution of images (mainly visual, but not only). Just look at the number of posts of pictures and messages on social networks and in the deposits of images on devices and in gigantic memories called “clouds.” Of course, this upward trend did not begin in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but during the Renaissance and the emergence of techniques for the mechanical reproduction of words and images. But today, it reaches unimaginable proportions. This directly interferes with our perception of ourselves, who we are, how we are, and how we act. To consume means to incorporate. If we consume images (and we have been doing it since CroMagnon in infinitely smaller proportions), we develop a new type of metabolism that interferes with our existence, a cultural metabolism. And with it also a dependency.

From then on, iconophagy becomes reversed: the images devour people. They dictate patterns of bodies, shape, weight, facial features, height, posture, and skin color. They exert enormous coercion on life, even generating serious health problems studied today in the medical field as “body image disorders.” That is why it is important to understand more deeply the impact of images on life today.

Therefore, the theme of the body is fundamental to the communication sciences. It is our point of departure and arrival. It is not a means or a medium; it is the beginning and end of all sociability.

**MATRIZES:** This is a contribution you have been making for more than three decades. What are the roots of this thinking?

**NBJ:** The main root is the Media Theory inaugurated in the early 1970s in Berlin by Harry Pross, journalist, political scientist, and psychologist. Pross was a student of Alfred Weber in the area of Sociology of Culture and of the physician Viktor von Weizsäcker, who proposed the principles of Psychosomatics. By bringing such a legacy to the communication sciences, he announces some of the principles of Media Theory. As a foundation: “All communication begins in the body and ends in the body.” Based on this, he defines three degrees of mediation: primary means (which do not require resources other than the body itself for communication); secondary means (which require the use of a carrier to transmit messages between two bodies); tertiary means (which need transmission and reception apparatus to create mediations between bodies).

From this base, I have been trying to deepen some concepts, starting with Jakob von Uexküll, who brought the concept of *Umwelt* (environment) to biology. Then, the contribution of Ethology, by Konrad Lorenz, and Human Ethology, with Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt. They are authors who have never been studied within the area of communication and, however, researched the fundamentals of communication. Today, there are notable examples within primatology, with the research of Diane Fossey and Jane Goodall and, more recently, Frans De Waal. The great apes teach us about the archeology of the social environments of communication there in its most remote origin.

Based on these researches, I have been seeking to study the phylogenesis of human communication, on the one hand, establishing parallels between other species, their sociability, and their more hedonic or agonistic relationships, and human communication as an equally agonistic or hedonic tension field. The manifestations of aggression must be considered, also the pacification of conflicts and the construction of peace, empathy, and the other's perception. And on the other hand, there is also a need to better understand human communication ontogenesis, the developments of sociability from birth to life's end. The communication of a newborn or an older person with Alzheimer's, the communication of young slum dwellers on the fringes of urban sumptuousness, is there a possible communication with patients in a coma? Such objects have been challenging our young science of communication and obviously require interdisciplinary and collective work. The Interdisciplinary Center for Research in Semiotics of Culture and Media (CISC) was the stage for many of these researches. Founded 30 years ago, it has provided the space for many national and international events, with the support of numerous cultural institutions, stimulating the development of a wide range of research mentioned above.



**MATRIZES:** Regarding this expansion of the field of research and the area of communication, how do you see the acceptance of these studies, in the major communication forums or by area, as an academic organization?

**NBJ:** The development of science is also made of resistances. At first, there was greater resistance to themes such as body communication; and this resistance has been overcome by the facts. There is already a lot of work being done all over the world, especially in some centers in Europe and Asia, with this more anthropological and ecological focus on not only communication but cultural sciences in general. Communication sciences are not only Social Sciences; they are also Cultural Sciences, as we deal with the imaginary, with the *second nature of man*, according to Edgar Morin's expression, or *second reality*, according to the Czech Ivan Bystřina. So there is always resistance, just as there was resistance to the Theory of Relativity itself, the principle of indeterminacy, and Darwin's discoveries.

The tendency is that science has to expand and is expanding as well as Communication Science. Many of these themes were brought up by master's and doctorate students with real problems to solve in their practical and professional lives. Many of the innovations arise (this was my experience over nine years in the Area Coordination of Fapesp) even from undergraduate research projects, which surprise us with their courage to look at new facts and from previously unthinkable angles.

**MATRIZES:** Is the science of communication more open today than ever before? Is there also a critical look at the knowledge produced in the past to reassess forgotten contributions?

**NBJ:** It's more open today than ever before and will open up even more. For example, accepting Aby Warburg as a necessary reference within the Science of Communication does not meet with resistance, and Aby Warburg (1866-1929) was a pioneer. He developed a library of the Science of Culture based on his very peculiar Theory of Culture, which was forgotten for half a century. Warburg was an image researcher; he understood, like no one else, that an image is not just a timeless and defenseless aesthetic object. It has historical ballast and the potential to generate environments, create impacts, to awaken "passions" (he said that an image is a formula for "pathos"). This offers us an important clue for studies of the deluge of images that constitutes tertiary media (the one requiring the use of electrical or electronic devices at both ends) in its most current manifestations (social networks, web, applications, etc.), but it already helps us to study other image environments such as cinema, television, and photography.

**MATRIZES:** In many moments, you address specific questions about images when it comes to communication or media. How do you relate Communication Theory and Image Theory? Do you separate them as strands or treat them as a combination when developing your own approach?

**NBJ:** Image Theory is a part of Media Theory. We deal all the time with tactile images, olfactory images, proprioceptive, gustatory images, auditory images, and visual images. And so, an image theory will work with all these images, seeking to understand the dynamics of the environments created by these images. There are tactile images for the blind, for example. The theses and research on hearing and visually impaired communication have developed significantly. However, it is undeniable that the visual image is hegemonic in our world civilization. For a straightforward reason: we are primates whose main sense of alertness is vision. It is through the eyes that the first fear that is at a distance enters. So let's consider sight a phobic sense, on principle.

On the other hand, we are aware that we live today in an age of media, which has succeeded the age of art (since the Renaissance) and has followed the age of worship (Middle Ages). They are great environments of western human culture. The media age has brought an explosion of images that have become ubiquitous everywhere, public or private, in our homes, clothes, pockets, and skin. The media age created an environment of universal capillarity for visual images. And it is important to say that many other thinkers contributed to the current Media Theory: Dietmar Kamper, Hans Belting, Vilém Flusser, and Vicente Romano. All of them help us to understand the media (and images) as co-determinants of planetary ecology.

**MATRIZES:** A resource of media communication is to explore fear. What is the role of fear? How to deal with images like “the fear of communism,” “the fear of the Jews,” etc.?

**NBJ:** Fear is constitutive of life. I remember Federico Fellini's phrase that said, “Sai Uomo senza paura mi sembra che sai uno stupido,” “a man without fear seems to me to be stupid.” So, fear, of course, is a defense of life itself, of animal life; every animal is afraid, and fear is a survival strategy. But it is not just our age that plays on this fear to propel and present images, words, ideas, and belief systems. Warburg wrote about the spread of threatening astrological and monster images in Luther's time as a propagandistic strategy for and against the Reformation. What we see today is no different: putting fear on the loudspeaker is a resource for mobilizing the other. Orson Welles himself, with a radio program based on the novel *The War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells, showed this power by putting a city in panic. This continues to

be used today, and it should be the role of the enlightened media to dismantle these mechanisms. It is important, the role of communication, of a Science of Communication, also to teach to dismantle these mechanisms of fanciful fear.

**MATRIZES:** Have you also been dedicated to studying environments of intense cultural and political polarization that Warburg analyzed in his famous essay on “Pagan-Antique Prophecy in Words and Images in the Age of Luther,” published in 1920? Did something similar happen in the First World War, your time? Are we now living in a similar moment?

**NBJ:** It's scary and breathtaking to see how we humans repeat archaic, sometimes even primitive, cultural patterns. At that moment of the Protestant Reformation and the Renaissance, it is said that there was a great revolution in Western thought, an advance of what we usually call rationality. Warburg studied this subject a lot and pointed out that, alongside this rationality, there was also an ingrained irrationality. In his analysis of the images and words used in pamphlets for and against the Reformation, he reconstructs this struggle that used falsified data to spread terror in the population. He creates a word to designate rational discernment: *Denkraum* (environment of thought or space of thought). And he verifies that there is an advance in the thought space that collides with the space of belief, superstition, and general human irrationality. This also happened in his lifetime; during the First World War, scientific rationality was not enough to stop the irrationality of a war that killed an absurd number of human beings and their main auxiliaries, horses. There is research and data on this subject that the horse was a factor of production, like agricultural production, necessary to feed the population and that twelve million horses were used in war, six million of which died. This was also addressed by a Warburgian, Ulrich Raulff, in the beautiful work *Farewell to the Horse* (2018). Warburg not only studied but also collected photos and newspaper clippings about this irrationality and possibly fell ill due to that toxic historical moment.

What we see today is similar: a clash between the space of rationality (the space of thought, the *Denkraum*) and the growth of irrationality, today spread even by electronic media, generating phenomena like Brexit, like Trump, like setbacks in US legislation on issues such as abortion and gun licensing. The same irrationality has also manifested itself in Brazil in recent years in the dismantling of investment in science and education, destruction of forest heritage, the deadly attack against the heritage of ethnic and cultural diversity, liberalization of the use of pesticides and poisons, falsification of the news, in the propagation of unfounded fears.



**MATRIZES:** Speaking of poison, you were recently at the Warburg Institute in London, researching a particular aspect of Warburg's work, his "poison cabinet," an unprecedented topic in Warburgian research. How did you get there? And what results did you get?

**NBJ:** Warburg had a section in his library that he called "the poison cabinet" (*Giftschrank*). It was a section of books and thinkers that he considered poisonous, i.e., spreaders of irrationalities, beliefs, theories, and harmful proposals. When the library moved to London in 1933, this explicit rubric was not kept (or probably there was not even such a rubric, and it only presented "here is my poison cabinet"). Only the written testimony of a young student, Carl Georg Heise, who received informal guidance from the master, testifies emphatically to the existence of such a sector of toxic works. No one else studied or mentioned it; there is no geographically delimited region in the library. Not even Ernst Gombrich, who wrote Warburg's biography, mentioned it.

Only the most recent biography, an excellent work by Marie-Anne Lescourret (2015), dedicates a few lines to the subject, supported by Carl Georg Heise (2005) in his *Persönliche Erinnerungen an Aby Warburg*. With the support of Fapesp and CNPq, I searched the incredible files (*Zettelkästen*) gathered by Warburg throughout his life, in his correspondence and the library itself, finding reliable references that, in fact, there was such a section. I am now preparing a book, *Os venenos de Warburg*, with reflections, discoveries, and some hypotheses about what a toxic cultural environment would be for Warburg. As we are living today in a time of very toxic environments in the world, I think that what Warburg built with his little "poison cabinet" could be an exciting contribution.

**MATRIZES:** Did you get to know any specific content of the poisons contained therein?

**NBJ:** Perhaps the most eloquent poison that was there was the work of Count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau. Coincidentally, Gobineau had been the French ambassador to Brazil, under Dom Pedro II, for a year. In this condition, he became a friend of the Emperor and tried to convince him that Brazil would never succeed until it whitened its population. He corresponded until the end of his life with Pedro II. And when he returned to France, he published his *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*, which had significant repercussions in Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Gobineau was there on the poison cabinet. But there were other explicit poisons that I am expounding better in the book.

**MATRIZes:** Let's talk a little about the Flusser Archive and your most recent research on this author's thinking.

**NBJ:** I received an invitation from the widow, Edith Flusser, to bring the archive to Brazil. With the support of Fapesp and the Goethe Institute, in 2012-2013, we digitized the entire collection, with documents that were at risk of being lost in Germany, comprising 35,000 pages. We built a mirror archive in partnership with the University of the Arts in Berlin. Everything there is also here and vice versa, including new finds and material that may be collected.

The printed documents are now at PUC of Ipiranga but are already entirely online. The Vilém Flusser São Paulo Archive brings many surprises, and the research carried out today by many master's and doctorate students, based mainly on his correspondence, has shown us a much more complex thinker than the one who wrote about photography. Although the *Towards a Philosophy of Photograph* itself – or here *Filosofia da Caixa Preta* (2018) – already deals with environments (in anticipation of the ecology of culture), we see something even politically much more complex in his correspondence than what was disclosed about Flusser until today. There is research still to be done, for example, on the courses he taught here in São Paulo. All lessons were typed and carefully preserved. They are all still unpublished. This is an incredible material, but his voluminous correspondence with everyone, including his correspondence with Harry Pross, is what brings the most surprises.

All this is a precious contribution to the constitution of a Brazilian science of communication, a heritage of Brazilian science. Although he never quoted anyone, Flusser interacted with the greatest European thinkers in communication: Harry Pross, Vicente Romano, Dietmar Kamper, Hans Belting, Abraham Moles, Lev Kopelev, Ivan Bystrina, and many others.

**MATRIZes:** How does Flusser's thought dialogue with the theme of iconophagy? He wrote a lot about images and technical images. People are consuming images on a large scale, devouring recycled, repeated, and sustained images. Is this the generation of a detritus of excremental images? Or can image inflation block the view of the world?

**NBJ:** Here, we have several crossed lines that produce a beautiful plurality of dialogues, practicing something that for Flusser was very valuable, the construction of intersubjectivity.

In 2007, in Germany, I published one of the volumes of the *International Flusser Lectures* entitled *Flussers Völlerei* (Flusser's Gluttony). There I present elements of Brazilian anthropophagic thought in some Flusserian concepts.

And he wrote in an article on Brazilian philosophy in the 1970s that Oswald de Andrade was the greatest Brazilian philosopher of all time.

The issue of “excremental images” he touched on indirectly. In his concept of the third realm, the garbage realm arises alongside the nature and culture realms. Implicit here is the idea that humanity is producing, in addition to material waste, immaterial waste, and waste from non-things. This is a very important theme that brings him closer to Dietmar Kamper’s reflections. And the issue of blocking the world by images, Flusser mentions in some essays the idea that images can become screens instead of windows; they can hide instead of showing the world.

**MATRIZes:** Continuing with the themes of devouring and detritus, we see that you have recently released the book: *A fotografia e o verme* (2021). Is there a Flusserian inspiration there?

**NBJ:** Without a doubt, the text was originally published in German and English in the exhibition catalog *Something Other Than Photography* (2013) at the German museum Edith-Russ-Haus für Medienkunst, organized by Claudia Giannetti. Upon receiving the invitation to publish it in Brazil, I proposed to do it together with twelve photography artists in a dialogue between the text and the photos. I expanded and updated the text, adding a post scriptum about the worm and the virus. It is the development of a metaphor used by Flusser, who compares the human devouring rage with worms. The theme of devouring (and iconophagy) is central to the worm (and the human). The theme of detritus and garbage production also appears there.

**MATRIZes:** Let’s talk a little about your writing. Your text takes great care of the word, searches for etymologies, maintains the rigor and depth of the concepts, but also seems to us to be somewhat imagistic and poetic. Could you also tell us a little bit about this way of treating your academic writing?

**NBJ:** A word is an image. The holy scriptures say, “Christ is image and word. Images and words are one; the two were crucified.” Who cited this was the chief Dadaist of Zurich, Hugo Ball. Responding directly to his question, Vilém Flusser was one of the first to say that the word was born from the image, that it is an image torn into strips to build a line. In a certain sense, it shows a continuity of environments: the word is more ideogrammatic in the East, more image, and it is more abstract in the Middle East, where alphabetic writing was born, and in Egypt, where it represents a sound, but the word represents the sound which is also an image, and the image is acoustic, it is the image of the breath.



So, in this sense, taking care of the word as an image means not trivializing it because it has a history and a density of imagery layers, which is why the etymology resource ends up being important. I seek aesthetic and imagery writing, but not coded and impenetrable. The word must seduce by being an image and breath at the same time. Two of my recent books, *O pensamento sentado* (2012) and *Existências penduradas* (2019), are written intentionally for young readers, with short and diverse chapters or segments for readers used to reading small texts on small screens. I tried to practice miniaturizing the text without giving up depth and poetry.

**MATRIZES:** Doesn't the text's density and the concepts' depth require greater participation from the reader?

**NBJ:** Greater involvement, no doubt. That is why we must add imagery and sound layers to writing. This type of writing was also practiced by Dietmar Kamper. A colleague told his undergraduate students to read *Estrutura temporal das imagens* (2002) with the instruction: "It's no use reading Kamper's text once; you have to read it twenty times, once here, another time you read it to your dog, another time you read in the mirror, another time you read on the beach, another time under the bed, etc." In the next class, a student brought the result: "Professor, I read the text and didn't understand anything, twenty times, and I didn't understand anything, I kept reading, and suddenly I started crying." Kamper is not meant to be read with the head; it is meant to be read with the body.

**MATRIZES:** The themes of the ecology of images and culture as an ecosystem have been increasingly present in your courses and lectures. Have you ever thought about an Amerindian cultural ecology in a dialogue with Viveiros de Castro?

**NBJ:** I am very interested in the question of an Amerindian cultural ecosystem, as presented by Viveiros de Castro. Ecology of culture must think and try to understand cultural diversity as a human heritage to be preserved. In this sense, I have also studied the Japanese thinker Tetsuro Watsuji (2017), who talks about the anthropology of the landscape. Tetsuro presents us with three great environments that generate three great cultural ecosystems or patterns of culture: the monsoon environment, the desert environment, and the rural environment.

In the monsoon environment, man is part of nature; in the desert environment, man fights nature, or nature fights man, and he has to fight to survive. In the rural environment, man is allied with the predictability of

nature. Each environment creates deities of a specific type and directs human action differently. His work, called *FuDo* (earth and wind), written in 1929, offers instigating themes to understand the ecology of culture.

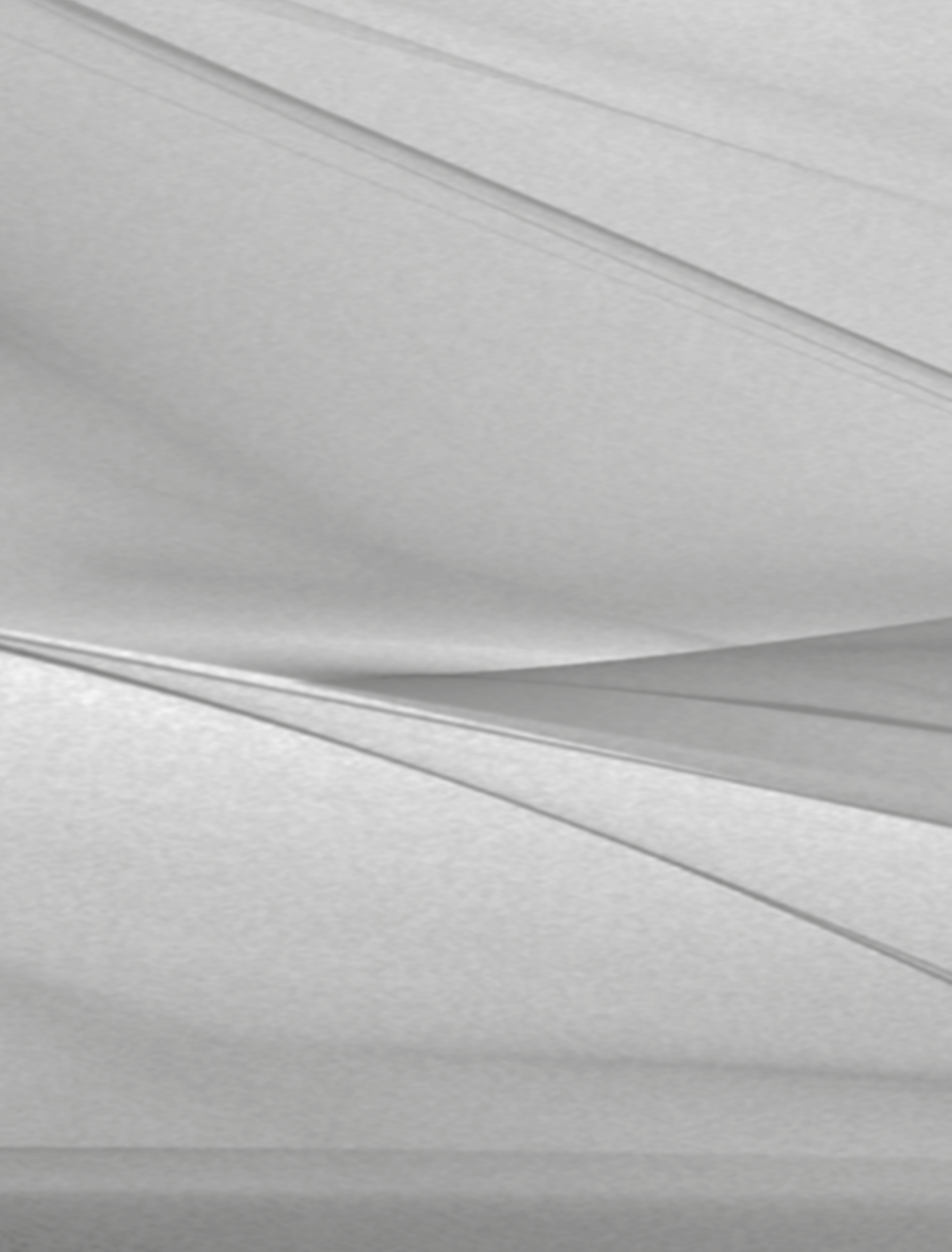
In the end, at the suggestion of Professor Norval, we included among the cited references one of the works by Harry Pross (1989), which was published in Spanish, the Spanish version of the book by Tetsuro Watsuji (2016), and one of the books by Dietmar Kamper (2016) available in Portuguese. **M**

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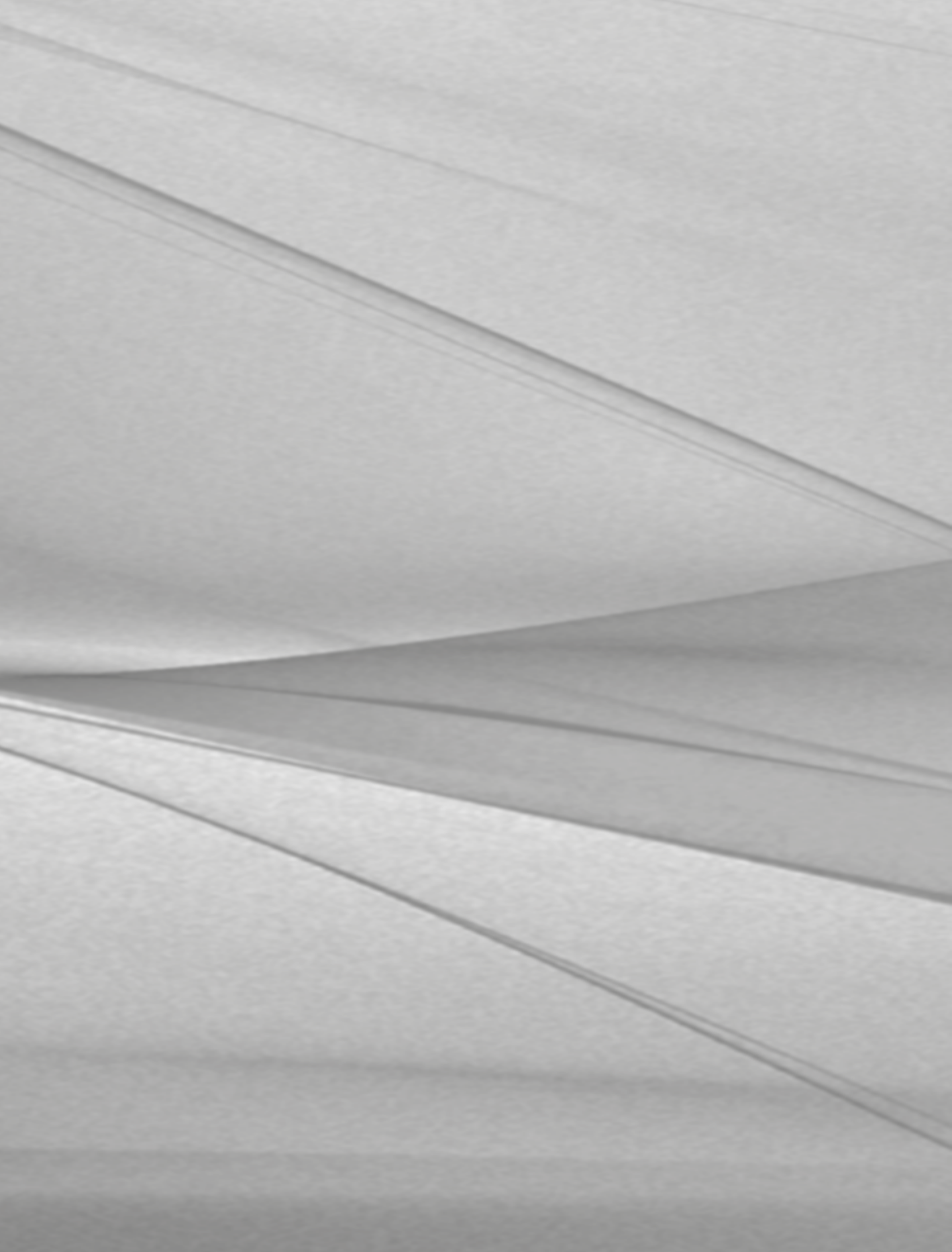
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# EM PAUTA

NAS PESQUISAS DE COMUNICAÇÃO







# The Mediatization of Memory<sup>a</sup>

## *Mediatização da Memória*

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### ABSTRACT

In times of intense mediatization, we face the problem of the potential defragmentation of memory in the face of an open and infinite virtual space. Understanding the role of memory in contemporary societies implies contemplating its mediatized expansion, responsible for the profusion and acceleration with which societies produce memorial traces. This paper presents the main schools of thought in memory studies and traces the current political and social implications of memory. Also, it analyzes the role of media on the very notion of memory, namely, the paradox of digital memory, the shortening and pollution of memory caused by digital media, and the Internet as a kind of palimpsestic memory of the present time.

**Keywords:** Collective memory, memorialization, Halbwachs, media, internet

<sup>a</sup> *MATRIZES* has chosen to adapt the text to the new spelling of the Portuguese language, while retaining the characteristics of European Portuguese.

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### RESUMO

Em tempos de intensa mediatização, aparece o problema da potencial desfragmentação da memória perante um espaço virtual aberto e infinito. Compreender o papel da memória nas sociedades contemporâneas implica contemplar sua expansão mediatizada, responsável pela profusão e aceleração da produção de traços memoriais pelas sociedades. Este artigo apresenta as principais correntes de pensamento dos estudos da memória e traça as atuais implicações políticas e sociais da memória. Além disso, analisa o papel dos media sobre a noção de memória, nomeadamente, o paradoxo da memória digital, o encurtamento e a poluição da memória provocada pelos media digitais, e a internet como uma espécie de memória palimpséstica da atualidade.

**Palavras-chave:** Memória coletiva, memorialização, Halbwachs, media, internet

CYBERCULTURE IS THE set of techniques, practices, ways of thinking, attitudes and values instituted with the emergence of cyberspace (Lévy, 1999). Cyberspace is understood as an interactive and communitarian communication device that emerges from information technologies. It dates to the 1950s, resulting from the intersection of cybernetics and computer science (Lemos, 2002), and coincides with the expansion of telematic networks on a global scale, being, therefore, a privileged instrument for the development of a collective intelligence (Lévy, 2000).

Understood as a network, cyberculture designates the new possibilities for creating, storing, disseminating, and sharing information and knowledge based on the interconnection of computers and marks a new moment in the mediated organization of societies. The idea of “network” points to the openness, flexibility, and interdependence of cyberculture itself to which the digital communication infrastructure – cyberspace – gives rise.

To that extent, cyberspace and digital media, in particular, can be seen as a true memory technology, in which potentially all of humanity’s records are being digitized and made available online. This is an externalized and objectified human memory that is thus a technical memory (Stiegler, 2009, p. 11).

It is as if all libraries (records, documentation centers, videos, comments, shares, newspapers, documents etc.) converged into cyberspace, making the internet a gigantic library that collects all traces of human activity. Thus, the relations between man and memory are being reformulated, which apparently conflict a weak memory (which, by being diffuse and superficial, disorganizes meaning) and a strong memory (massive, coherent, and compact that organizes meaning) (Candau, 2011, p. 44).

Now, the problem that arises is the potential defragmentation of memory at a time of strong mediatization, especially in the face of mnemotechnologies (press, television, digital media), including the Internet as a potential open and infinite virtual space.

The mere existence of memory transmission infrastructures does not necessarily promote social ties. The sharing and interconnection of memories through media – an artificial and less organic memory – may not lead to the same shared meanings (Candau, 2011, p. 115) capable of functioning as the aggregating cement of society.

Therefore, trying to understand the role of memory in contemporary societies leads us to contemplate its mediatized expansion, responsible for the profusion and acceleration with which societies produce memorial traces (from patrimonialization, going through monuments and commemorations, to the mnemonic dimension of the internet).

## MEMORY AS IDENTITY

For Schopenhauer, conceiving an individual without a past is just as impossible as conceiving a people without history. A society devoid of historical knowledge – if you will, of a shared memory – is incapable of reflecting on the present and drawing lessons for the future. The Western canon views memory as a personal, individual, and unique capacity, and this unique and unrepeatable character would distinguish individuals from one another. The modern sense of identity is thus linked to the memories that individuals possess (Giddens, 2002). This assumption is today questioned by science fiction literature itself.

For example, cyberpunk – a subgenre of science fiction that works on issues related to artificial intelligence and cybernetics – questions the notion that identities are defined by personal memories. A very significant number of works describe the implantation of memories in the human brain (Cavallaro, 2002, p. 205). The short story “We Can Remember it for You Wholesale” by Philip K. Dick, or the films *Blade Runner* by Ridley Scott, *Total Recall* by Paul Verhoeven, or *Johnny Mnemonic* by Robert Longo, depict worlds where memories can be simulated, revised, and artificially created. Bruce Sterling’s novel *The Artificial Kid* tells of a character whose memories have not been experienced, but rather transferred and downloaded. Moreover, cyberpunk insistently stresses how vulnerable human memories are to contamination and distortion. In his various books, William Gibson questions the possibility that memories are untouchable and unrepeatable. After all, they are not endowed with lived experience, but rather sets of data manipulated to simulate lived experience.

In all these stories, fiction interrogates the nature of memory – individual and collective – by challenging the assumption of a stable and unshakable correlation between memory and personal identity. In many ways, cyberpunk illustrates some of the changes that cyberculture, computers, and the Internet have imposed on the question of memory, leaving us with intriguing interpellations. For example, in the world of widespread technical reproduction, what place is reserved for authenticity? To what extent can we believe and verify these memories? How to conceive the exercise of remembrance when memories are externalized before the individual?

All these questions accentuate the importance of reflecting about memory and acquire renewed interest with the emergence of cyberculture and the unavoidable role of media in contemporary experience.

## MEMORY STUDIES

Studies about memory have a transdisciplinary dimension and date back to the beginning of the 20th century, when different scholars were interested



in the intersections between culture and memory, such as Sigmund Freud, Henry Bergson, Arnold van Gennep, Émile Durkheim, Maurice Halbwachs, Aby Warburg, and Walter Benjamin. The 1980s saw the birth of a renewed interest in how individuals and societies access memory and remember. Thus, the “new cultural memory studies” emerged, driven by Pierre Nora’s *Lieux de Mémoire*, which offered a new way of thinking about national repertoires of collective memory construction. Historical and political changes offered the backdrop for a turning point in memory studies. Forty years after World War II and the Holocaust, without organic and autobiographical memories to aid the memorialization process, societies became more dependent on media (including monuments and memorials) to transmit experience (Erll, 2008a, p. 1).

Maurice Halbwachs is the most recognized and cited author within memory studies. His books *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Mémoire* (1925) and, above all, *La Mémoire Collective* (1950) revolutionized our understanding of memory by highlighting the social contexts that serve as the basis for recollection. Drawing inspiration from Durkheim’s concept of collective consciousness and the two types of memory (habitual and pure) proposed by Henry Bergson, Halbwachs challenges the prevailing ideas of psychology by stressing that memory cannot be considered only in subjective, individual terms, but that it is a socially structured process. Individuals not only acquire their memories in society but also remember and recognize them socially. “To evoke his own past, a person generally needs to resort to the memories of others, and transport himself to reference points that exist outside himself, determined by society. More than that, the functioning of individual memory is impossible without those instruments which are the words and ideas that the individual has not invented, but borrows from his environment” (Halbwachs, 2013, p. 72). Halbwachs, thus, suggests the existence of a collective memory, shared among the members of a society, which exists externally to the consciousness of the individual, but which is an integral part of social life. This means that societies can even produce memories of events in individuals who have never directly experienced them. In other words, collective memory is a pathway to collective consciousness, and is viewed in a very Durkheimian (Misztal, 2003, p. 138) manner, similar to a social fact. However, while Durkheim assumes a unified society, Halbwachs accounts for the multiple and plural constitutions of collective memories.

While Halbwachs proposes collective memory as a mediating instance between individual and society, Jan Assman is more interested in considering the social and communicative structures that social groups use to evaluate social representations objectified in various symbolic forms (architecture, writing, image, objects) which assist the memorialization process. Assman (1995, p. 126)

thus proposes the concept of communicative memory to designate the varieties of collective memory that are based exclusively on everyday communications. He thus discriminates between subvariants previously grouped under the generic notion of collective memory, considering the oral realizations that contribute to socially constituting memory. According to the author, everyday communication is characterized by non-specialization, role reciprocity, and thematic instability. By these mundane interactions, each individual composes a socially mediated memory embedded in a social group. However, from the moment we enter the world of objectified culture (texts, buildings, monuments, statues etc.), we move away from the concept of communicative memory and have before us a *cultural memory*.

Just as the communicative memory is characterized by its proximity to the everyday, cultural memory is characterized by its distance from the everyday. Distance from the everyday (transcendence) marks its temporal horizon. Cultural memory has its fixed point; its horizon does not change with the passing of time. These fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance). (Assman, 1995, pp. 128-129)

Like Assman, Joël Candau (2011) breaks down the concept of memory by discriminating and detailing the general aspects contained in the notion of collective memory. He describes three memories: proto-memory, very close to Bourdieu's *habitus*, expresses an embodied social memory (for example, in gestures and language practices), taking place automatically, "almost without awareness" (Candau, 2011, p. 23); memory proper, which takes place by voluntary evocation; and metamemory, the form of a claimed memory that deals with identity construction and the representation we make of our own memories. For Candau, protomemory and memory are at the level of individual faculties and therefore cannot be shared. For the anthropologist, only metamemory can be shared, since it assumes a set of representations of memory. Therefore, the metamemory covers Halbwachs' concept of collective memory and can be the object of a social structuring of the past. Note, however, that for Halbwachs, collective memory forms a mnemonic unit (simultaneously individual and social) whereas Candau's protomemory is particularly situated at the level of collective agencying and an organizing memory.

As it can be seen, the concept of memory in the Social Sciences and Humanities is slender and composed of many nuances, as evidenced by the various decompositions it has undergone. The difficulties in the proposals



of Halbwachs, Assman, and Candau in discerning what should be included (or excluded) from collective memory also demonstrate the enormous breadth (conceptual and practical) of the concept. This attribute is also reflected in the importance of memory, as we will see below.

### **POLITICAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF MEDIA ON MEMORY**

The way individuals and societies remember and forget today is largely affected by political, social, cultural, but also technological changes. Indeed, one of the most influential factors in shaping our collective memory is the modern mass media. The mediatization of memory (Hoskins, 2009) thus becomes an unavoidable dimension of memory studies, prompting a renewed examination of the nature of memory, remembering, and forgetting in the context of new technologies. In the media age, the question of memory must be evaluated according to digital media and sociotechnical practices, such as cyberculture.

The incorporation of media studies in contemporary theories of memory leads Erl (2008b, p. 4) to refer to a *medial memory* (material or medial memory) which deals with the enlargement that writing, film, television, or the Internet have caused in the spatial and temporal horizon of memorialization. Each *medium* has its own specific ways of developing the process of remembering and of leaving its own traces in the collective memory to which it contributes. In particular, the intramedial, intermedial, and plurimedial dynamics have the power to produce and shape cultural memory (Erl, 2008b, p. 390). In practice, memorialization is a trans-media process: the representation of events is not confined to a single medium, but spills over across a broad spectrum of media. This is precisely what makes considering media in memorialization processes so pertinent: media is a powerful agent of (individual and collective) memory. Not only do they play a decisive role in stabilizing the memory of certain events, but they also have the potential to create memories. They provide us with certain mental schemas that allow us to remember and, simultaneously, provide a platform for reproducing the meaning of these same memorialization processes. They disseminate memories, but in doing so, given their sociotechnical particularities, they (re)create or retrace the meaning pathways of memory, reshaping and directing its very development.

In particular, digital media, by allowing recording, production, editing, and dissemination, opens simultaneous – sometimes conflicting – paths in the memorialization process.

With new communication and information technologies, with digital and personal communication devices, the technological mediation of the screen and

the reproducibility of the image (and the event) become modes of sensation and perception – of feeling and seeing the world –, of retention and memory. (I. Babo, 2018, pp. 89-90)

In the twenty-first century, the articulation of memory with media has two main consequences (cf. Hoskins, 2009, pp. 28-30). First, the media confronts memories with their permanent exposure. Resulting from a confessional culture exacerbated by reality television, digital media intensifies the visibility of individuals' private and remote pasts, turning them into new devices of social surveillance. The relationship with forgetting is more complex now since this movement of revelation seems to point precisely to this impossibility. If everything can be rescued, memory controls forgetfulness. Second, the new media makes memory not only more visible and accessible, but also more fluid and dispersed. In *La Mémoire Collective*, Halbwachs (1950, p. 50), when referring to a group memory, points out that it does not imply the physical presence of the members of this social group. Now, this is precisely what we observe in digital media. The virtuality and the spatial and temporal deferral that appear as remediation (in the sense that Bolter and Grusin give it) demonstrate new ways of reproducing and creating memories. The concept now dispenses with the copresence of individuals, losing a physical dimension and acquiring a liquid nature (to paraphrase Bauman). The horizontal connections such as peer-to-peer enabled by the new media make memories de-territorialized, in global and diffuse spaces, besides transforming memorialization into an immediate and prolix process.

Media also streamlines memories that are shared but that may not have been directly experienced by individuals, giving rise to prosthetic memories, that is, “memories that do not originate from a person's lived experience in the strict sense” (Landsberg, 1995, p. 175). Since media and cyberculture have an enormous influence on what we experience, they are privileged arenas for the production and circulation of prosocial memories. By operationalizing the process of memorialization, mass media re-enacts and stimulates memories that most individuals have never directly experienced (for example, the lunacy of the Apollo 13 mission or the exhilarating excitement of a world soccer championship). Memories are, thus, originated in the media, and for this reason the media functions, in the good manner of McLuhan, as an extension or prosthesis of memory. We collectively share memories that would never exist without the interference of the media. Our relationship with the world and the events has become so mediatized that real experience or real time is inseparably associated with cyberculture and socio-technical mediations. On the other hand,



this ubiquity of media makes it difficult to discern between directly lived experience and lived experience (through media). Prosthetic memory thus tends to replace the experienced memory itself.

The fact that the internet operates as a kind of colossal archive and a gigantic database authorizes us to describe it as exercising a transactive memory, that is, a system by which individuals collectively encode, store, and retrieve knowledge (Wegner & Ward, 2013). The internet is an archive in the sense of a device for storing information, but also for retrieving it. And it even interacts with individuals (for example, by congratulating you on your birthday or responding to voice commands). The Internet seems to know everything about everyone, and companies and individuals take advantage from this efficiency to pursue their goals. With Google, Wikipedia, or databases like IMDb, information is retrieved, used, and shared much faster than if we only used our memory. The ease with which the result of an online search emerges blurs the boundaries between personal memories and transactive memories.

In fact, the internet today is used as external memory or transactive memory where information is collectively deposited outside ourselves (Sparrow et al., 2011), and is one of the best examples of functional specialization and resource allocation. As we increasingly rely on cyberspace to perform our daily tasks, we no longer have to remember information; all we need is to know *where to find and retrieve it*. Much of our collective memory comes from these internet-based memories and our symbiosis with computers and cyberspace. We move, today, among interconnected and transactive systems that have transformed collective memory into a reticular and external memory. A prosthetic memory, similar to hard disks, offers us the advantage of accessing vast sources of information without having to possess or even know this information in depth (for example, the Internet teaches us the route to the restaurant without us having to know its address). This means an adaptation to our technological environment since trying to remember a lot of specific information is, now, less efficient than remembering how to access that specific information.

Sparrow et al. (2011) concluded in an empirical study that students expected to have future access to information (via the internet) and therefore were less likely to remember specific information although they remembered how to find that information. In another empirical study, Fisher et al. (2015) determined that searching for information on internet increased an individual's confidence in her own knowledge. In other words, it inflated the perception of their internal knowledge – even though this confidence was due to a memory extrinsic to the individual.

On the other hand, one must consider the effects of information overload on the very idea of memory. The 21st century has accentuated the emergence of a



new ecology, in which information constitutes a new environment. Virilio (1996), for example, mentions that we live in a kind of Chernobyl accident of information. The idea of associated catastrophe is related to its polluting potential. Infopollution (Sutter, 1998) designates the set of disturbances related to the quality of data and information. It makes an analogy between the Industrial Revolution (18th and 19th centuries) and the Information Revolution (20th century), in which information is equated with the environmental pollution generated by the earlier industrialization.

In particular, infopollution refers to the paradox that we live in information societies that are quantitatively rich but qualitatively poor, that is, not very enriching and that have more to do with entertainment than with enlightenment. In contrast to the poor information substance, we are faced with massified content that floods our digital devices and occupies much of our attention, such as advertisements, spam, or clickbaits. We find them in various online portals, which present us with qualitatively depauperate content such as: “Draw – see Ronaldo’s reaction” or “Actress Kristen Stewart says ‘wearing Princess Diana’s wedding dress was scary’”. If we put the emphasis on the qualitative aspect of information, we speak of infopollution. In contrast, the notion of *information obesity* points to the quantitative dimension and highlights the problems caused by an excess of information, both in terms of its production and its accessibility.

The notion of memory cannot, consequently, be dissociated from the excess and contamination of information since these will have direct repercussions on what we remember (and what, by excess, we are unable to remember). Infopollutants such as the exhaustive repetition of the exact same news pieces or the instant messages of social network chats distort the processes of memorialization by colonizing the cognitive space of individuals and societies. With so much information available and with today’s abysmal acceleration, memory must be equated according to the perverse effects of information excess (obesity) and qualitative poverty (pollution). The more we know, the less we seem to know about the details and particulars that form the dense network of memory. We became overwhelmed by the voracity of information. The saturation that the media accentuates then makes the process of memorialization increasingly rarefied, as individuals find themselves drowned in the technologization of memory that made this possible in the first place. Just as pollution leaves waste in the atmosphere, this new information ecosystem leaves inconvenient residues on the surface of our social memory.

Consider the unforeseen effects of two practices which are increasingly present in daily life: zapping and browsing. These are new behaviors that have emerged in the context of this new ecology of information. Faced with



the immensity of stimuli and the flood of information that the media have brought with them, zapping and browsing are established as cognitive strategies. Instead of grasping the content in its entirety, individuals access a portion of the information by browsing through successive titles, windows, images, videos, etc. On the other hand, faced with the inability to read, consult, and analyze exhaustively and integrally the information currently produced, we, as a society, have developed this prodigious capacity for zapping. This consists of watching only a few minutes (or even seconds) of a television program, reading only the covers of newspapers to keep up with current events, or listening to clipped excerpts from radio stations. On the internet, social networks and YouTube are organized around both browsing an indistinct and voluminous mass of content and, simultaneously, zapping (an individual can watch 5 minutes of each 60-minute video, for example).

All this underscores the individual and collective consequences of the mediatization of memory and how the new socio-technical practices that emerged with cyberspace have fundamentally altered our collective relationship with memory. In the interconnections of digital networks presence, number, and acceleration prevail; the spatiotemporal coordinates of action (and of the event) fade away and, thus, the relation to time and place blurs. To this extent, the narration or the *mise-en-intrigue* of the action has no place on the network and, as a result, the sense of history is also dissipated (I. Babo, 2018, p. 79).

In this sense, digital media tend to be hypertextual (number of posts and new information imperative in non-linear reading) rather than narrative (linear and successive reading).

The internet and its transactive dimension have only intensified the first step, already taken by media, to make memories prosthetic devices.

### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We leave three lines of reflection to future considerations on the place of memory in the media (therefore, in society in general).

The first line of reflection concerns the paradox of digital memory: the more information we store in cyberspace, the less information we have. By relying, absolutely, on the digital archives and the transactive paths of the Internet, we end up knowing many things collectively, but individually risk diminished knowledge. We know how to get information, and we deposit it in devices external to our personal memory; however, many times we cannot remember without technological intervention. “The advent of the information

age seems to have created a generation of people who feel they know more than ever before – when, in fact, their reliance on the internet means they know less and less about the world around them” (Wegner & Ward, 2013). With the internet, we transcend the organic limit of our memory. And with that limit comes this risk of an amnesia, which calls for new ways of interacting with information. Cyberspace can thus paradoxically make memory simultaneously expand and contract, strengthen or weaken. Cyberspace may include this risk of forgetting, but it is up to us as a society to deal with and overcome this paradox.

The second line of reflection relates to the acceleration of the production of memories that digital media made possible. In shared knowledge networks, where information is instantaneous, memories become fast. Events succeed each other, discourses multiply, and memories seem to be constantly in the process of being reformulated or updated. The sensation, in digital media, is that only the now exists and that the present recovers the past. Faced with the imposition of the present, the danger is that we form only short-lived memories. Long, historical, anthropological memory needs time to build, deconstruct, and reconstruct itself. In a network where information accumulates, memory can tend to be short, syntagmatic or extemporaneous, aligned with fashions (the trending of social networks). This represents a challenge for societies, which must foresee mediatized ways of producing a collective, long, historical, and paradigmatic memory.

The third line of reflection sums up how we have characterized the nature of memory. If we had to highlight the central idea of this paper, it would be that memory is palimpsestic. All the decompositions listed here point to this polyfaced, collective, and shared nature in sociotechnical practices of mediatized societies. The challenge is, then, to understand if the hyperindustrialization of memory (Stiegler, 2009) empties it, or, on the contrary, enrich it in the new technological configurations. The dispersion of (dematerialized) technical memories can either lead to the impoverishment of experience, or to the optimized reconfiguration in new frameworks of collective memory.

The various theoretical and empirical approaches to the memory studies referenced here, all share the idea that memory is a kind of multi-handed rewriting. The internet has, therefore, exponentiated the generating and regenerating dimension that memory contains within itself. Faced with the danger of memory dilution, building strategies for creating a historical and narrative memory is necessary. It is up to the mediatized societies in which we live to decide which of these possibilities will predominate. ■

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# From Media to (Algorithmic) Mediations: Mediation, Reception, and Consumption on Digital Platforms<sup>a</sup>

## *Dos Meios às Mediações (Algorítmicas): Mediação, Recepção e Consumo em Plataformas Digitais*

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### ABSTRACT

Algorithms have become social vectors and constituents of meanings as they apply tension and are tensioned by the social dynamics of the web. This article discusses online consumption and reception and presents the *Algorithmic Mediation System Map*, based on the propositions by Jesús Martín-Barbero, as an instrument to support reflections on platform studies. The map attempts to align cultural studies with contemporaneity, permeated by algorithmic flows, in which digital platforms gain importance as a category of analysis of institutional mediations in reception. We investigate how the contents are consumed in a daily life that is overcome by social practices originated from other mediations of the subject.

**Keywords:** Algorithms, mediation, reception, cultural studies

### RESUMO

Algoritmos tornaram-se vetores sociais e constituidores de sentidos, pois tensionam e são tensionados pelas dinâmicas sociais da web. O artigo discute consumo e recepção online, e apresenta o *Mapa do Sistema de Mediações Algorítmicas*, a partir das proposições de Jesús Martín-Barbero, como um instrumento de apoio à reflexão sobre pesquisas em plataformas. O mapa é uma tentativa de alinhar os estudos culturais à contemporaneidade, permeada por fluxos algorítmicos, em que as plataformas digitais ganham importância como categoria de análise das mediações institucionais na recepção. Investiga-se como os conteúdos são consumidos em um cotidiano atravessado pelas práticas sociais originadas de outras mediações do sujeito.

**Palavras-chave:** Algoritmos, mediação, recepção, estudos culturais

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MATRIZES



ALGORITHM-BASED STRUCTURES HAVE become inseparable from the everyday practices of any connected individual. Search engines, social networks, chat applications, streaming services, recommendation systems, and virtual assistants are more and more at the center of economy, politics, and culture. Despite being private structures, digital platforms have become spaces in which important public debates occur and where the confrontation of views and the articulation of opinions is verified.

Going beyond the instrumental rationale, algorithms have become social vectors and constituents of meanings since they apply tension and are tensioned by the social dynamics established on the web. Couldry and Hepp (2020) pointed out that the essentially mediated nature of the social is also based on material objects – interconnections, platforms, infrastructures, etc. – “through which communication, as well as the production of meanings, takes place” (p. 14). However, one must not abandon the term “social” and analyze meanings and technologies separately, because the media infrastructure, which aids in the construction of the social aspect in the view of the researchers, becomes simultaneously more complex.

Digital technologies connected to the Internet have considerably increased the content flow and enabled a much wider range of individuals to create and disseminate information; for this reason, it is much more difficult to control the flow of symbolic content on the web. Hence, under the perspective of cultural studies, besides the plurality and hybridity of profiles present on the network, the uses, appropriations, and productions of meanings caused by this complex information – boosted by algorithms – depends on the family, historical, institutional, cultural, social, and political context in which the individual is inserted.

With a sociocultural approach, this article is constituted from two objectives: (1) to discuss the scenario of consumption, reception, and circulation on digital platforms, which we define as *algorithmic mediations*; (2) to introduce the *Algorithmic Mediations System Map* (Winques, 2020), from the propositions by Jesús Martín-Barbero, in an attempt to align cultural studies to the contemporary context permeated by algorithmic flows. The work is divided into three main parts: the first, the theoretical and conceptual discussion, reflecting on reception theories in a more culturalist field and on the society of the algorithm. In the second part, we define the algorithm and analyze how it impacts the forms in which information is consumed and distributed, especially within the scope of social networks. In the third and final part, we present the algorithmic mediations system map as an instrument to support the reflection on digital platform research.



## RECEPTION AND MULTIPLE CONVERGENCES

The analysis of reception may have a more inclusive perspective, sharing with cultural studies “the conception about the message of the media, considering it as cultural forms open to different decodings, and about the audience, defining it as composed of meaning production agents” (Jacks & Escosteguy, 2005, pp. 41-42). Therefore, the individuals are active, with the freedom to act in various manners with the communication media – from simple consumption and use to a more relevant social application.

From the viewpoint of Ronsini (2010), the emphasis of reception is present in the analysis of the constitution of the cultural by communicative mediations. They permeate the relationship of the receiver with the medium, which does not exist outside this connection: “social classes, gender, ethnicity, family, school, friend groups, individuals are being modeled by the media culture” (p. 11). The same author also emphasized *sociality*, relatively connected to social relations, the individual, and their various elements of identity based on their personal references such as ethnicity, generation, or gender. Also, in the assessment of Lopes (2014), the reception movements are an integral part of cultural practices and “articulate both subjective and objective processes, of both a micro nature (the immediate environment controlled by the subject) and a macro nature (the social structure that escapes this control)” (p. 67). For this reason, reception is multidimensional; people live their daily lives and “at the same time, sign up for structural and historical power relationships that extrapolate their everyday activities” (p. 67).

From Denis McQuail (1997, as cited in Jacks & Escosteguy, 2005), reception studies may be classified at the *structural*, *behavioral*, and *sociocultural* levels. At the first level is audience measurement research; at the second, the effects and uses of the media are assessed; the third is represented by research carried out by cultural studies and the reception analysis. The sociocultural approach is viewed by Escosteguy (2004) as that which involves a broader and more complex onlook of the media narrative reception process. In this case, “multiple social and cultural relationships are considered. More than the study of the reception phenomenon in itself, it intends to problematize and research its social and cultural insertion, be it from the theoretical or empirical viewpoint” (p. 135). This branch of studies views receivers as producers of meaning who negotiate, reinterpret, and re-elaborate the media messages according to individual characteristics, as well as by the action of social agents (Jacks, 2014). Certain mediations and cultural practices may also appear, such as the cultural identity and the everyday experiences.



Contemporary societies have as a characteristic the formation of multiple media and information technology audiences. Upon assuming such peculiarities, Orozco Gómez (2003) evaluated that the field of reception studies must question: “How are the individual and collective subjects being constituted as citizens of a country and the world when the majority of their constitution is mediated by their multiple links to the media and information technologies?”<sup>1</sup> (p. 11). This is a challenge to be faced since the spaces marked by the countries, regions, and the world are no longer products of direct experiences but rather the result of representations, mostly electronic, digital, and virtual, made from the ecosystem of communication media. From this perspective, the author argues that reception is a synonym of interaction, and interactions with mediators multiply and restructure, as far as he is concerned, into multiple convergencies.

In a scenario of manifestations and mediations through the networks, Orozco Gómez (2003) helped with the understanding that the activity of the public is not a mere reaction to stimuli – their actions obey, not always consciously, sociocultural patterns established, learned, and developed over the *particular* historicity. Moreover, the entire communication process is inevitably mediated by various sources, contexts, and situations. It is the *mediation game* that defines the interaction and molds its result. It is necessary to assume that direct and indirect interactions with the media exist. Hence, it is important to understand the diversity of scenarios that allow the understanding of the diversity of possible mediations in the reception processes. “It is pertinent to keep in mind that the interaction with a medium, among other things, is a catalyst of profound identities and individual and collective memories that precisely emerge and are triggered by media references”<sup>2</sup> (p. 9).

With the introduction of social media networks in the mid-2000s, Couldry and Hepp (2020) pointed out that the media became much more than specific centralized content channels: they comprise platforms that, for many individuals, are literally spaces where, through communication, they enact socially. To understand the place of reception within these contents, and agreeing with Fausto Neto (2010), it is necessary to think about the role of circulation. Before that, however, we must recall that the processes and articulations presents features in which the interfaces are formalized by offering and appropriating discourse strategies. For the author, the domain of circulation is not only a concept that refers to the notion of interval or lag, as was assumed in the first studies on reception or effects. It was within the scope of complex articulation that the author saw that circulation is among the properties of the proposed discourse and the strategies of appropriation by the individual. Also, the advance of the socio-technical transformations engendered “by the

<sup>1</sup> In the original: “Cómo se está constituyendo el sujeto individual y colectivo como ciudadano de un país y del mundo, cuando la mayor parte de su constitución está mediatizada por sus múltiples vínculos con medios y tecnologías de información?”

This and other translations by the authors.

<sup>2</sup> In the original: “es pertinente tener presente que la interacción con un medio además de otras cosas es un catalizador de identidades profundas y memorias individuales y colectivas que precisamente afloran detonadas por los referentes mediáticos”.

mediatization and its repercussions on social organization allows understanding a solution of part of its problem, from an invisible region, to transform into socio-technical-discursive devices (with visible marks)” (Fausto Neto, 2010, p. 63). Such devices will formulate the interaction processes, especially the place of the reception concept.

From the expansion of the communication channels on the internet, in an attempt to define the connected subject, various concepts emerged: *prosumer*<sup>3</sup> (Castells, 2003), *gatewatchers*<sup>4</sup> (Bruns, 2003), *interagent*<sup>5</sup> (Primo, 2007), *internaut*<sup>6</sup> (García Canclini, 2008), *reader-producer* (Brignol, 2010) etc. In general, all these terms point to the user/citizen as a participating agent in the production process of the most varied levels of the network construction of narratives and information. The receivers become cooperators of the processes that integrate the media production scene in the most varied formats and genres. In the scientific field, Stuart Hall inaugurated, from the perspective of cultural studies and still in the 1980s, the idea that the individual is active in the communication process. In the wake of Hall, Latin-American studies on reception have granted the receiver the position of the protagonist, stating their cooperation in the meaning formation processes. The dislocations of the media to the mediations, an approach elaborated by Jesús Martín-Barbero in 1987, in *De los Medios a las Mediaciones* and the cultural hybridization processes, a theme developed by Néstor García Canclini in 1990, in *Culturas Híbridas: Estratégias para Entrar e Sair da Modernidade*, represent two of such main reflection axes.

In this diversity of scenarios, digital platforms are added as a fundamental structure in the mediation game. This relationship is considered pertinent by Bucher (2020), a researcher who has stood out in the study of algorithms. When asked if the production of meanings relative to the algorithms is related to the media reception and consumption studies, the author pointed to the perspective of it being a work of relating meanings and interpretations. She introduced the idea of *algorithmic imaginaries* to account for this relationship between production and consumption, i.e., how people experiment and understand their interactions with algorithms in their everyday lives. In the perception of Buchner, such relationships are much more cyclical and multidimensional than the traditional audience studies thought.

## CONNECTED SUBJECT, CIRCULATION, AND ALGORITHM PULVERIZATION

Indeed, the adaptation of concepts from the communication theory to understand how algorithms operate – and are perceived – in communication

<sup>3</sup>This term refers to subjects who are receivers, creators, re-signifiers, and distributors of information in communication, all at the same time.

<sup>4</sup>This concept is about individuals involved in organizing and curating the variety of content available across a multitude of channels. The objective is not to control the “gates” of the channels, but to participate in a distributed and organized effort to observe what kind of information is going through these channels.

<sup>5</sup>This term encompasses the participation and exchange between technology/subject, between man/machine, and between subjects on the web.

<sup>6</sup>According to García Canclini (2008), being an internet user “increases, for millions of people, the possibility of being readers and spectators” (p. 54).

<sup>7</sup>This concept deals with individuals who appropriate the media based on their needs and interests, giving them new meaning in their daily practices.



processes on digital platforms seems to have a place of prominence in more recent discussions involving the relationships of individuals with information. Lomborg and Kapsch (2019) sought to adapt the concept of *decoding* by Stuart Hall as a device to probe how people know and understand algorithms. For the authors, this concept is useful since it highlights a fundamental characteristic of communication: the gaps that must be filled by the mobilization of our semiotic and sociocultural knowledge in interpretation processes, which takes place before any communication makes sense.

If we cannot open the black box itself, we can study the relationships that people experience with algorithms, and by extension how and to what extent these experienced relationships become meaningful and are interwoven with users' reflections of power, transparency, and justice in digital media. (Lomborg & Kapsch, 2019, p. 2)

The authors reinforced that, as part of the digital infrastructure of everyday life, algorithms also become productive and powerful through the meanings attributed to them in concrete scenarios. Therefore, in the context of the forms of interaction with the digital media, they identified "several accounts of users performing protective tactics and deliberate attempts to influence or circumvent algorithmic systems through interactions with them, underlining that while algorithms do things to people, people also do things to algorithms" (Lomborg & Kapsch, 2019, p. 11). The study showed that individuals become more aware of the existence of technical and invisible objects, such as algorithms and their consequences in the mediations and formation of meanings.

Social media have no specific border, i.e., a beginning, middle, and end. This is due to how they are operated by the individual, who maintain continuous, internal, and external relationships. Within the scope of digital platforms, the circulation limits may be within the *algorithms*. Fausto Neto (2019) assessed that the platforms impose their own rules and prescriptions, organize enunciations, and circulate the systematization of new messages in the form of statements. Hence, the place of reception is not only in the metrics, the comments, and the sharing that the contents receive. The place of reception is also in the digital footprints, which are established by the social and cultural space the individual occupies while building their online and offline dialogues, i.e., by the dimensions in everyday life and their interactions.

As technical instruments, algorithms build and implement power and knowledge regimes (Beer, 2009; Gillespie, 2018), and their use has normative and performative implications since individuals attribute meanings to the information they receive. In fact, when computational tools are used as a primary form of

expression, as Gillespie (2018) observes, human discourse and knowledge are subjected to the logics of procedures that support computation; logics that, in addition to the techniques, are demarcated by commercial interests (Couldry & Mejias, 2018; Srnicek, 2017; Zuboff, 2020), by political interests (O’Neil, 2016; Silveira, 2019), and also by human bias (Benjamin, 2019; Crawford, 2021; Noble, 2021; Silva, 2021). Hence, it is necessary to question not only algorithms as key elements of this information system configuration but also the cultural forms that emerge from their shadows. In the words of Gillespie (2018), there are “specific implications when we use algorithms to select what is most relevant from a corpus of data composed by footprints of our activities, preferences, and expressions” (p. 97).

To Uricchio (2017), the algorithm reached a point of inflection upon impacting and even redefining the subject-object relationships. In doing so, it raises some quite fundamental epistemological questions. Combined with data, in a scenario that adds to the emergence of big data, processing power, and high-speed networks, it may be defining an emerging epistemic era.

Like data, algorithms can be human- or machine-generated. And although an ancient idea, the algorithm has . . . reached a tipping point in terms of its cultural operations: it is now being deployed in ways that redefine long-held subject-object relationships and, in so doing, it poses some rather fundamental epistemological questions. (Uricchio, 2017, p. 125)

Considered as an agent that configures collective life in various forms, the algorithm is viewed by Kitchin (2016) as an instrument that guides and molds the way people, animals, and technical objects integrate and traverse various systems. Beer (2009) observed algorithms as powerful agents capable of molding cultural and social formations. Allying to these authors, in this horizon of sociological analysis of algorithms, Gillespie (2018) perceived the algorithm not merely as an abstraction; The author observed that the analyses must emphasize and reveal the human and institutional choices behind their elaborations. This argumentation leads to the center of the issue discussed in this article: the algorithms that compose the network must also be seen from the perspective of mediations, with a view that does not lose sight of the political, social, and economic power that reveals itself through the codes that conduct experiences and interactions.

Algorithms, especially machine learning ones<sup>8</sup>, make classifications using varied forms and sets of models: navigation history, geographical information, gender, age, behavior, political preferences, profession, performance, work, temporal information, etc. Other analyses count days of the week of access

<sup>8</sup>In *machine learning*, the functions are executed by the algorithm itself. In other words, there is human action in the elaboration of the codes; however, later, as new *inputs* are added, the machine starts acting as the interactions happen.



to the contents, intervals, permanence, engagement, assiduity, frequency, etc. – a signal system built based on the information stemming from the intersection of social, cultural, political, economic, and informative strategies – clear signs of surveillance, digital surveillance substantiated by “systematic, automated, and remote monitoring of actions and information on individuals in the cyberspace with the purpose of knowing and intervening in their possible conducts or choices” (Bruno, 2008, p. 11). The longer a user stays on a mobile application or online platform, the more data on their habits, tastes, and behaviors will be collected (Beer, 2009; Couldry & Mejias, 2018; O’Neil, 2016; Silveira, 2019, Srnicek, 2017).

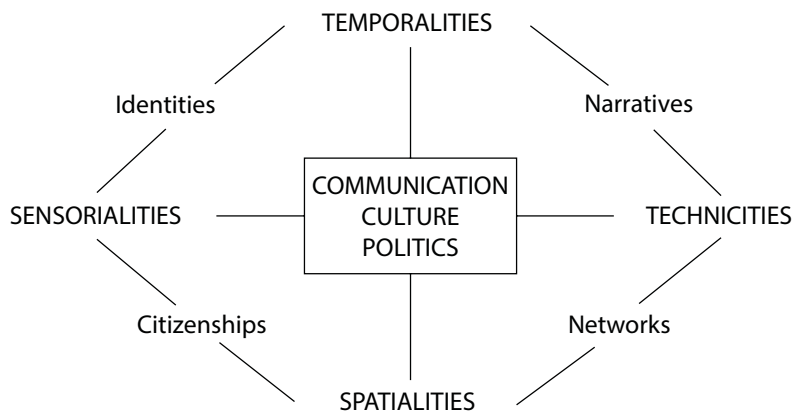
That said, the final topic presents the *Algorithmic Mediations System Map* (Winques, 2020). It is a map that takes on a rereading of the night maps by Martín-Barbero and brings a connection with the contemporary scenario permeated by digital platforms, media diversity, and algorithms.

### ALGORITHMIC MEDIATIONS SYSTEM MAP

The mediations of Martín-Barbero are *where* it is possible to understand the interactions between the space of reception and that of production. According to Lopes (2018), “the Barberian cartography concerns a *strategic-rhizomatic method*, and the mediations must be seen as devices that crisscross in a constant motion of mutation, renovation, and updating” (p. 51). The reading of the mediations by Martín-Barbero takes place across four maps, presented in the different editions of the work *De los Medios a las Mediaciones*. The recovery is made by Lopes (2018), and the publications are marked by the years 1987, 1998, 2010, and 2017<sup>9</sup>. The mapping method shows an epistemology that uses footprints. A more comprehensive view of Martín-Barbero and the maps in their completeness may be seen in the analyses by Lopes (2018), Jacks and Escosteguy (2005), and Jacks et al. (2019).

In the contemporary scenario, digital media displace knowledge. Such devices are “modifying both the cognitive and the institutional statute of the conditions of knowledge, leading to a strong blurring of the borders between reason and imagination, knowledge and information, art and science, specialized and common knowledge” (Lopes, 2018, p. 58). This technological mutation started to configure the communication ecosystem, and this historicity helped elaborate the last map proposed by Martín-Barbero (Figure 1). In this map, interpreted by Rincón (2019) and Lopes (2018), two new axes appear – *technicities* and *sensorialities* – in addition to three new sub-mediations – *narratives*, *networks*, and *citizenships*.

<sup>9</sup>The 2017 map is not part of an introduction of a new edition of the author’s work but was rather presented in an interview of Martín Barbero with Omar Rincón on May 22, 2017 (Rincón, 2017).

**Figure 1***Fourth Methodological Map of Mediations (2017)*

Note. From “A Teoria Barberiana da Comunicação”, by M. I. V. Lopes, 2018, *MATRIZes*, 12(1), p. 58. (<https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.1982-8160.v8i1p65-80>).

The *technicities* imply a reconfiguration of sensoriality and sociality. Lopes (2018) observed that Martín-Barbero proposed contemplating the *sensitivity* theory in dialogue with Jacques Rancière and the *sharing of the sensitive*. This occurs in two ways: first, the author refuses to reduce the aesthetics to a merely speculative reflection; conversely, points to the necessity to broaden it to a reflection linked to the various sensitivity regimes that coexist in society; second, cartography exposes that the arrangement of the positions and competencies of individuals has as a pillar the decentralized view of the researcher, who observes the margins and the valorization of the communication flow and the cultural exchange.

Rincón (2019) observed that one of the keys is reading the current sensory as being inhabited by the instability and chaos within the individual, politics, and society. This is due to the existence of various crises, such as the environmental and political crises, and, at the same time, a certain technological optimism is witnessed. In turn, the mediation of sociality “reveals outlines that will demarcate the different experiences with the sensitive, or with the ‘taking part in the sharing’ mentioned by Rancière. Therefore, the cartography may be an instrument to promote new parameters for representing the sharing of the sensitive” (Lopes, 2018, p. 60).

The *narratives* are conceptually conjugated by the amalgamation of ritual. While everyday life stories are molded by rituals, the narratives produce stories that remain in the collective memory, according to Rincón (2019). In the case



of *networks*, it is how the natural world and the ecosystem may be read. For the author, the network is the contemporary language, and the flows are the depth.

Rincón (2019) observed that *citizenships*, which refer to the citizens, are more perennial. They inhabit the cities, the rights, and the ways to gain power in everyday life. In turn, the *identities* are the forms that social performances take on. There are also the figures and the characters that concern the ephemeral, the fragmentary, but with the power of performance and enunciation. Lastly, relative to the space and time axes, it is possible to inhabit the city time and the virtual time in contemporaneity. In the view of the author, the relationship is space-time; the spaces inhabit the times.

In the view of Martín-Barbero (2011), the knowledge of *identity crisis* in contemporary society is structurally connected with the market society, which guides the logic and dynamic of the production and circulation of knowledge. This issue intensifies if we observe, for example, the scenario of platform capitalism (Couldry & Mejias, 2018; Srnicek, 2017). In contrast, the new communication and information technologies triggers the need to investigate the meaning of the *cultural mutation* that is introduced in all fields of society. From the perspective of Martín-Barbero (2011), when the technological mediation of communication ceases to be instrumental and becomes structural, the very place of culture within society changes. Therefore, *technicity*, a term coined by anthropologist André Leroi-Gourhan in the 20th century, refers nowadays to the technology that is not only in the devices but in the new ways of perception and language, in new sensitivities and writings.

For the author, the matter of the technique is increasingly crucial insofar as technicism threatens the cultural diversity of the techniques, becoming a universal connector of the world; a global technicism that concerns not only the world of objects but also of the individuals and their social bonds. Consequently, society is not only in the face of economic avatars but also other premises of culture and politics. Although technology has always been assessed as a mere instrument, Martín-Barbero (2011) noted the need to view it as a reason in the sense proposed by Martin Heidegger, in a constitutive dimension of sociocultural changes, which paradoxically reveals the reverse process undergone by politics: the “loss of symbolic density”, which is the loss of the capacity to summon and keep subjects united. Therefore, in the view of the author, the current technological stage is disrupts the images of the world and the coordinates of the sensitive experience.

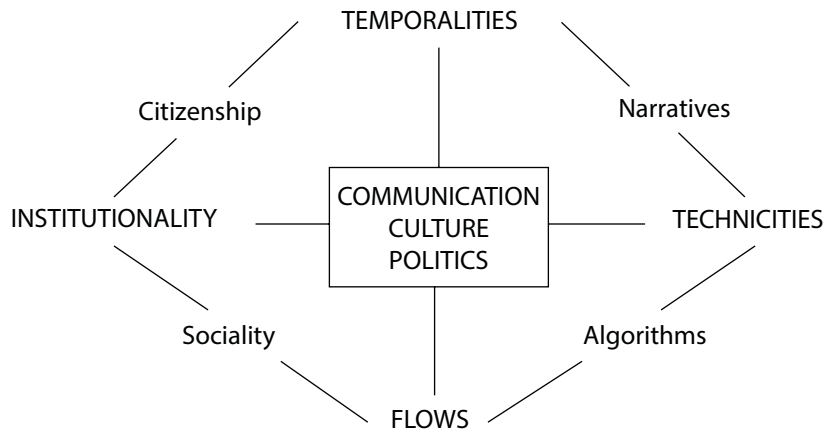
Hence, in light of the mediation maps by Martín-Barbero and the authors mentioned before, the *Algorithmic Mediations System Map* is proposed (Figure 2), with the following as basic mediations: *institutionality* and *technicity* on the



horizontal axis; and *temporalities* and *flows* on the vertical axis. As sub-mediation axes, the following appear: *narratives*, *algorithms*, *sociality*, and *citizenship*.

**Figure 2**

*Algorithmic Mediations System Map*



Note. From *Mediações Algorítmicas e Espiral do Silêncio: As Dimensões Estruturantes Igreja e Sindicato na Recepção de Conteúdos Noticiosos em Plataformas Digitais*, por K. Winques, 2020, p. 160.

Regarding the horizontal axis of institutionality, it is necessary to recognize the institutionalization of the media formations in contemporary society. Jacks (1999) observed that the mediations are carried out by the institutions the individual belongs to or has some type of contact with, such as: political party, neighborhood, religion, company, school etc. Additionally, the author, just as Orozco Gómez (2005), considers television as an institution that, together with those mentioned above, mediates the relationship of the individual who produces and reproduces senses and meanings from the television discourse.

For this reason, the application of the institutional dimension covers the belief that institutions such as churches, schools, families, parties, and unions are important in the formation of the mediations; however, the various media, especially the digital platforms, need to be considered as mediating instances of the ways of seeing, thinking, and acting. They need to be characterized as such because they have become an indispensable part of the everyday lives of individuals. Their communicative genres, narratives, codes, and symbols go through digitalization; however, they are not just algorithms and exchanges void of meaning but are institutionalized forms of social interaction. In opting for the institutional perspective, one agrees with Hjarvard (2015) and Couldry and Hepp (2020) that it is important to consider the various media – especially



the new ones. In a more sociological view, Hjarvard (2015) pondered that an institution is a field of the social life or an identifiable domain governed by a set of formal and informal rules, and that it also “presents a particular structure, performs given social functions, and allocates resources for social action in varied ways” (p. 56).

Compared to mass media, the new formats of media, propagation, and interaction, such as the Internet and mobile devices, have a different insertion in everyday practices. This is due to the integration of a variety of private, semi-private, and public institutional contexts. In the conception of Hjarvard (2015), in the institutionalization process of the social interaction patterns, media may serve a variety of uses, but it is the media affordances, i.e., their communicative, aesthetic, and social possibilities, that determine which social interaction patterns will be dominant. Concerning the private forms of interaction, however, the central point is that the influence of the used media “stems more from the media affordances and less from a *modus operandi* of the institution of the semi-independent media” (p. 57). Speaking of institutionalization involves allocating resources, both in terms of economic investments and the social learning of how to use the media. The author mentioned the example of Facebook, which was initially molded by particular developers and media systems but that, after reaching a dominant position, began to structure the interaction of the individuals in a manner that is difficult to circumvent – especially since there are algorithms that help the circulation and contribute to a logic based on platform capitalism and data colonialism (Couldry & Mejias, 2018; Srnicek, 2017).

In the assessment of García Canclini (2020), companies such as Google, Apple, Facebook, and Amazon are not only the largest technology business complexes, but they also reconfigure the meanings of coexistence and interactions. For this reason, it was chosen to keep sociality and citizenship connected to the institutional dimension since the activity of institutions promotes the formation of everyday relationships and social bonds and the ways in which the citizen develop their political participation and identity.

Sociality is part of the construction and deconstruction of society. Cogo and Brignol (2011) understood the networks as spaces of social interaction “of flexible, dynamic and constantly moving exchanges that do not cease to accommodate power relationships expressed in the disputes, hierarchies, and asymmetries that constitute the sphere of communication and culture” (p. 82). The networks manifest a way to form bonds and be together and, jointly, may implicate manners of social participation and integration. It is also possible to think of *scheduled sociability*, conceptualized by Bucher (2012), which considers that platforms

and their algorithmic dynamics have an important role in the dimensions that aid the construction of common space. The view woven by the author allows us to consider sociality as a continuous process of assembly and reconfigurations that involves human and non-human actors.

Citizenship emerges as a dimension that is problematized especially by the interrelationships it establishes, involving institutions and cultural identity. The interrelationships between technicism and the constitution of new citizenships in the cultural field must be viewed from a perspective that considers the plurality of communication scenarios. Bonin and Morigi (2019) observed the relevance in considering the new forms of monitoring, surveillance, and control introduced by technological conglomerates. Other aspects concern the use of algorithms that significantly limit the possibilities of developing extended network interactions, as well as the phenomenon of disseminating false content, which expresses the deliberate use of misinformation as a power maneuver for controlling citizens.

The formulation of technicity suits the most recent view by Martín-Barbero (2011), who assessed that there is a new type of technique, the peculiarity of which is in its association with a new cognitive economy governed by the displacement of the number, which, as a sign of domain over nature, gradually becomes the universal mediator of knowledge. Through this angle, the author observed that computer networks transformed the relationship with time and space by mobilizing knowledge figures that escape the dualistic reason: “working interactively with sounds, images, and written texts, the hypertext hybridizes the symbolic density with the numerical abstraction and causes the two parts of the brain (so far ‘opposite’) to be rediscovered”<sup>10</sup> (p. 113). According to the author, the computer is clearly not a traditional machine for producing symbolic objects but a device that bears a new type of technicity constituted by the processing of information, the symbolic production, and the relationships between the order of the discursive (logic) and the visible (form). Despite the change in view, Martín-Barbero did not assume the priority of the media, only recognized that communication “densifies” with the new dimensions of technicity, that the communicative is becoming stronger, and that the new media are part of the symbolic experiences – which involves considering the various multi-mediation interfaces.

These symbolic experiences are also formulated by the narratives and the algorithms. For Silva and Baseio (2019), “the narrative mediation suggests analyzing communicative processes under the perspective of the practices, dealing with fragments, rituals, and repetitions reproduced in everyday time and space”<sup>11</sup> (p. 180). Encompassed by digital technologies, social complexity provides

<sup>10</sup>In the original: “al trabajar interactivamente con sonidos, imágenes y textos escritos, el hipertexto hibrida la densidad simbólica con la abstracción numérica, y hace que se reencuentren las dos (hasta ahora ‘opuestas’) partes del cerebro”.

<sup>11</sup>In the original: “La mediación narrativa sugiere analizar los procesos comunicativos en la óptica de las prácticas, ocupándose de los fragmentos, de los ritos y de las repeticiones reproducidas en el tiempo y espacio cotidianos”.



new means to create, recreate, read, and reread narratives. Hence, it is necessary to consider the experience of the individual who, in terms of their expectations, creates new narration possibilities. Photos, videos, texts, and audio compose everyday narratives. Cogo and Brignol (2011) observed that the hybridization of different discursive forms brings consequences to reception. The same occurs with hypertext, composed of a non-sequential structure, which “also causes one to think of the content and messages built through heterogeneous flows, in a context of interrelated processes” (p. 85).

If the model of social networking, searching, relationship, purchasing, mobility, and other platforms involves significant changes to the institutional relationships and emerging cultural practices, algorithms may be considered agents that intensely and quickly mediate the transformation of society. As organization, modulation, and performativity devices, algorithms leave the numerical object field to appropriate the cultural references of the users. In the regularities of accessing, clicking, commenting, and sharing, the apparently technical objects find references of the individuals that will help conduct the experience that develops through interactivity and hypertext, which, consequently, help the encounter with the narratives present on the network. This is how algorithms refer to technicity since they are not restricted to the discursive grammars formulated by enunciation practices but serve to understand the discursive dexterity and its performative operators.

The everyday rites are no longer restricted to the act of turning the TV on or reading the newspaper; they are marked by various technological spaces. The rituality includes acts such as opening Instagram, checking WhatsApp messages, turning on the radio, or watching a movie on Netflix. As pointed out by Fausto Neto (2010), “programming” no longer exists; individuals themselves are the operators/programmers. For this reason, it is not possible to find the exact dimension of technicity and its connections with the narratives, the sociality, the citizenship, and the algorithms; it is viable, however, to think of the productions, reproductions, and re-elaborations of meanings that may be contemplated and understood through methodologies connected to the *listening* process of the subjects (Bonin, 2013) – such as interviews, focus groups, ethnography etc., or, even, through social network analysis techniques (Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2016), which especially aim at mapping the footprints left on the network. The emerging field of social network analysis is dedicated to investigating scenarios in which the networks, especially social media ones, start to be recognized as the epicenter of interpersonal relations. This includes the consumption of information, the monitoring of collectivities and individualities, the analysis of feelings, and the strengthening of specific agendas, among others.

Finally, the vertical axis is marked by temporalities and flows. Martín-Barbero (2017) observed that the *new age of the sensitive* involves overcoming the unbroken linear sequence of the time of information and potentializes new temporalities that break old borders of knowledge and belonging. Hence, the new device and dialogue scenarios allows for the discussions about the time migrants: individuals who are located in the present from multiple and even distant temporalities, configuring a new kind of global community without maps. Upon tackling the new era of the sensitive, the author argued that it is less about devices and more about capturing how, by articulating technique and culture, individuals are faced with new forms of perceiving, feeling, and being in the medium. These are more precarious temporalities, while also being more flexible. This is because they are at the basis of the experience of the fragmentation culture that expresses itself through the growing identification with fragmented stories in videos, audios, texts, photos etc. There are environments of more ephemeral temporalities and spatialities.

The temporalities are directly connected with the flows, which are the decentralized spaces and those of multiple spatialities. Martín-Barbero (2018) proposed that the multiple spatialities are the following spaces: (1) the *inhabited* space, of territory, proximity, and belonging; (2) the *produced* space, which weaves electronic networks; (3) the *imagined* space, of the nation and its identity; (4) the *practiced* space, which involves the subjectivity that emerges from the new relationship with the city and the forms of its appropriation. This relationship allows the discussion on the communication technologies and the spatialities enabled by them, generating new socialities and citizenships in a world of spatial fragmentation and isolation of individuals. To adopt the term flows means to think about the position of geography that recognizes spatiality, which is also virtual, as a place of contradictions and disputes.

From the flows, temporalities, technicities, algorithms, narratives, and institutions, the cognitive and situational mediations, as proposed by Orozco Gómez (2005), may be observed or triggered. The first occurs through scripts that the author treats as mental scripts that indicate the framing and cultural relevance of given themes, situations, and forms of perception placed in negotiation in the communication. Therefore, cognitive mediation is a set of factors that influence the perception, appropriation, and processing of elements and events that are directly related to the acquisition of knowledge – which may take place both through the processing of the logic of the information and the systems of beliefs and values (rational or irrational) of the individual. Consequently, a script results from the interaction of the subject with others and with their medium. For this reason, this perception may also be assessed through the formation of schemes in



the environment of digital platforms that occur due to more significant attention or sensitivity for certain themes and disregard for others.

In turn, situational mediations involve a specific relationship with the media, connected to the type of space in which this encounter occurs and to the form by which they dispute the attention of their users – who may be alone or in groups. In this angle, the *appropriation communities* may also be observed, through which the message travels within the same public until it receives a final interpretation – yet not definitive. Hence, the subject “takes the message to the different communities they belong to, in which it gains or loses meaning, generating the production of new meanings or the reproduction of proposed meanings” (Jacks, 1999, p. 58). The appropriation communities may also vary according to the individual; within the same audience, specific appropriations may occur. “Belonging to various appropriation communities causes the receiver to have various *reference communities*, the relevance in the reception process of which will be determined by the empirical situation of the object of analysis” (Jacks, 1999, p. 58). Upon visualizing an information set, a person will have the possibility of confronting the material with their own personality and other reference communities; for such reasons, their identity is continuously built by appropriation communities.

*Sociocultural mediators*, as described by Martín-Barbero (2015), are “... nstitutional and traditional figures – the school, the family, the church, the neighborhood” (p. 20) – and “the new actors and emerging social movements that, similar to ecological or human rights organizations and ethnic or gender movements, introduce new meanings of social and new social uses of media” (p. 20). In view of this, algorithms are used as cultural and infrastructural mediators that need to be dealt with politically, technically, and expressively. Furthermore, we believe that recognizing algorithmic mediations is a part of the contemporary complexity that involves the processes and mediums of communication. The mediations and the map described above are connected to the assumption that the reception does not occur only while accessing content on the web – using social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Twitter, or using search engines such as Google – it starts before and ends after. The production of meanings takes place through the combination of various mediations that intervene in the reception process. According to Jacks (1999) and Lopes (2018), the use of the night maps does not require an explicit application of all analytical categories. However, these maps are fundamental for the design of the investigation, the object of study, and the entire analytical process of conjuncture in which the study under development is inserted. Lastly, the *Algorithmic Mediations*

*System Map* is a map model that gathers the theoretical conceptions of the cultural studies, reception theories, platform studies, and critical studies on algorithms. Upon rereading the night maps by Martín-Barbero, this is an attempt to align the cultural studies to the contemporary context permeated by algorithmic flows and multiple temporalities.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Regarding reception research focused on the internet in Brazil, from the analysis of dissertations and theses defended from 2010 to 2015, Pieniz et al. (2017) identified an exponential increase in the number of studies – a comparison made with the findings by Pieniz and Wottrich (2014) in the first decade of the 2000s<sup>12</sup>. In their most recent work, the authors presented 235 studies, of which 11 address only the Internet, 41 invested in media convergence, 52 observed network conversations, and 131 focused on the uses and competencies of the platforms – with a predominance of Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Regarding themes, there was an emphasis on politics, culture, religion, identity, and fashion. The concepts with the highest incidence were cyberculture, cyberspace, digital media, and the definition of interaction. The primary criticism is that all works are more focused on the descriptivism of the manifestations of the subjects: “new studies may perform a more in-depth analysis of the phenomena and the communication process itself” (Pieniz et al., 2017, p. 33).

Given the exposed, algorithms must also be observed from the perspective of mediations, not losing sight of the political and economic power revealed through the codes that conduct experiences and interactions, signs, and symbols. Christin (2020), Lomborg and Kapsch (2019), and Winques (2020) faced this problem and progressed in the perspective of recognition of algorithms as symbolic objects of negotiations, representations, contradictions, and production of meanings.

Christin (2020) analyzed the ways journalists handle data to the public. Based on four years of fieldwork in newsrooms in the United States and France, the author discovered crucial and paradoxical differences in how American and French journalists understand the analysis of the public and how this affects the news articles produced. Contrary to the belief that algorithms are homogenizing forces, the researcher showed that computational technologies may have diverging ramifications and that subjects may develop disputable appropriations. In their exploratory study of how people decode algorithms from different forms of engagement, Lomborg and Kapsch (2019) attested the ways through which individuals tacitly reinforce or subvert the algorithmic logics through their

<sup>12</sup>Pieniz and Wottrich (2014) analyzed that reception research from the 2000s manifested changes “at times with works regarding a traditional media scenario with well-determined borders between emitters and receivers, other times with works with a media scenario in reconfiguration, with analyses of empirical spaces of the internet” (p. 74). Hence, they noticed that, in this process of the entry of reception in internet studies, there were 31 works involving the online medium from 2000 to 2009.



communicative agency. Lastly, through a sociocultural matrix reception study with evangelical believers and unionized professors, Winques (2020) sought to understand the power relationships from the productions of meanings of the subjects, taking into account the algorithmic mediations as part of this power structure. In this sense, from the *Algorithmic Mediations System Map*, the author explored the social processes that involve algorithms and subjects and investigated the implications of this relationship in the reception and circulation of journalistic information on digital platforms.

A common perspective among the mentioned studies is the *listening* of the individuals, which takes place through methods such as ethnography and interviews. These are methodologies that help the process of *hearing* what the users say and think. Therefore, they offer important clues as to how subjects relate among themselves and to information on digital platforms. That said, it is proposed that, upon using the *Algorithmic Mediations System Map*, research aiming to understand the mediations, the consumption, or the reception in the space of digital platforms must take into account the technical, circulation, and reception/consumption aspects in the environment mediated by algorithms. Under this perspective, digital platforms gain importance as a category of analysis of the institutional mediations in the reception process – it is about investigating how content is consumed in the everyday life traversed by social practices originated in other mediations of the individual that aid in the formation of opinions, actions, and memories. ■

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# Recognition and Redistribution in the Digital Media of the Común Tierra Project

## *Reconhecimento e Redistribuição nas Mídias Digitais do Projeto Común Tierra*

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### ABSTRACT

This article discusses issues of recognition, sustainability, and redistribution by monitoring and analyzing the digital media of the Común Tierra project, an itinerant undertaking that originated from a six-year journey through Latin America with the aim of documenting sustainable communities and ecological projects in different countries. We take as a starting point the analytical category of participatory parity. We also start from the hypothesis that we could understand the media produced at the project as community communication processes responsible for pedagogically disseminating ecological practices and promoting sustainable ways of life as an alternative to the capitalist system.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, community communication, digital media, recognition, redistribution

### RESUMO

O artigo discute questões de reconhecimento, sustentabilidade e redistribuição a partir do monitoramento e análise das mídias digitais do projeto Común Tierra, empreitada itinerante originada a partir de uma viagem de seis anos pela América Latina com o objetivo de documentar comunidades sustentáveis e projetos ecológicos em diferentes países. Tomamos como base analítica a categoria de *paridade participativa*, partindo da hipótese de que as mídias do projeto podem ser consideradas processos comunicacionais comunitários responsáveis por divulgar pedagogicamente práticas ecológicas e promoverem um modo de vida sustentável como alternativa no sistema capitalista.

**Palavras-chave:** Sustentabilidade, comunicação comunitária, mídias digitais, reconhecimento, redistribuição

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<sup>1</sup>This is the way in which the document "Our Common Future" is known. Coordinated by the then Prime Minister of Norway Gro Harlem Brundtland, the World Commission on Environment and Development sought to propagate the idea of sustainable development.

AT THE BEGINNING of the new millennium, as Henry Acelard (2009) reminds us, different types of discursive matrices have been associated with the notion of sustainability since 1987, when the "Brundtland Report"<sup>1</sup> (Brundtland, 1987) placed it in the global debate. Among these discursive matrices, Acelard (2009) highlights: efficiency, which would aim to combat the material waste of development, also covering economic rationality to the planetary mercantile space; scale, which advocates a quantitative limit to economic growth and the pressure it exerts on the environment; equality, which seeks to relate and articulate principles of justice and ecology; self-sufficiency, which propagates the decoupling of national economies and traditional societies from financial transactions in the global market – a strategy aimed at ensuring the community's capacity for self-regulation of the conditions for reproducing the material basis of development; and ethics, which is part of the social appropriation of the material world in constant dialogue with moral values and "the interactions of the material basis of development with the conditions of continuity of life on the planet" (Acelard, 2009, p. 43).

In fact, the different notions of sustainability and discursive matrices are related to the desired social results and the functions and articulations that certain discourses intend to turn into reality. In other words, "that set of practices that carry sustainability in the future is sustainable today" (Acelard, 2009, p. 46). And there are struggles in the field – symbolic, discursive, and communicational ones – of groups and organizations for the recognition of being sustainable and for the right to be sustainable in a world where the hegemonic logic of consumption prevails.

This article proposes to present the case of sustainable communities located in rural areas in Brazil and in Latin American countries which have, in common with other types of intentional communities around the world, the defense of a self-sufficient way of life based on permaculture (Arruda, 2018; Capello, 2013; Nery, 2017). In practical terms, this model is characterized by the adoption of a vegan or vegetarian diet; subsistence agricultural production; rejection of the consumer society and the use of fossil fuels; inspiration by the way of life of native peoples or traditional communities; and constant economic interaction with local and regional partners.

As a result of a post-doctoral research funded by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), this study has, as its main objective, the investigation of the Común Tierra project, responsible for mapping sustainable communities and ecovillages in Latin America. Therefore, in 2020, we monitored and analyzed the project's digital platforms, responsible

for disseminating sustainable practices on the internet, with special attention to the project's presence on YouTube and Facebook, networks in which it has a significant number of followers and views. In other words, types of media that have more popularity and ability to disseminate project ideals and, consequently, sustainable practices.

The *participatory parity* category, which we take as a basis, is related to notions of sustainability and is part of Nancy Fraser's theoretical discussions on *recognition and distribution*. In addition to the analysis of the digital media of the Común Tierra project and its relations with the issues of recognition and distributive justice, as a specific objective, we question whether these digital media can be conceived as community media in the light of the discussion by Muniz Sodré, Raquel Paiva, and Cíclia Peruzzo.

As an introduction to the proposed theme, Capello (2013) points out that the concept of *ecovillage*, one of the main focuses of this study, should not be limited to the establishment of a list of "green solutions" or equipment and forms of socio-environmental interactions that collaborate to gradually increase residents' ecological practices. However, such practices are not restricted to the internal benefits to ecovillages and their surroundings, as they are part of actions linked to global organizations that promote the values of different aspects of environmentalism (Castells, 2000; Leis, 1999) due to the serious environmental crisis that threatens the planet nowadays.

The contradictions that involve the concept of *sustainable development* (Leis, 1999) – in a continuum that extends from a business management modality to the convergence between environmentalism and spirituality – seem to be reproduced in sustainable communities, pressured by the need to economically survive with the provision of collective and individual services and to maintain the utopian ideals of a life that prioritizes the collective well-being of its members and of all living beings.

One of the criticisms to these communities concerns their relative social isolation and class elitism (Nery, 2017). However, it seems difficult to blame them for not including low-income people or people from ethnic minorities when public policies to finance their sustainability projects are scarce. Therefore, sustainable communities today represent an alternative way of life to current consumption parameters in a world in which the accumulation of wealth without the equal distribution of social benefits has exacerbated contradictions and conflicts in rural areas and in large and medium Latin American urban centers.

According to the research released in January 2020 by the non-governmental organization (NGO) Oxfam, between June 2018 and June 2019, global wealth



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remained densely concentrated “at the top of the distribution pyramid: the richest 1%, in terms of equity profile, in mid-2019, held more than twice the net wealth owned by 6.9 billion people” (“Desigualdades...”, 2020). This inequality became even more evident with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has spread across the planet and has already victimized more than 6.32 million people, in addition to leaving more than 115 million people living in misery worldwide, while the fortunes of billionaires grew by 27% in 2020 (“Os cálculos...”, 2020).

Given this picture, the main key to interpreting sustainable communities would be to observe them as “an attempt to find a system of values that defines the right human measure” (Silva, 2013, p. 19). In a similar sense, for Capello (2013), it is necessary to realize that sustainable communities would be examples of possibilities for new human settlements and community life, but that they do not constitute “a universal solution” to the world’s problems. According to the author, it is an enterprise of “the result of a group and community option or a philosophy of life, one of many that mark modern and pluralist western society . . . an ideology and a pedagogy” (p. 14).

In other words, sustainable communities present themselves as forms of community and of social and ecological action focused on a pedagogy of change that encompasses human beings’ relationships with nature, in terms of the preservation and regeneration of the environment, in which the logic of redistribution, as we shall see, is embedded.

Based on these first reflections, we present three hypotheses, one of them theoretical: (1) ideas about harmony between humans and nature, contrary to the capitalist logic of profit maximization, can be adopted beyond the spatial limits of sustainable communities; (2) digital media prove to be adequate to disseminate ecological ideals and sustainable practices, that is, they are responsible for the expansion and propagation of these ideas; and (3) we can consider the digital media of the Común Tierra project as community media responsible for sharing sustainable practices.

From these hypotheses, we formulate the following questions: can this way of life, common to a small number of communities, through community media, face environmental devastation and social inequality in capitalist society? How can the idea of harmony between humans and non-humans come to fruition via digital media, that is, beyond the spatial limits of sustainable communities? To what extent are the digital media of the project community media, as they are planned and produced by people outside the communities?

We argue here that the sustainable communities visited by the Común Tierra project represent community actions that involve the possibility of a cultural, economic, and social exchange in which the common does not mean the reduction



of differences to the same denominator (García Canclini, 2004). When reflecting on the meaning of apprehending the *common* in Latin American culture, along with all the differences and inequalities between groups and ethnicities, García Canclini (2004) argues that political and cultural integration remains as necessary as the autonomy of groups for the construction of a sociopolitical project to overcome inequalities.

Similar to Garcia Canclini, for Sodr  (2014), communication is revealed as the main organizational and political form in contemporary society. In other words, it is, in its radicality, “the organizational work of the essential mediations to the human common, the approximate resolution of pertinent differences in symbolic forms” (p. 15).

As a proposed discussion and analysis, we divided the article into three main topics, in addition to this introduction and our final remarks. The first topic describes the Com n Tierra project as an object of study and the methodology applied in the investigation; the second topic presents theoretical discussions and the applied categories of analysis. In a third moment, the analysis of the object of study is described, with the specific objective of answering whether we are truly facing a form of community media.

## OBJECT OF STUDY AND APPLIED METHODOLOGY

Com n Tierra is a nomadic, itinerant enterprise, which has existed since 2010 with the aim of documenting sustainable communities and the ecological projects of intentional communities. The project was created by a young middle-class couple, Let cia Riggati, a Brazilian citizen graduated in Social Communication, and Ryan Luckey, a North American citizen. They traveled for six years through Latin America. Up until 2016, they visited 150 villages of Indigenous peoples and different sustainable communities. Among the countries visited are Mexico, Nicaragua, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil, in which they traveled during the last six months of their trip.

They started in the south of the continent, on the border between Brazil and Uruguay, in the city of Chu . Therefore, the communities of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina States were the first to be visited and documented. Among them are the agroecological communities settled by the Landless Workers Movement (MST) in Nova Santa Rita, Rio Grande do Sul, and the S o Jos  Ecovillage, in Santa Catarina.

After a few months in these places, the couple headed to the community of Serra Grande, in the south of Bahia. There, they settled with their children and, in mid-2017, they built a new house. In this place, they began the process of settling with other families in the region, where they are still leaving.

# A

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The entire experience was documented with the use of technological devices, cameras, computers, cell phones, and traveling media and shared on social networks with multimedia guides, photos, and videos. The couple says, in an interview available on the project's digital media, that this record was made through what they call *barefoot journalism*, with “one hand in the garden and the other filming and documenting.”

We started by defining the places visited by the Común Tierra project as communities that live locally and internally and connect globally and externally through personal and digital networks. Next, we discuss the importance of online communication in the economic and symbolic constitution and maintenance itself, that is, as forms of social recognition of these communities. As digital media, we consider all content produced and made available in a virtual environment in a multimedia form through the communication channels of the project in 2020. That is, the content available on social networks on the internet and online platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, blog, and website (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
*Común Tierra project website*



Note. Reproduction of the home screen of the Común Tierra project website.

The methodology applied was the observation, monitoring, and qualitative analysis of digital media from the categories of analysis described in the next item. According to Depexe (2015), the monitoring methodology presupposes keeping track and observing content flows in networks and activities, demarcated temporally. Thus, the observed and monitored period extended from March to December 2020 when information was collected. That provided insights into

the uses and appropriations of the internet as a platform for the interaction and dissemination of certain content and individual and collective participation.

Additionally, it is important to emphasize that the study was, in part, guided by network analysis, a method proposed by Malini (2017) in which it seeks to identify, process, and interpret the points of view expressed in interactions in virtual spaces and online social networks, produced or moderated by the organizers of the project. From an empirical point of view, the method presents concepts from a topological and temporal perspective in the analysis of social networks and digital media, based on the production of written messages and images produced by the profiles.

### **CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS AND THEORETICAL CONCEPTIONS ON RECOGNITION AND REDISTRIBUTION**

Axel Honneth (2003), a philosopher and sociologist who developed the theory of recognition, states that “the distinctively human dependence on intersubjective recognition is always shaped by the particular way in which the mutual granting of recognition is institutionalized in a society” (p. 138). Thus, this institutionalization of the mutual granting of social recognition takes place in different instances, including media. In this sense, Común Tierra’s digital platforms are part of the network society (Castells, 2000) which faces the disheartening prospect of an incessant crisis of catastrophic proportions for life on the planet, privileging digital networks as a way of structuring the system of economic greed while it promises connections to increase consumption and citizen participation through a set of narratives produced in the media, the State, and institutions.

Here, recognition ends up occupying a key place in the theoretical debate for those who propose to discuss new sociocultural perspectives for the organization of sustainable communities within these networks. For Nancy Fraser (2006), who expands on Honneth’s discussions, cultural recognition has replaced economic redistribution as a remedy and solution to social injustice and occupied a prominent place in political struggle at local and global levels.

According to the author, it is necessary to develop a critical theory of recognition that identifies and takes up the defense of versions of the cultural politics of difference, which can be coherently combined with the social politics of equality. Fraser demonstrates her aim to connect two problems which were previously dissociated, recognition and redistribution. According to her, we achieve a conceptual framework adequate to contemporary demands only by integrating both concepts.



Capello (2013), in turn, points out that sustainable and intentional communities have the particularity of combining concern for environmental problems with increased awareness of the need to experience new ways of life, based on the fair distribution of material goods and cultural services. Therefore, we can interpret that sustainable communities would be concerned with associating issues of recognition with redistribution.

In this sense, Fraser (2006) points out that it is necessary to pay attention to two forms of injustice: the economic one, which increasingly deepens itself in the economic-political structure of current societies; and the cultural or symbolic one, which delves into “social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication” (p. 231). That is to say, Fraser’s political philosophy captures the synergy between economic inequalities, culture, and discourse (Dahl et al., 2004), emphasizing the danger of analyses that simply ignore the politics of redistribution in exchange for the salience of identity politics.

Unlike Honneth, according to Fraser, recognition must be conceived as a matter of justice. For her, it is unfair that some groups and individuals are denied the *status of full partners in social interaction* merely because of institutionalized patterns of cultural valuation – in whose constructions they did not participate in equal conditions – which depreciates the distinctive characteristics they possess or are assigned to them. It must be said, then, “that non-recognition is wrong because it constitutes a form of institutionalized subordination – and therefore a serious violation of justice” (Fraser, 2007, p. 112).

Therefore, to study recognition as a matter of justice, according to Fraser, we should perceive non-recognition as subordination of status<sup>2</sup>, that is, to find the mistake in social relations and not in social or interindividual psychology.

According to the author’s conception, the normative focus should be the notion of *parity of participation*. According to this parameter, justice requires social arrangements that allow members of society to interact as partners. First, the distribution of material resources must take place in a way that ensures the independence and voice of the participants, called the *objective condition* of participatory parity. Yet, the second condition, for Fraser, requires that institutionalized patterns of cultural valuation express equal respect for participants and ensure equal opportunity to the achievement of social esteem. Fraser calls it the *intersubjective condition* of participatory parity. Such conditions serve as a theoretical parameter for the analyses.

Here, it is necessary to emphasize that the objective condition and the intersubjective condition are necessary for parity of participation and cannot be treated as isolated facts. The objective condition focuses on concerns traditionally associated with the theory of distributive justice and related to the economic

<sup>2</sup> We do not agree with Fraser that it is necessary to disregard the validations of identities in exchange for validations for equality of status. We believe that the affirmation of identity differences does not prevent this equality. Not all identity struggles fit into what she calls repressive communitarianism.

structure of society and social class differentiations, such as the demarcation of Indigenous lands. The intersubjective condition, on the other hand, is related to the status order of society (which is different from identities) and to culturally defined status hierarchies. Thus, a broad conception of justice, guided by the norm of participatory parity, considers redistribution and recognition mutually.

How, then, can claims for recognition be analyzed in the digital media of the Común Tierra project and in other actions that seek to make the population aware of the different notions of sustainability? The approach proposed here, as already explained, considers participatory parity as an evaluative standard, the main category of analysis in this investigation.

According to Fraser (2007), those who claim redistribution must show that the current economic scenario denies them the objective conditions for participatory parity. Recognition claimants, on the other hand, must show that institutionalized patterns of cultural valuation deny them the necessary intersubjective conditions. Therefore, in both cases, the norm of participatory parity is the model for justifying the claim, and participatory parity serves to assess proposed solutions against injustice. This means that “regardless of whether claimants are demanding redistribution or recognition, claimants must show that the social changes they pursue will, in fact, promote parity of participation” (p. 125).

Thus, we also hypothesize that the digital media of the Común Tierra project can be considered as community communication processes responsible for claiming both redistribution and recognition issues.

Paiva (2007) highlights two attributes which apply to qualifying a communicative process as community communication. The first one is related to the communicated contents. According to the author, this type of communication arises from the perception of the biased and displaced character of the contents broadcast by conventional mass channels and from the desire to produce information which deals with local and regional problems in a more reliable way. Another outstanding attribute would be the community’s participation in the elaboration of the programming to be broadcast. As much as the vehicle is privately owned, it can only be characterized as community if the people of the locality have an active participation in defining the contents and approaches to be adopted. Therefore, a community vehicle would be one that deals with topics relevant to the community in a formative (and not merely informative) way, and that depends on the participation of the community itself in its daily working.

Hence, Peruzzo (2007) highlights the pedagogical character of community communication processes, which have the responsibility of disseminating content



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with the aim of developing education and culture and expanding citizenship. These characteristics, as well as the objective and subjective conditions of participatory parity, will be observed below.

### **DIGITAL MEDIA ANALYSIS OF THE COMÚN TIERRA PROJECT**

Based on the theoretical concepts of recognition, redistribution, and community communication worked so far, we will analyze the media content produced by the Común Tierra project.

Among more than 70 videos and documents available on the project's digital platforms, there are interviews and works developed in sustainable communities, ecovillages, and permaculture centers. On the project's website – which is available in Portuguese, Spanish, and English –, in addition to various materials, links, and documents, the main attraction is a map of Latin America with all the sustainable communities visited by the couple and a description of each one. In addition, within the website, there is a blog, updated up until 2018, with project activities after the trip.

The last blog post addresses a round of debates that took place in Ilhéus, Bahia, Brazil, on the “Rights of Mother Nature,” with researcher Vanessa Hasson, an expert on the subject, who works in the management and development of socio-environmental projects together with public authorities and the third sector. It is, in fact, a movement that works on the implementation of legislation that grants legal rights to the environment in Brazil and other countries around the world. On the occasion, were present residents of sustainable communities in the region, representatives of the legislature and the executive power of Bahia, and researchers from the State University of Bahia (Uneb), which demonstrates the political and representative character of the movement related to issues of recognition and redistribution and to the objective and intersubjective conditions of participatory parity (Fraser, 2006, 2007). In other words, when entering the project in discussions with the public power, participants start to demand changes of an economic and social order, as well as cultural and representative ones.

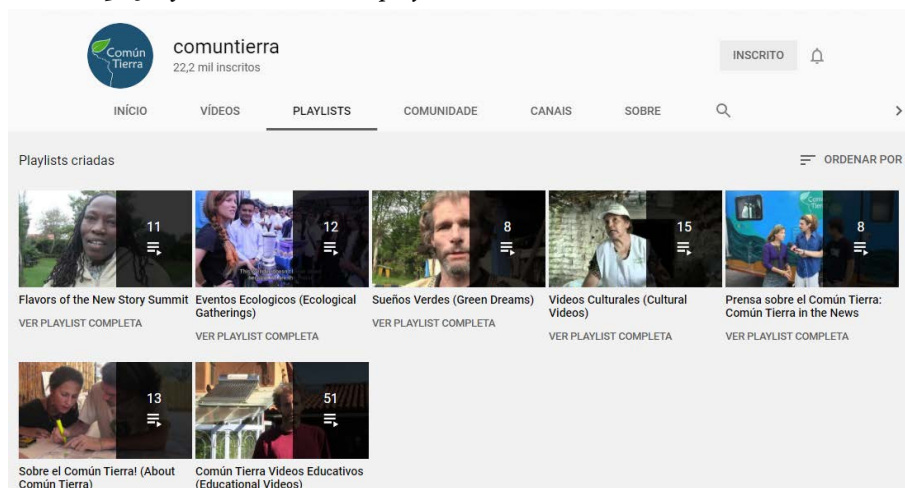
Also, the description on the website states that the main objective of the project is to disseminate educational information for the improvement of techniques and tools with a sustainable approach through visits in different locations. This point allows us to argue that we are facing a community communication process. According to Paiva (2007), the communication produced by these new media generates, at all times, new forms of language, producing effective interference

in the change of social postures. That is, its main characteristic is to act with the primary purpose of education. For the researcher, “the educational perspective is a primary prerogative of a community vehicle, and, for this very reason, its activity is not limited to the mere production of news messages” (p. 144).

In the same way, on their YouTube page (<https://bit.ly/3adwNQd>), which, in 2022, has 25.6 thousand subscribers (at the beginning of our analysis, in March 2020, there were 20.9 thousand subscribers), there is a vast amount of material produced by the project. This media space is the most important platform of Común Tierra, in which all the audiovisual materials produced by the couple are linked. For these reasons, greater attention was given to the analysis of this platform (Figure 2).

Figure 2

*YouTube page of the Común Tierra project*



*Note.* Reproduction of the Común Tierra project channel on YouTube.

Therefore, in order to carry out the analyses, we chose to divide the sections of the project videos available on YouTube into five subgroups:

(1) Educational videos: Here we find audiovisual recordings with an educational approach. That is, community, technical or demonstrative content addressing sustainability issues found in the different settlements and communities that the project has documented in Latin America and around the world. The videos in this section use background music, with colloquial language, mixing the couple's speeches with the testimonies of people who work and live in the Latin American visited ecovillages. These videos have an average length of five to six minutes.



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The webpage hosts 51 educational videos which deal with practices aimed at sustainability, such as: construction of houses with mud and straw (adobe technique); production of toothpastes with natural ingredients; assembly of a solar-powered oven and an ecological motorhome; preparation of medicinal tinctures; family-scale permaculture tips; and construction of a low-cost biodigester. Almost all videos feature the participation of members of the communities visited who share different types of teachings on sustainable practices. Here we see one more characteristic of community communication present, which would be the participation of the community itself in the elaboration of the contents.

Another important issue to be highlighted are the videos which deal with the promotion of dialogue networks between communities and how to organize them internally. Altogether, there are 10 videos in this section, conceived as educational videos. Here we perceive the intersubjective condition of participatory parity related to the status order of society in a pedagogical conception of shared and collectively organized environmental social justice in the Latin American communities visited by the project. It is perceived that there is an intention to give voice to the leaders of each community and, thus, through social networks, seek a possible interaction between them.

(2) Videos dedicated to ecological events: the second section documents international meetings focused on sustainability and ecovillages that the Común Tierra project participated in or held during and after the roadtrip. In this part are available 12 videos produced between 2010 and 2014, such as the “Pepena Fest: Festival of Recycling in the Capital of Mexico,” in 2010, about a meeting whose main theme was recycling, practices and solutions for waste, and disposable waste. This section also has videos about the Third Argentine Permaculture Encounter, held in Junin, Mendoza, Argentina, October 2013 and the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) conferences in 2013 and 2014, held in Switzerland and Germany, respectively. These meetings bring together around 300 activists from 51 countries and leaders of different movements from faith-based communities and ecovillages around the world. In this section, as highlighted in the educational videos, the notion of recognition and redistribution within the participatory parity category defended by Fraser is also evident, in which the discourse of equality and environmental justice is present since communities present themselves as organizational forms to combat ecological disparities at a global level, forming mutual support networks, albeit at different hierarchical and Eurocentric scales.

GEN, for instance, is coordinated by Europeans. Therefore, its organizational logics – even in an attempt to oppose the capitalist system through the



promotion of ecological and sustainable practices – also contain marketing characteristics of modern western rationalism, which highlights the structural limits of some of the changes which are proposed.

(3) Cultural videos: In this third section analyzed, we found videos which deal with the artistic expressions of popular, native, and traditional cultures of peoples of Latin America visited by the couple Leticia and Ryan. Here, we find video clips produced during the roadtrip with local artists. There are 15 videos available in total, some of them with musical performances by artists from the villages visited, such as *Kichwa* songs, Indigenous music from Rio Blanco and Ecuador, and an audiovisual record on the process of making handicrafts in *Cabuya*, the cultivation of weaving, with a member of the Asociación Mujer y Medio Ambiente of Plaza Gutierrez, Ecuador.

(4) Press: this section contains a collection of news about the project, broadcast on different television stations. Here, eight videos are available about the project broadcast by traditional TV stations, university media, and corporate hegemonic media in Brazil and other countries in Latin America. Here, we find reports from TVE Brasil; CNN in Spanish, shown in Mexico; *Tierra Viva* program, Canal 7, in Argentina; and TV Universitaria, from Bolivia. The issue of cultural or symbolic recognition becomes more latent, as it appears that the members of Común Tierra are concerned with the representation of the project in different channels, regardless of their profile, as a form of media and cultural legitimization of the ecological causes defended by them.

(5) “Sueños Verdes:” this section features eight videos filmed at the Encuentro Llamado de la Montaña with testimonies from activists and leaders of sustainable Latin American communities. Each member talks about the different perspectives of a sustainable future, a “green dream” for the world based on practices applied in their territories. Here, what Acselard (2009) suggests is confirmed, that is, sustainable would today be the combination of practices that carry sustainability in the future, a dream, an almost-utopia in a world full of social and ecological disparities and injustices.

Finally, the third platform monitored by the project was their Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ComunTierra>), which, at the time of our last mapping, had 8,633 followers (Figure 3). During this last mapping of the project’s social networks, we analyzed one of the few posts made during the pandemic, on September 5, 2020: the video of an interview, which lasted about 1h30min, given by the couple Riggati and Luckey to the Una Nueva Eco project coordinator, Carlos Rojas, responsible for an information center which promotes encounters for the creation of ecological villages in Latin America.

Figure 3  
Facebook page of the Común Tierra project



Note. Reproduction of the Común Tierra project page on Facebook.

The video had 2,100 views and 70 comments so far, most with questions about permaculture and the road trip experience, in addition to greetings. No offensive comments were found.

The conversation took place entirely in Spanish. What stood out the most was the attention given to the forms of social relations within the ecovillages, that is, the community and communicational aspect of the project. As we can see in the following Rigatti speech:

The work of communities breaks many paradigms. In some of the villages it became clear the part of social relations: of building trust among their members. The limiting factor of an ecovillage is the limit of the strength of personal bonds, which enables a greater energy or not. The community is a growing being, it is something into a lot of attention and care must be put. . . . The appreciation of placing relationships between people at the center of functions, vital for all processes, unlike what happens in the individualized world (verbal information). (Común Tierra, 2020)

In addition to community communication factors, another key issue in the interview was the importance of self-sufficiency in sustainable communities, something that is also very present in the testimonies recorded on YouTube from the different leaders of the settlements visited by the project. The couple also highlighted the need to develop economic interdependence and understand the

relationships of sustainable communities as support networks. Social and cultural chains that need to dialogue with each other, which can also be interpreted as a legitimate demand for redistribution, challenge the economic conditions denying them the objective conditions for participatory parity, and recognition, by emphasizing the necessary cultural valuation. Therefore, the norm of participatory parity is justified from this claim.

Finally, also from the Facebook monitoring of the project, even if outside our temporal scope, we found two posts supporting and disseminating the cause of demarcation of Indigenous lands in Brazil. One of the posts, from February 4th, 2019, is a video at their YouTube channel called *Vozes Tupinambá* (Tupinambá Voices - 2019), by chief Ramon Tupinambá, which brings the word of the Tupinambá people about the national campaign “Indigenous Blood: Not a Single Drop More!” during mobilizations in Olivença, Bahia, with the hashtag *demarcaçãojá*. Here, the project once again demonstrates an action that inhabits the fields of recognition and redistribution, in dialogue with the demands of struggle and environmental justice of the original Brazilian peoples, beyond the internal and practical issues of the settlements visited.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As a starting point for our final considerations, we emphasize that the very name of the project refers to the common, a prefix of communication and community. As Paiva (2007) reminds us, community would be, then, “what allows individuals and groups to glimpse and perceive the opening to creatively extend new bridges over human dissociation” (p. 10). Therefore, sustainable communities, also called intentional communities, are motivated by the eagerness to overcome barriers beyond the settlements themselves in the act of prioritizing education and sharing in a pedagogical way through digital media, different paths of sustainability within the possible limits, even if in a restricted way and, at times, contradictory practices. Or, as the interlocutors themselves propose, “a barefoot journalism,” in order to disseminate such actions, which are urgent in a hegemonically capitalist world.

During our analyses, the three hypotheses were confirmed, two of them partially. The first one, about the harmony between humans and nature, sometimes antagonistic to the capitalist logic of profit maximization and able to be adopted beyond the spatial limits of sustainable communities, was partially confirmed. As we found, from theoretical analyses and readings, these changes will only be generalized if we have the transformation of the capitalist mode of production or a radical change in terms of distributive justice. In short, we could claim



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that only in eco-socialism would this be possible (Camargo, 2020; Löwy, 2005) and that this transformation seems very distant to us since, as these authors argue, it cannot exist without intersectional change. Political action enters the ecological relation, which produces collective transformations that contain an environmental class consciousness, a topic that we intend to address in future analyses. Due to our methodological choices (and for length reasons) this issue was not discussed in this article.

Regarding the second hypothesis, linked to the previous argument, we identified, in the digital media of Común Tierra, what Fraser (2006, 2007) points out as cultural recognition. That is, the attempt to fill gaps in place of socioeconomic redistribution is perceived as a search for a solution to social injustices and an objective of political struggle for a paradigm shift. In this case, ecological and consumer ones, based on the proposed actions. Therefore, the hypothesis is also partially confirmed. What we now have within our reach is the possibility of changing the patterns of work and consumption of human groups gathered in sustainable communities, assuming that the mediation of digital communication is a condition for the existence and maintenance of them. In other words, of a real participatory parity.

Finally, the hypothesis that we are facing a community communication process was confirmed. Even if it is an itinerant project, the observation is justified based on the assumptions of Peruzzo (2009), who draws attention to the fact that there are substantial changes in the conceptions of community while some of its principles are still being verified. According to the author, the feeling of belonging, participation, and the union of interests and interaction are characteristics which persist throughout history, while the notion of a “specific territorial locus as a structuring element of community is overcome by the changes caused by the incorporation of new information and communication technologies” (p. 57). According to the researcher, in line with what we have argued so far, we cannot underestimate the issue of geographic space as an important factor of social aggregation in certain contexts and circumstances. However, we find that there is a constant search to find connections and similarities between the different locations registered by the project members and the respective claims for environmental justice. We also found that community media play a fundamental role in contemporary times for participatory parity and for the material and intersubjective conditions of its application.

It should also be noted that face-to-face interviews with project members and field research in sustainable communities in southern Brazil were also planned. This was impossible due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Another limitation of this research was also due to the fact that communication with the project organizers happened in a very restricted way, as we planned to carry out a semi-structured interview, albeit online, with them, something that did not happen, even after

a few attempts. However, sanitary limitations and restrictions allowed greater concentration on digital media and the communication practices analyzed here, which proved to be a rich field for communication sciences which can contribute to humanitarian and ecological developments. **M**

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# The vaccine in two Brazilian newspapers before and during COVID-19<sup>a</sup>

## *A vacina em dois jornais brasileiros antes e durante a covid-19*

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### ABSTRACT

In this article, we analyze 2,120 news stories on vaccine published by the newspapers *O Estado de S. Paulo* and *Folha de S. Paulo* in 2019 and 2020 – before and during the COVID-19 pandemic – in order to understand the changes in the approach to this topic by the press. Using a computer-assisted content analysis methodology, we identified the main elements of the stories in both periods. The results show that the increase in the production of vaccine content was accompanied by the shift from service journalism to a more scientific approach and by the insertion of a diversity of actors, organizations, and countries – revealing characteristics of the political, economic, and ideological aspects that permeate science.

**Keywords:** Science journalism, vaccine, COVID-19

### RESUMO

Neste artigo, analisamos 2.120 matérias sobre vacina publicadas pelos jornais *O Estado de S. Paulo* e *Folha de S. Paulo* em 2019 e 2020 – antes e durante a pandemia da covid-19 – com o objetivo de compreender as mudanças na abordagem desse tema pela imprensa. Com uma metodologia de análise de conteúdo assistida por computador, identificamos os principais elementos das matérias nos dois períodos. Os resultados mostram que o aumento na produção de conteúdo sobre vacina foi acompanhado pela passagem de um jornalismo de serviço para uma abordagem mais científica e pela inserção de uma diversidade de atores, organizações e países – características reveladoras dos aspectos políticos, econômicos e ideológicos que permeiam a ciência.

**Palavras-chave:** Jornalismo científico, vacina, covid-19

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## The vaccine in two Brazilian newspapers before and during COVID-19

FOR ALMOST FIVE decades, Brazil has had a successful National Immunization Program (PNI), created in 1973 to coordinate the country's vaccination policy. Since then, the PNI has been responsible for regulating the immunization calendar, introducing new vaccines, standardizing technical procedures, and adopting innovative strategies, such as combining routine vaccination with large campaigns (Silva Jr., 2013). In the wake of the eradication of smallpox in the early 1970s and the creation of the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) in the 1988 Constitution, the program has consolidated itself as an important public health policy, responsible for the eradication of diseases such as polio and, for a certain period, the measles.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, declared in March 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO) – during which Brazil became the second country with the most deaths by the virus –, and the political context of the country, the supply of vaccines against the disease for all Brazilians could not be handled by the country's expertise in this area. The first vaccines were approved at the end of December of that year, but the obstacles created by the Brazilian government delayed the start of the campaign and caused inequalities in the criteria and progress of vaccination among the states. By May 2021, Brazil had vaccinated just over 22 million people with two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, which represents only 10.5% of the population (“Brasil já...,” 2021), in clear contrast to previous experiences of large-scale immunization<sup>1</sup>.

Health interventions are complex social processes whose success is due to several factors. When part of the result also depends on an individual decision, as in the case of the vaccine, one of the main factors for its success is communication, both institutional and mediated by the press on the most diverse platforms. Many studies attest that communication and, more specifically, journalism have the potential for social mobilization, risk perception, and the adoption of protective measures (Chen & Stoecker, 2020; Goldstein et al., 2015; Vai et al., 2020). Therefore, media approaches, framing, and editorial decisions can play a key role in public understanding of scientific and health issues and citizens' behavior. The scenario becomes even more complex in a communication environment characterized by *information disorder* (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017), with the circulation of fake news and conspiracy theories, largely disseminated by denialists or members of the so-called anti-vax movements (Hussain et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2020).

Due to the centrality of communication, it is necessary to understand how the Brazilian press has approached the theme of vaccines in its coverage. Furthermore, we have the opportunity to investigate communication phenomena and processes in the context of a global public health emergency unprecedented in recent history. Therefore, in this study, we undertook an exploratory,

<sup>1</sup> Annual campaigns against poliomyelitis manage to vaccinate 15 million children in a single day. The first national measles vaccination campaign for the population aged 9 months to 14 years in 1992 vaccinated more than 48 million children in two months. In 2001 and 2002, the vaccination campaign for women of childbearing age distributed the double viral vaccine (rubella and measles) to approximately 29 million women (Ministério da Saúde, 2003).



comparative, and longitudinal analysis of all pieces on the subject of vaccines published by two of the main Brazilian newspapers – *O Estado de S. Paulo* and *Folha de S. Paulo* (herein called *Estadão* and *Folha*) – in 2019 and 2020, that is, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## HEALTH CRISES, VACCINES, AND COMMUNICATION

Outbreaks, epidemics, and pandemics do not just motivate research in the medical and biological fields. In the communication and science communication research area, there is a tradition of studies that address the role of the media in these contexts, demonstrating the media's importance as a source of information and its contribution to positioning the subject in the public sphere (Dudo et al., 2007; Ihekweazu, 2016; Medeiros & Massarani, 2010; Tian & Stewart, 2005). Therefore, the interests and editorial choices that guide the coverage of a health emergency can significantly affect the public's understanding of the problem (van den Bulck & Custers, 2009), individual and community attitudes (Rezza et al., 2004), and even broader issues, e.g., the adoption of public policies in response to the problem (Bonneux & van Damme, 2006). Such aspects are especially important in the current crisis as the world has been forced to adopt strict measures of social isolation and individual protection, such as the use of masks, and to promote mass vaccination on a global scale, the most effective way to control the pandemic.

This interconnection has been identified at other periods in history, as shown by Nascimento (2018) in his study with scientific pieces on poliomyelitis vaccination published by the newspapers *O Globo*, *Estadão*, and *Folha* in the 1970s and 1980s. The researcher notes that the low demand of the population was accompanied by the emergence of new formats of stories that presented vaccines as beneficial instruments for society and immunology as cutting-edge science. Inserted into people's daily lives over the years, journalistic coverage related to vaccines began to assume relevant social functions, such as service provision, science communication, and health promotion. These functions were identified to different degrees in a survey that analyzed 132 articles published by *Folha* from 2018 to 2019 (Massarani, Leal et al., 2021). The study shows that the framing related to public policies was predominant, focusing on public actions for the immunization of the population.

However, even consolidated public policies based on scientific evidence are not without controversy. One of them, concerning the HPV vaccination campaign in 2014, was addressed by Quevedo et al. (2016). As the disease is sexually transmitted, the campaign triggered the moral values of society because it was aimed at teenagers. The researchers note that, while institutional



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communication failed to promote a broad debate on the benefits and risks of the vaccine, the communication produced by the media addressed procedural immunization topics and gave voice to audiences critical of vaccination. Still on moral issues, the research by Sacramento and Paiva (2020) shows that even among people who decide to vaccinate there is the activation of religious values as a “security and protection anchor in the face of so many paradigms, information, truths, and lies in constant profusion” (p. 102).

Statistical projections even suggest a correlation between communication and vaccination coverage, as in the study by Chen and Stoecker (2020) on US newspapers. The authors estimated that every 100 pieces on flu published in October (when the US’s “flu season” begins) from 2010 to 2017 were associated with a 0.3 percentage point increase in the vaccination rate against the disease by people over 65 years old. The opposite was verified by Wilson and Wiysonge (2020) in relation to social media. They analyzed 250,000 vaccination-related posts from 2018 to 2019 and, using a five-point disinformation scale, estimated that each additional point on the scale was associated with a decrease of approximately two percentage points in average vaccination coverage.

Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the articulation of anti-vax groups on the internet. Almeida (2019) found that 22% of the links shared on the page of one of these groups on Facebook used a journalistic source. However, the contents of these sources were appropriated by the participants, who gave them a new interpretation to reinforce the group’s values. With the COVID-19 pandemic, these groups began to target the new disease. According to a survey by União Pró-Vacina from the Universidade de São Paulo (USP), 78.4% of the posts made on these pages disseminated conspiracy theories, used false information or without evidence, distorted reliable information, and suggested the use or commercialization of products and treatments not scientifically validated (Rafael Jr., 2020).

In addition to their specific findings, these studies show that the communication processes related to vaccines reflect the mediatization of science in general, in which different actors compete not only for the relevance of information and for the legitimation and commodification of knowledge (Oliveira, 2018) but also for the very notions of true and false. One of these actors, journalism, despite having historically built a status of informative authority, has been continually scrutinized, especially with the severe health crisis that began in 2020. It is undoubtedly an event that makes any issues related to the communication of science and health today more sensitive, and we will address this with the methodological and analytical procedures presented below.

## METHODOLOGY

### Selection and collection

The objective of this study was to analyze the Brazilian journalistic coverage on vaccines before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. We started the composition of the corpus by selecting the newspapers to be analyzed, prioritizing those of the so-called print media whose content was available on the internet. We chose traditional – or legacy – media (Casero-Ripollés, 2020) given its history of credibility and its predominance as a source of reliable information in critical situations, such as the current pandemic.

*Folha de S.Paulo* and *O Estado de S. Paulo* can be considered what the literature defines as elite (Carpenter, 2007) or prestigious newspapers (Lacy et al., 1991): commercial publications with wide circulation, national reporting, a tendency toward a more balanced coverage, and agenda-setters of other media outlets (Carpenter, 2007; Lacy et al., 1991). In addition, *Estadão* and *Folha* make all their content available on their websites and provide a search tool with the possibility of looking them up by keyword and date. These particularities were decisive for our selection of the two newspapers since the two criteria previously established were the analysis of the totality of the stories and the temporal division.

On the respective websites, we searched for stories with the keyword “vaccine” (which includes variations with the same stem) from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2020. We collected the URLs of each publication with Google Chrome’s Web Scraper extension, storing them in Excel spreadsheets broken down by year. To extract the content of the URLs, we used NewsPlease, a data scraping module developed for the Python programming language.

From this initial corpus, we excluded the publications whose non-textual information was impossible to extract with the abovementioned technique, such as photo carousels, infographics, videos, and podcasts. To avoid bias in the quantitative analysis, we also removed the content composed of very short notes (such as some columns and comments from readers) to consider only news texts, reports, and articles. A final refinement was made so that only stories with the vaccine as a central theme were included in the corpus. Thus, we kept exclusively the texts in which this word (or its derivations) appeared in the title. The application of this protocol gathered 2,120 stories: 1,352 from *Estadão* (122 in 2019 and 1,230 in 2020) and 768 from *Folha* (79 in 2019 and 689 in 2020).



### Processing and analysis

We define this research as quali-quantitative, based on the computer-assisted content analysis of the 2,120 stories that make up the corpus using the WordStat 8 software developed by Provalis Research. This approach is similar to the traditional content analysis, in which a text is systematically classified into categories of interest and inferences are made from the identified characteristics (Bengston & Xu, 1995). With the software, this classification is done by creating a categorization dictionary (Deng et al., 2017, 2018), also called a coding scheme or classification system (Bengston & Xu, 1995). Then, inductively or deductively, the researchers create thematic categories and subcategories in which textual elements are included (words, phrases, and proximity rules) so that the program calculates their frequencies in the corpus.

To build the categorization dictionary of this study, we used the Semi-automatic Dictionary Building Process (S-DBP) developed by Deng et al. (2018), divided in six steps: definition of the objective; creation of the corpus; pre-processing; identification and categorization of elements; extension and simplification; validation. One of the advantages of using this method is that these authors used precisely the same software to test the proposed protocol.

Concerning our study, we have already presented the first two stages of the categorization process. The third step includes refining and cleaning the data and choosing a cut-off criterion. For this, we applied the WordStat feature to remove stop words, such as prepositions and conjunctions, and standardized inconsistent spellings (e.g., Butantan instead of Butantã). The chosen cut-off criterion was the TF-IDF (Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency), a statistical formula that measures the “importance” of a word in the corpus.

After calculating the TF-IDF for each subset of stories (divided by newspaper and by year, that is, four subsets), we proceeded to identify and categorize the words and phrases with the highest TF-IDF into categories created *a priori* or from the results themselves. This was done with the 100 words and the 100 most heavily weighted phrases in each subset, totaling 800 categorizations. In the theoretical framework, we noticed that the definition of the number of words and phrases to be categorized is random (Lo et al., 2019; Wallace, 2018) and that the larger the number, the more comprehensive and accurate the dictionary will be.

Categorization is an immersive, iterative, and thoughtful process. Although some words are obvious (“Bolsonaro” necessarily refers to the president of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro), others need to be differentiated by a longer phrase or by context (“Ministry” should be classified according to its denomination, such as

Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economy, etc.). With this technique, categories are made and unmade throughout the process. For example, phrases such as “Anvisa approval,” “vaccine approval,” and “authorization for emergency use,” among others, were classified in the subcategory “Approval and Registration,” which in turn makes up the subcategory “Technical and Scientific Aspects,” which is included in the larger category “Approaches”. By applying the categorization dictionary to the corpus, the program used can calculate in how many stories and in which period each topic was present. At the end of this process, we obtained a dictionary with three broad categories: diseases and vaccines; approaches; and organizations, actors, and countries. Each of them is composed of several subcategories, presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
*Categorization dictionary*

DISEASES AND VACCINES	APROACHES	ORGANIZATIONS <sup>2</sup> , ACTORS, AND COUNTRIES
COVID-19	<b>Service provision</b>	<b>Organizations</b>
Diphtheria	Vaccination campaigns	Government entities and bodies
Yellow fever	Target audience	Anvisa
Typhoid fever	Locations and times	CDC
Flu	Dosage	EMA
Hepatitis	Symptoms of diseases	FDA
HPV	<b>Technical and scientific aspects</b>	Judiciary
Meningitis	Approval and registration	Legislative
Pentavalent	Research and development	Ministry of Economy
Polio	Action mechanisms	Ministry of Health
Rabies	Tests	Public Ministry
Rhinitis	Phases	Health departments
Measles	Efficacy and safety	Research institutions <sup>3</sup>
Tetanus		Butantan Institute
Triple viral (MMR)	<b>Production and commercialization</b>	Fiocruz
Tuberculosis	<b>Disinformation and denialism</b>	Gamaleya Institute
	Obligatoriness	Oxford
	Fake news	Universities (in general)
	Anvi-vax movement	Pharmaceutical companies and laboratories
	Vaccine and autism	Astrazeneca
		Bharat Biotech
		Biontech
		Cansino
		Inovio
		Janssen

<sup>2</sup>We used the broad concept of organization of Maximiano (2000) – “a combination of resources which deliberately seeks to fulfill some kind of objective” (p. 91) – to refer to the several bodies, entities, institutions, companies, and structures identified in the corpus.

<sup>3</sup>Although these institutions are also linked to the government, we classified them separately as they are directly involved in research related to the COVID-19 vaccine.

Continue...



## The vaccine in two Brazilian newspapers before and during COVID-19

DISEASES AND VACCINES	APPROACHES	ORGANIZATIONS <sup>2</sup> , ACTORS, AND COUNTRIES
		Jhonson& Jhonson Moderna Novavax Pfizer Serum Sinopharm Sinovac Vaxart
		<b>International organizations/ initiatives</b> Covax OMS OPAS
		<b>Medical/scienti5c societies</b> SBI (Imunologia) SBI (Infectologia) SBIIm SBP Sociedades (geral)
		<b>Actors</b> Antonio Barra Torres Joe Biden Jair Bolsonaro Boris Jhonson Bruno Covas João Doria Paulo Guedes Rodrigo Maia Nelson Mandetta Eduardo Pazuello Vladimir Putin Donald Trump
		<b>Countries</b> Germany Brazil China United States Israel Italy United Kingdom

*Note.* Elaborated by the authors.

We consider that the last step of the process proposed by Deng et al. (2018) – validation – was carried out in this study by applying the dictionary in the corpus. The results chosen for analysis were the relative frequencies (percentages) of the presence of categories and subcategories in the stories (as there was a substantial increase in stories from 2019 to 2020, it would not be representative to make comparisons with absolute numbers). In this way, it was possible to identify the topics that received more or less coverage by each newspaper and the changes in the approach to these topics before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## RESULTS

### Coverage intensity

The COVID-19 pandemic intensified journalistic coverage related to vaccines in the two analyzed newspapers. In 2019, the monthly average of publications was 17 stories (10 in *Estadão* and 7 in *Folha*). This number was almost 10 times higher in 2020, when, on average, 160 news, reports, and articles were published on the subject per month. The difference between the two newspapers also increased significantly. In 2020, *Estadão* produced an average of 103 stories on vaccines whereas *Folha* produced 57, which represents almost double (1.8 times) their production in 2019.

For 2019, it is hard to outline a coverage trend in quantitative terms since the numbers fluctuate each month. *Estadão* registered the highest number of stories on vaccines in July (19 stories), while in *Folha* the peak occurred in March (11 stories). When analyzing the publications in these months, it appears that, in the first newspaper, the increase in content was due to the extension of the measles vaccination campaign in the state of São Paulo because the cases of the disease were rising. In the second newspaper, no specific subject dominated the coverage that month.

For 2020, it is possible to trace an ascending trend line over the months, especially from the year's second half. In both newspapers, the sharpest jump occurred in December, with 429 stories in *Estadão* and 256 in *Folha*. The topics covered in that month included: approval for emergency use of the first COVID-19 vaccines; start of vaccination in European countries, the United States, and Israel; judgment by the Federal Supreme Court (STF) on mandatory vaccination; forecasts for the acquisition of immunization and the beginning of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign in Brazil.



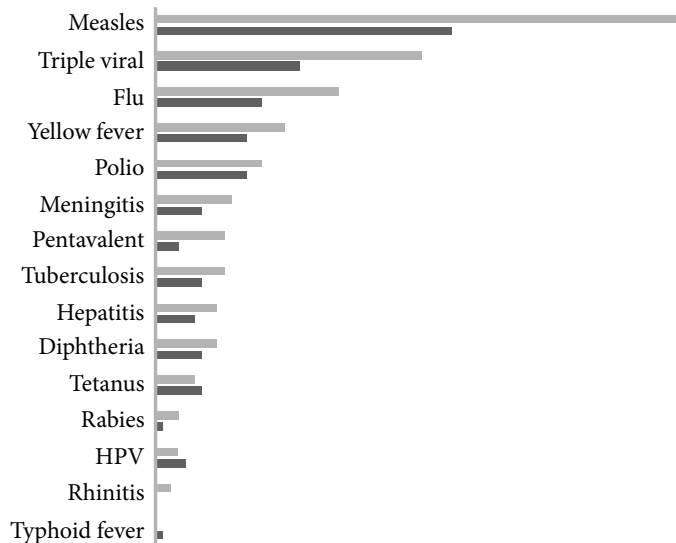
## The vaccine in two Brazilian newspapers before and during COVID-19

### Diseases and vaccines

In 2019, the two newspapers' coverage on diseases and vaccines mainly addressed measles (Figure 1). Mentions of measles or its vaccine were present in more than half of the stories on the subject in *Estadão* (57.4%) and almost half of the stories in *Folha* (49.4%). The MMR triple viral vaccine came in second place, present in 28.7% of the publications in the first newspaper and 24.1% in the second. Less than 20% of stories mentioned flu (including diseases caused by influenza virus subtypes), yellow fever, and polio. Other diseases and vaccines were mentioned in less than 10% of the coverage, including meningitis, pentavalent vaccine, tuberculosis, hepatitis, diphtheria, tetanus, rabies, HPV, rhinitis, and typhoid fever.

**Figure 1**

*Number of stories per newspaper with mentions of diseases and vaccines (2019)*



*Note.* Elaborated by the authors.

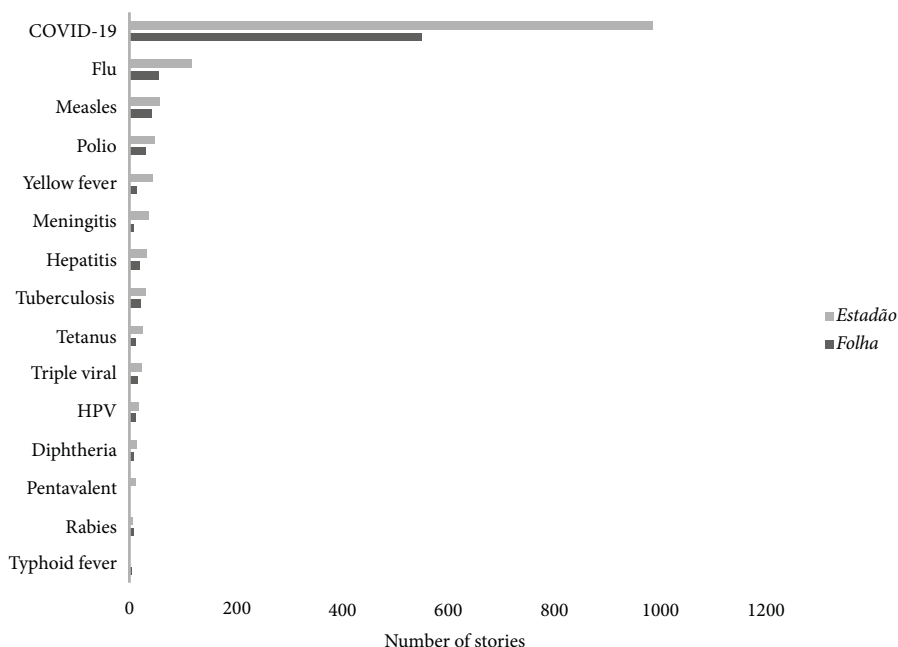
The following year, vaccine-related coverage was dominated by COVID-19 (Figure 2). About eight out of ten stories in the two newspapers mentioned the new disease. All other diseases and vaccines appeared in less than 10% of the publications. However, it should be noted that, in absolute numbers, there was a general increase in the approach to these other diseases from 2019 to 2020. In *Estadão*, for example, the number of stories mentioning the flu jumped from 24 to 117. There was also an increase in mentions of yellow fever (from 17 to 42) and poliomyelitis (from 14 to 47), among others. In *Folha*, the increase in absolute terms was mainly related to influenza (from 14 to 55), polio (from 12 to 31), and tuberculosis (from 6 to 20). This growth was also



recorded in relation to meningitis, hepatitis, tetanus, HPV, diphtheria, rabies, and the pentavalent vaccine. Measles, widely discussed in 2019, had a lower presence in *Estadão* in 2020 (from 70 to 56 stories) and a slightly higher one in *Folha* (from 39 to 41). The decrease could also be seen in the mentions of the MMR vaccine, although to a lesser extent.

**Figure 2**

*Number of stories per newspaper with mentions of diseases and vaccines (2020)*



Note. Elaborated by the authors.

**APPROACHES**

The vaccine coverage approaches also followed a similar pattern in the two newspapers before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The trend for coverage focused on service provision decreased whereas content related to technical and scientific aspects and the production and commercialization of immunizations increased (Figure 3). It is observed that the approach focused on the topic of service provision was predominant in the stories of 2019 (82.8% in *Estadão* and 79.8% in *Folha*), occupying only half of the vaccine-related publications of the following year. The topics scientific issues and commercial aspects, which before the pandemic corresponded to less than 40% of publications, exceeded 70% and 50% of stories in 2020,

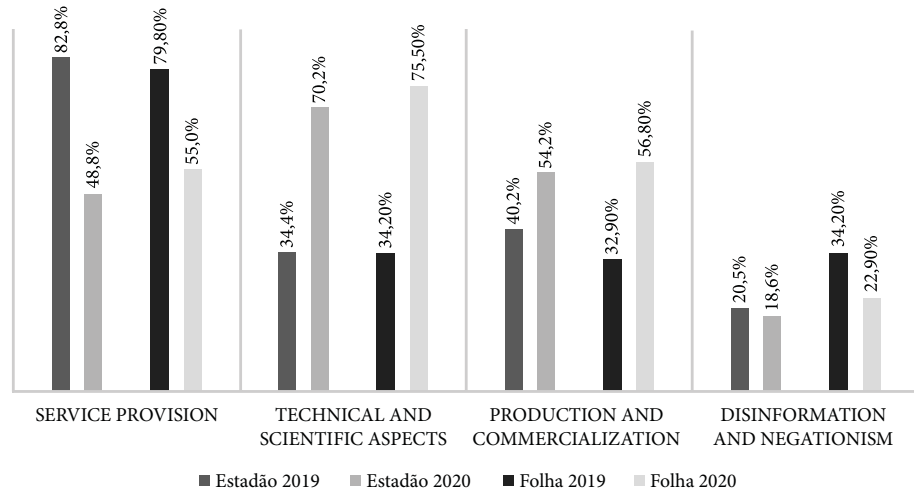


## The vaccine in two Brazilian newspapers before and during COVID-19

respectively. There was a slight variation in the proportion of stories with elements of disinformation and denialism, with a slight downward trend in both newspapers.

**Figure 3**

*Relative frequency of approaches identified in vaccine coverage, by newspaper and by year*



Note. Elaborated by the authors.

It is also possible to verify, within each of these dimensions, which aspects were more or less addressed by the newspapers. In 2019, service journalism focused mainly on information about public vaccination campaigns and their target audience. Campaigns continued to be the most addressed service topic in 2020, although in a much smaller proportion than in the previous year. They were addressed mainly in December, when the media began to reflect the expectation of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. Still from this perspective, information on the application of different doses of the vaccine (dosage), symptoms of diseases, and places and times of vaccination, which were present in more than a quarter of the service provision stories in 2019, represented only a tiny proportion of the publications in 2020.

This trend is inverse when observing the technical and scientific issues presented by newspapers before and during the pandemic. *Estadão* and *Folha* addressed aspects related to vaccine research and development in about 34% of their stories in 2019. A year later, this proportion jumped to 66.7% in the first newspaper and 71.8% in the second, with an emphasis on COVID-19 vaccine trials carried out by pharmaceutical companies and

research institutions around the world. In this specific perspective, the newspapers more frequently reported the phases of pre-clinical (animal) and clinical (human) tests to which a potential immunizer is submitted for an evaluation of its efficacy and safety.

Still concerning technical and scientific content, coverage included information on regulatory health entities' approval and registration of vaccines. There were no mentions of this subject in any story in 2019. The topic appeared in the news only in May 2020, at the time still tangentially, reaching sustained coverage in the second half of that year. In 2020, information on vaccine approval and registration was mentioned in 18.6% of the publications in *Estadão* and 21.5% in *Folha*.

Regarding the portion of coverage that deals with disinformation and denialism, although there were no significant variations from one year to the next, it is possible to observe a change in focus. In 2019, fake news, the anti-vax movement and, more specifically, the false claim that the MMR vaccine could cause autism were among the main topics of this category, with a little more prominence in *Folha's* coverage. In 2020, discussions about mandatory vaccination came to the fore. This topic, practically not addressed in the previous year, emerged from the controversies raised by President Jair Bolsonaro himself. He publicly defended the non-compulsory immunization, especially when questioning the CoronaVac vaccine, at the time still under development by the Chinese company Sinovac. The drugmaker had signed an agreement with the Butantan Institute, in São Paulo, on the initiative of Governor João Doria, the president's political antagonist.

## ORGANIZATIONS, COUNTRIES, AND ACTORS

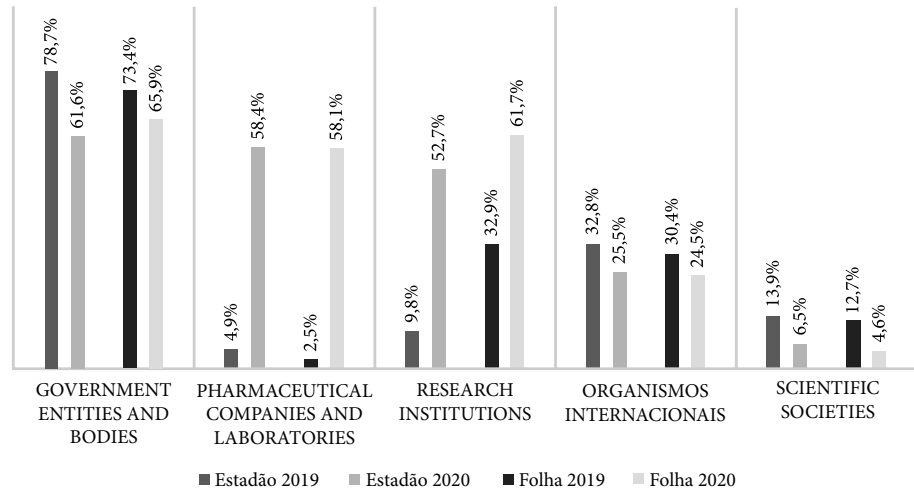
We also observed changes in the organizations mentioned in the vaccine-related stories published by *Estadão* and *Folha* during the two years. Figure 4 shows that the role of government entities, mainly the Ministry of Health and the State and Municipal Health Departments, began to be disputed by laboratories, pharmaceutical companies, and research institutions from Brazil and around the world, whose mentions increased significantly in 2020. It can be said that the presence of government entities remained high in coverage after the COVID-19 pandemic (above 60% in both newspapers), but it was surpassed by public and private institutions involved in research for developing a vaccine against the disease. The proportion of mentions of international organizations and scientific societies decreased over the years.



## The vaccine in two Brazilian newspapers before and during COVID-19

**Figure 4**

*Relative frequency of organizations mentioned in vaccine coverage, by newspaper and by year*



Note. Elaborated by the authors.

There were also changes in the frequency with which organizations were mentioned in the news coverage. In 2020, the National Health Surveillance Agency (Anvisa), responsible for evaluating and authorizing (or not) medicines and vaccines in Brazil, emerged as the most cited government entity, surpassing the Ministry of Health in *Estadão* coverage. It is also noteworthy that, after these two organizations, the most frequent entities and bodies referred to were those of the Legislative and Judiciary Branches (National Congress, Chamber of Deputies, Senate, Federal Supreme Court, and Courts of Justice). These organizations had minimal expression in 2019 – below 7% for the Legislative and 2% for the Judiciary.

As for laboratories, pharmaceutical companies, and research institutions, the pandemic was responsible for inserting a wide variety of infrequent names in the news. While in 2019 stories the few mentions of these organizations referred to universities and, in an even smaller number, to the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz) and the Butantan Institute, in 2020 there were much more frequent references to them and other international institutions, such as the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom and the Gamaleya Institute in Russia (which developed the Sputnik V vaccine). In addition, pharmaceutical companies such as Astrazeneca, Sinovac, Pfizer, BioNTech, and Moderna were present in more than 15% of the stories. It is important to remember that the University of Oxford and Astrazeneca jointly

developed a COVID-19 vaccine – Covishield – and made a technology transfer agreement with Fiocruz to manufacture the immunizer in Brazil. Another agreement was signed between China’s Sinovac and the Butantan Institute for producing the CoronaVac vaccine.

Likewise, countries rarely or never mentioned in the vaccine coverage throughout 2019 gained expression or appeared in the following year’s stories. The United States went from less than 20% to almost 40% of the 2020 stories on vaccines. China and the United Kingdom, practically absent in the 2019 coverage, were present in more than 20% of the publications the next year. Russia, which was not mentioned once in the pre-pandemic news, appeared in 11.5% of the stories in *Estadão* in 2020 and in 11.3% of the stories in *Folha* that same year.

Finally, the analysis of the actors mentioned in the stories shows that the vaccine-related coverage before the COVID-19 pandemic made little reference to specific names. The most frequent references were to Jair Bolsonaro and the then Minister of Health Luiz Henrique Mandetta, but they were still very low – 13.9% and 9.8% in the stories of *Estadão* and 8.9% and 5.1% in *Folha*, respectively. In 2020, the name of the Brazilian president was much more frequently mentioned, appearing in 36.3% of the publications of *Estadão* and 49.1% of *Folha*. They were followed by the names of João Doria and Eduardo Pazuello, the latter being the third to assume the post of Minister of Health since the beginning of the pandemic in Brazil. Other actors appear in the survey, but with reduced proportional expression.

## DISCUSSION

International media attention to COVID-19 grew in proportion to the disease’s severity. Our study portrays this fact by comparing vaccine coverage in two leading Brazilian newspapers before and during the pandemic. Although vaccines are routinely present in the news, they became the focus of special attention as they are one of the main ways to control the health crisis, reflecting all the anxiety and expectation of the moment. Such drastic changes have inevitable implications for the media production process, which, according to the newsmaking theory (Wolf, 2008), involves selecting the facts that will become journalistic news, the approaches, and the angle of the stories. In the case of the COVID-19 vaccine, we consider one more aspect: the feedback that newspapers had to give to public demand for reliable information. In this sense, the increase in vaccine-related coverage we identified may be, in part, an effect of the trend observed in different reception surveys (Casero-Ripollés, 2020; Vai et al., 2020),



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which show the public's trust in media outlets as sources of credibility, especially in a context of social isolation.

Contrary to the upward curve of publications in 2020, the lack of a trend line in the previous year shows that, in non-pandemic times, vaccine coverage obeys, first of all, journalistic factualism. By analyzing the number of publications and the most mentioned diseases, we can see how the increase in measles cases and the actions taken to contain the outbreaks were strongly present in the 2019 publications, such as the stories “Measles Cases Skyrocket to 384 in SP and Vaccination is Extended” (Carvalho, 2019) and “Measles Sounds the Alarm for Low Vaccination Coverage in the Country” (Pasquini, 2019). These examples draw attention to the tone of concern framed by the two newspapers, which certainly reflects the resurgence of the disease in national territory and remembers the measles outbreak that had already been recorded in 2018, mainly in the country's Northern region.

The other diseases and vaccines have much lighter appearance frequencies in line with the seasonality with which they are addressed, especially due to annual vaccination campaigns, such as for the MMR, influenza, yellow fever, and poliomyelitis. Thus, we essentially characterize vaccine coverage in 2019 as service journalism (Eide & Knight, 1999) since it indicated to readers the period of immunization and the public for which it was intended. At this point, our study corroborates the results of Massarani, Leal et al. (2021) in analyzing stories on vaccines published by *Folha* from 2018 to 2019.

It is observed that the insertion of vaccines as everyday issues is predominant, demonstrating that vaccination is understood as a resource incorporated into people's lives, highlighting the role of the newspaper in providing service about government campaigns and actions. (Massarani, Leal et al., 2021)

We have advanced in this aspect by doing a comparative analysis with the pandemic year, from which perhaps the significant change in journalistic terms arises: the shift from the perspective of service journalism to that of scientific journalism in a stricter way. As a dominant theme on the media's public agenda, details about the development of a new immunizer come into play, such as its testing phases, the vaccine's efficacy and safety and mechanisms of action, and its approval and registration processes. There is also an increase in the economic approach, which involves production capacity, costs, and agreements to acquire doses. In stories such as “Understand Anvisa's Rules for the Emergency Use of Covid-19 Vaccines” (Machado, 2020) and “How CoronaVac, the Chinese Vaccine Against the Virus, is Being Developed”

(Santos, 2020), the newspapers aim to explain technical and scientific details related to vaccination.

From the examples above, it can be noted that even in December, *Estadão* referred to the vaccine developed by the company Sinovac as the “Chinese vaccine,” in a lexical choice incorporated in the discussions on origin and safety and on the obligation to take the vaccine – the latter included more frequently in coverage related to disinformation and denialism in 2020. These are issues that go back to the very history of immunization in Brazil, marked by the Vaccine Revolt, a protest against the mandatory smallpox vaccination in 1904 which established a public debate in the then national capital Rio de Janeiro on the population’s fear of scientific novelty (Benchimol, 2003; Chalhoub, 1996). When analyzing the coverage of the newspapers *Correio da Manhã* and *Gazeta de Notícias* in the months before the 1904 uprising, Salgado (2018) concludes that the emphasis given to science was achieved by the intense public debate about the smallpox vaccine and the bill that instituted its mandatory application.

Despite advances over more than a century, the controversies on vaccination are still not completely pacified, as our results show. In 2019, *Estadão* and *Folha* published an extensive and conclusive study that found that there is no relationship between the MMR vaccine (against measles, mumps, and rubella) and autism in children, putting an end to false information that had already been denied on other occasions (Hviid et al., 2019). In 2020, questions about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine and the obligation to take it were made by President Jair Bolsonaro, whose management of the pandemic in Brazil was marked by denialism of scientific evidence (“COVID-19 in...,” 2020).

These questions are also the most frequent topics in anti-vax groups on Facebook, as verified by Almeida (2019). Her research shows that, in the discussions of these groups, there is distrust about vaccines and who is to blame for their effects – precisely the question raised by Bolsonaro at the end of 2020 when explaining why he had refused a contract to purchase the vaccine from Pfizer/BioNTech: “There in the Pfizer contract it is very clear: ‘we [the company] are not responsible for any side effects.’ If you turn into an alligator, it’s your problem” (Valadares, 2020). It so happens that, at the time, the last stage of testing for this vaccine, conducted even in Brazil, had already been completed, and the vaccine had already been approved for emergency use in countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Mexico.

From the results presented above, the diversity of organizations, countries, and actors in the coverage of the two newspapers from one year to another stands out. Vaccines now have a name and nationality, but this attribution



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varies according to editorial choices, as shown by the previous example of the “Chinese vaccine” and the following headlines: “SP Government Celebrates the Success of *Pfizer Vaccine* [emphasis added], but Says *CoronaVac* [emphasis added] is ‘Further Ahead’” (Resk, 2020); “*Russian Vaccine* [emphasis added] Produces Immunity Against Novel Coronavirus, First Published Data Show” (Batista, 2020). In this scenario, the interests of authorities, major world powers, and pharmaceutical industry giants are in dispute in the “vaccine race” – a metaphor for the speed and competition of vaccine production identified in our previous research with newspapers from Brazil, the United States, and the United Kingdom (Massarani & Neves, 2021).

Therefore, the vaccine, as a product that follows the rules of market economy, characterized by the worldwide demand for a scarce item, leaves the local context for a context of international interest within the scope of a globalized system of production of scientific knowledge, as the following stories show: “Russian Rush for Vaccine Exposes Geopolitical Dispute Capable of Delaying Cure of Covid-19” (Turrer, 2020); “China and Russia Are Ahead in the Dispute for the Covid Vaccine, Fleeing From Already Established Rules” (Dou & Khurshudyan, 2020); “Russia Says Sputnik V Is Safe and Opens Up Vaccine Geopolitics” (Gielow, 2020); “China Is About to Beat the US with a Vaccine in Its Backyard, Says the US Military” (Sá, 2020). This is a sensitive point, as the possible correlation between communication and the adoption of individual health protection measures has already been found in other studies (Chen & Stoecker, 2020; Wilson & Wiysonge, 2020). Although we need more research to estimate this relationship in the case of the COVID-19 vaccine, surveys carried out in Brazil and the United States showed a decrease in people’s willingness to be vaccinated when the vaccine was associated with China or Russia (“Brasileiros resistem...,” 2020; Kreps et al., 2020).

In the national context, despite a reasonable reduction in mentions of government entities and bodies as a whole, the much more expressive presence of the Legislative and, especially, the Judiciary branches reveals how the pandemic in Brazil involved the different spheres of public power. In 2019, mentions of Judiciary entities did not reach 2% of the vaccine stories, but surpassed 10% in the following year. It is important to note that, right at the beginning of the health crisis, in April 2020, the Federal Supreme Court (STF) decided that state and municipal governments had the autonomy to determine social isolation, contradicting a provisional measure that put this determination up to the federal government. The narrative that the Court took away from the Executive branch the power to fight against the pandemic was appropriated by President Jair Bolsonaro as a justification for not adopting more effective prevention measures.



Another legal issue had as one of its primary motivators, once again, the discussion about mandatory vaccination, which also had to be pacified by the STF in December 2020. These and other related matters were also processed by the Legislative sphere, such as the approval of emergency aid for workers affected by the pandemic and pressures to hold the president accountable for mishandling the crisis. It is worth noting that the Legislative branch would assume an even more significant role in the following months, as early as the beginning of 2021, with the investiture, by the Senate, of a Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry (CPI) to investigate the elements that led to the large number of deaths by COVID-19.

The actors that gain prominence are also evidence of a more personalized and politicized coverage, characterized by the presence of authorities from the political world (Chinn et al., 2020). Before the pandemic, the vaccine news in *Estadão* and *Folha* made little mention of specific names, which changed with the public and declared antagonism between Bolsonaro and Doria the following year. The newspapers even classified the internal dispute as a military clash: “Vaccine War’ Can Help to Unite Forces of the Democratic Center Against Bolsonaro” (Frazão, 2020); “Amid the ‘Vaccine War’, Doria Says that Bolsonaro Government Insists on Denialism” (Amâncio, 2020). Currently, it is known that this political and ideological clash had direct consequences on the progress of COVID-19 vaccination in Brazil, such as the delay in starting the campaign, the shortage of doses, and the lack of pandemic control, which would reach a new contamination and mortality peak in early 2021.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Vaccines are responsible for controlling or eradicating diseases and reducing health care costs and inequalities among countries (Andre et al., 2008). With the COVID-19 pandemic, these factors became even more evident, which motivated us to conduct this comparative study on the coverage of vaccines by two of the most important Brazilian newspapers, having as an inflection point a severe global public health emergency. In order to carry out a comprehensive study that could consider all publications, we used a computer-assisted content analysis methodology, which allows exploring large textual datasets and associating quantitative results with qualitative inferences. For this, we created a categorization dictionary to identify the main elements of 2,120 stories on vaccine published by *Estadão* and *Folha* in 2019 and 2020.



## The vaccine in two Brazilian newspapers before and during COVID-19

Our results show how the pandemic has caused a significant increase in content production by newspapers, representing an additional challenge and responsibility. This scenario leads us to question whether the media and communication professionals were prepared for such an impact, both in terms of qualifications to deal with complex scientific issues and in working relationships in adverse conditions. A survey of Brazilian communication workers reveals that the pandemic has aggravated a sector already in crisis, marked by layoffs, precarious contracts, lower wages, work densification, stress, and uncertainties about the future (Figaro, 2020).

On the other hand, regarding content, it is important to emphasize the expansion of the scientific approach related to the vaccine, in addition to the essential service provided by newspapers in the pre-COVID coverage. Although this change presupposes an extremely painful event for society, we reflect on whether replacing an episodic approach with a more in-depth one can contribute to overcoming a science journalism based exclusively on sensationalism (Teixeira, 2002) or, in the words of Adeodato (2002), which “reinforces the futuristic fantasies of fantastic discoveries” (p. 223). It is worth mentioning, for example, that although COVID-19 dominated the newspapers’ coverage in 2020, the absolute frequency of mentions of other diseases and vaccines also increased compared to 2019, representing a significant advance for science journalism.

The insertion of other dimensions and actors in the news also made the vaccine no longer be seen as a finished product readily available in health units but as a scientific technology in constant development which mobilizes efforts of researchers from all over the world and goes through a long process that involves political, economic, and ideological aspects until its availability to society. In this sense, full-time coverage and the need to refute and clarify false or distorted information made room for other voices in science coverage (Massarani, Brotas et al., 2021). On the other hand, we express the same concern as Bolsen et al. (2014) regarding the risk that what has been called the politicization of the pandemic negatively interferes with the adoption of measures based on scientific evidence, even more so when this politicization is captured in the public debate promoted by the media, as some of our results reveal. The characteristics of this politicization have been investigated in different contexts (Hart et al., 2020; Ward et al., 2020), but the fact that in Brazil it was characterized by the media as a war between two of the most important adversaries of the political scene helps to explain the course of the crisis in the country.

Such reflections can be extended to science in general, which must be considered not only for its results but also, above all, for its processes, which contribute to the perception that, as a human activity, it is not isolated from the rest of society or exercised only within the confines of laboratories. In addition, all these aspects become the information framework available to society and, when, associated with other sources and social relationships, are appropriated to different degrees and with different interpretations. Though it is still too early to talk about a paradigm shift in science journalism and the public understanding of science, the impacts of the current COVID-19 pandemic in communication studies represent a fertile field of investigation, including the application of the categorization dictionary constructed here in other outlets and time periods. ■

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# Images of *Amor de Mãe*: Gridlines and Escapes

## *Imagens de Amor de Mãe: Quadriculamentos e Escapatórias*

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### ABSTRACT

The essay discusses framings and gridlines in images of the telenovela *Amor de Mãe*. The analysis lies on the functioning of family bonds/convivialities, their labile articulations amid anesthetic landscapes/aesthetic spaces, and fiction/reality interchanges. In this context, the following issues are examined: (1) meaning effects and sensorial gaps which may provide aesthetic appropriations; (2) escapes that enable active bodies to assume affective dispositions and sustain synesthetic relationships. It is concluded that the framings that show checkered characters immersed in restrictive practices and routines also reveal fissures that allow physical and symbolic exits.

**Keywords:** Telenovela *Amor de Mãe*, gridlines and escape, anesthetic landscapes/aesthetic spaces

### RESUMO

O estudo discute enquadramentos/quadriculamentos na telenovela *Amor de Mãe*, analisando a imagética de vínculos/convívios familiares, a labilidade com que se articulam entre paisagens anestésicas/espaços estéticos e os intercâmbios entre ficção e realidade. Examinam-se, em tal contexto: (1) efeitos de sentido e brechas sensíveis facultativas de apropriações estéticas; e (2) escapatórias que possibilitam a corpos ativos assumirem disposições afetivas e sustentarem relações sinestésicas. Conclui-se que os enquadramentos que dão a ver personagens quadriculadas em práticas cotidianas estruturadas a partir de apresamentos revelam, não obstante, fissuras que permitem a construção de saídas físicas e simbólicas.

**Palavras-chave:** Telenovela *Amor de Mãe*, quadriculamento e escapatória, paisagens anestésicas e espaços estéticos

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# A

<sup>1</sup>On March 21, 2020, the screening of *Amor de Mãe* was interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the proliferation of the virus in the country, the Globo Network studios were closed and recording sessions suspended indefinitely. The network then began to rebroadcast telenovelas that had been aired previously. After five months dedicated to defining health safety protocols, in August, the recording of the telenovelas in hiatus – *Amor de Mãe* and *Salve-se Quem Puder* – was resumed. *Malhação: Toda Forma de Amar* and *Éramos Seis*, already in their last chapters when activities were suspended, managed to finish their stories. The second part of *Amor de Mãe* aired on March 15, 2021, almost a year after its interruption.

THE TELENVELA *AMOR de Mãe* (Dias & Villamarim, 2019-2021) premiered on the Globo Television Network on November 25, 2019<sup>1</sup>, in the 9pm time slot, with the song “É” by Brazilian singer-songwriter Luiz Gonzaga do Nascimento Júnior (known as Gonzaguinha) as its opening theme. It is also with this song that, in the second chapter of the telenovela, the character Camila (Jessica Ellen), a newly graduated history teacher, begins her first class in a public school: “Yeah, we want to be worth our love, we want to be worth our sweat, we want to be worth our humor, we want the best of the best, we want affection and attention.” After humming this excerpt and earning the attentive glances of the previously dispersed class, the teacher tells the teenage students that the song was released in 1988, shortly after Brazil got rid of the military dictatorship imposed in 1964. In the sequence of the chapter, the class is interrupted by the sounds of rifle fire and helicopter engines flying over the school.

Considering fiction as a document of its time, the telenovelistic narrative under analysis adopts an imagetic-discursive language that reveals a close relationship with the social reality of contemporary Brazil, enabling a *documentating reading* (Odin, 1985). In the case of the gunshots and buzzing that plague the school, the plot, set in the city of Rio de Janeiro, recalls the controversial police action ordered in 2019 by then-governor Wilson Witzel (“Helicóptero...,” 2019) in the community of Morro do Alemão. It was reported then: “At least three people were reportedly beaten and two killed. Because of the operation, at least 14 daycare centers and schools in the region have suspended classes. Some areas of the favela were left without power because the shots hit power transformers” (“Helicóptero...,” 2019). From this perspective, the images of particular stories experienced by the characters of the telenovela come to function as metonymy and metaphor of society; they are accounts of a people, a nation, that take shape, in this case, from “a kaleidoscopic, multidimensional narrative of everyday life experienced by Brazilians,” as notes Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes (2009, p. 24).

The predominant genre of telenovelas is melodrama, which Peter Brooks (1976), based on the analysis of 18th century plays, particularizes as the *drama of recognition*. Jesús Martín-Barbero (2003) attributed to this resource one of the reasons for the success of melodrama among Latin Americans, because the plots develop “the ignorance of an identity and the struggle against injustices, appearances, against everything that is hidden and disguised: a struggle to make oneself recognized” (p. 317). In other words, Martín-Barbero observed how the drama of recognition can illustrate historical and cultural processes, suppressed origins, and absences of parts of who we are. *Amor de Mãe* addresses

several problematic issues that disturb contemporary societies, unfolding in narrative conflicts: child trafficking, attacks on the ecosystem, violence against women, racism, drug trade, widespread corruption etc. The misdemeanors, perversions, and social distortions interconnect the lives of the characters – making relationships and affective constructions possible that, at one time, shelter and imprison them in ties, moorings, and knots that are established predominantly in the form of family ties.

In the perspective defined by Ana Amado and Nora Domínguez (2004), family ties gain conflicting meanings between bonding/union and entrapment/fraud: bonds that unite also establish borders and separate. Family links install contradictory meanings, forms of coexistence, and ways of life, and function as promoters of junctions and disjunctions, ties and cuts, identifications and differences – in discursive, cultural, social, and theoretical categories. Therefore, family ties can be constituted in the mobility of the aesthetic circulation or in the immobility of the anesthetic paralysis of the bodies and their relations with the physical and social space.

We shall summarize some of the family links that are interwoven in *Amor de Mãe*, weaving cross-cutting relationships that support and motivate the characters, on the one hand, but on the other, keep them tangled and enmeshed in intricate networks of disorder and perversion. In Foucauldian terms, in the architectural and symbolic places that fit them in the fictional space of the telenovela, the characters will be – all of them, explicitly or not – imprisoned, trapped inside very tight powers that impose limitations, interdictions and obligations. To scrutinize, to probe the construction and the functioning of the audiovisual product on screen implies glimpsing there – even if from a distance – the reflection, even if distorted, of what also happens in the field beyond the screen. From this point of view, the question is: how is these gridlines, as machines/methods/formulas of control and domination, experienced, lived (intra, extra and inter-screens), and how can they (or not) be fractured, re-signified, overcome?

Lurdes (Lucy Alves/Regina Casé) – the central character in the plot – was separated from her son Domênico when he was 2, in the fictional town of Malaquitas, in Rio Grande do Norte. Getting rid of Jandir (Daniel Ribeiro), the boy's father – who sold him to Kátia (Stella Rabello/Vera Holtz), a child trafficker who lives in Rio de Janeiro –, the woman gathers her other three children and sets off in search of her son; On the way, she comes across an abandoned newborn girl, whom she takes in as her daughter, and starts living in Rio de Janeiro, working as a maid and a nanny, eternally on the lookout for Domênico. Thelma (Adriana Esteves), owner of a restaurant inherited from her father, lost her only son in a house fire that also killed her husband. She replaces



the child with another, “adopting” a baby by illicit means – whom she named Danilo (Chay Suede) – pretending he was the child that was gone and becoming an overprotective mother; once grown up, the boy finds himself imprisoned by the excessive maternal care and resents the arbitrary interference in his life. Sandro (Humberto Carrão), a good-natured young man raised by the drug dealer Katia and initiated by her into the world of crime as a child, is in prison, under a death sentence. A car accident during a couple’s argument leaves Leila (Arieta Corrêa) in a coma for eight years. Magno (Juliano Cazarré), then, is doomed to survive stuck in a marriage that was already in decline, caring for a paralyzed body in a hospital bed. Vitória (Taís Araújo), a successful lawyer, haunted by guilt for having abandoned a newborn child in her youth, in maturity wants to become a mother at any cost: after adopting a child, she ends up getting pregnant, which complicates her love and professional lives. Amanda (Camila Márdila), an environmental activist whose father is disabled due to years of working in the pipelines of the PWA, a plastic manufacturing company, where he got contaminated by the waste dumped there, is determined to destroy Álvaro (Irandhir Santos), the factory owner.

It is to this network of relations that the study will direct its analytical lenses<sup>2</sup>, to the *mise-en-scène* of the telenovela *Amor de Mãe* and its effects of meaning, taking as corpus the chapters aired between December 3, when Lurdes meets Sandro and, believing to be her son Domênico, manages to get him out of prison; and December 19, when Sandro rescues Lurdes from a kidnapping.

**TIES, CONVIVIALITIES, BONDS: BANDIT MOTHER LOVE?**

Starting from the premise that the gridlines imposed by the various instances of society affect both the subjects considered to be subversive and those who strive to ensure compliance with the norms, laws, and conventions in a dynamic of *verse/inverse* functioning that implies both sides, it is considered that all are – to a greater or lesser extent – trapped in restrictions and physical and affective delimitations. Looking at the aesthetic politicalities articulated between the expression plane and the content plane<sup>3</sup> of the audiovisual product in question, it is necessary to first focus on the advent of physical imprisonments and their concrete spaces of containment of bodies, and then, to deepen the lens on issues related to symbolic imprisonments.

Imprisonments stem, in particular, from a disciplinary ordering of bodies that, for Michel Foucault (2014), will require “the fence, the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in on itself” (p. 139). The structures that guide the buildings of colleges, barracks, hospitals, convents,

<sup>2</sup>Note that the analytical perspective proposed here focuses on the narrative and the production of meaning of the television product in question from the understanding that television fiction, as happens with the cinematographic, as it communicates with the society in which it is inserted, can work as a field of the symptom – thus extrapolating, eventually, the dimension of the so-called pure and simple representation. Specifics strictly pertaining to the “television” device and peculiarities restricted to the platform will not be delved into.

<sup>3</sup>For Jean-Marie Floch (2001), the meanings given by the *expression plane* and the *content plane*, placed in juxtaposition, constitute semi-symbolic systems. The expression plane is the one where “the sensitive qualities that a language has for manifestation are selected and articulated among themselves by differential variations”; The content plane, on the other hand, is “where signification arises from the differential variations thanks to which each culture, in order to think the world, sorts and chains ideas and discourse” (p. 9). A distinction is made between form and substance levels of each plane: “*form* is the organization, invariant and purely relational, that articulates the sensible matter or the conceptual matter of a plane, thus producing signification”; and “*substance* is the matter, the variable support that form articulates. Substance is thus the realization, at a given moment, of form” (p. 11).

schools, and factories are examples, among others, of this architecture of incarceration. Disciplinary apparatuses work with the principle of immediate localization, the *gridlines* that installs and confines “each individual in their place; and in each place, an individual” and whose logic requires the avoidance of “distributions by groups” and the decomposition of “collective deployments” and the analysis of “confused, massive, or elusive pluralities” (p. 140). This is in order to nullify the effects of undecided distributions: so that individuals do not disappear (escaping the control in force) and so that they do not have the opportunity to agglomerate (in common actions) it is necessary to control presences and absences, stimulate useful, convenient communications, and abort threatening and/or dangerous contacts. Disciplinary organizations create, reiterate, preserve, and attempt to perpetuate – with considerable strategic efficiency – their own systems of surveillance.

The dynamics that articulate the walls and cells that make up the dungeons – those typical of detention centers – can also be extended to buildings that are not primarily such. There are family homes – the so-called “welcoming homes”? – which to a greater or lesser degree harbor the most varied types of physical and psychological domestic violence, tyrannies, and the most complex types of coercion. This dynamic reconciles the *principle of gridlines* (Foucault, 2014), related to the situation of the subject who occupies categorized and organized physical environments for the sake of order and domination, in which experiences are flattened and diluted. The importance of observing the resignifications of hierarchical and repressive regimes within the family institution is scrutinized by Foucault (2014) in *Discipline and Punish*: “one day one will need to show how intrafamilial relations, essentially in the parent-child cell, have become ‘disciplined,’ absorbing since the Classical Era external, scholastic, military, then medical, psychiatric schemes...” (p. 208). Thinking about how disciplinary politics sneak into our daily lives will always be coated with a sense of urgency. Investigating how the failure of political institutions succeeds in lodging itself in domestic convivialities is of entire pertinence so that we can identify the reasons why the places of affective sharing become aesthetic or anesthetic<sup>4</sup>.

In *Amor de Mãe*, at the very moment when Sandro – who is then in prison, condemned to live in the bordering cells assigned by the state – is introduced to Lurdes as her lost son, the first affectionate relations between the boy and his supposed mother begins. In her efforts to live with her son, Lurdes ends up entering a world that is entirely unknown to her, but that, related to the supposed son, also becomes part of her personal universe. The daughter Camila comments:

<sup>4</sup> According to Fischer and Vaz (2018), from the place of dwelling and the dynamics of family relationships, which can both welcome and shelter as well as encase and oppress, it is possible to analyze the images that concern the question of inhabiting, according to topicalizations that can be filled by relational movements or by inert bodies, translating into aesthetic spaces or anesthetic landscapes.



[Camila] Sorry, Mom, but I find it very weird, I find it very weird seeing you recognize a criminal on TV, taking cigarettes to jail.

[Lurdes] I have to help my son, he needs help. Sandro is from that faction of Marconi's. Can't you see that they are killing all of Marconi's people?

[Camila] Mom, for God's sake, look, you can't mess with criminals, we're not part of this world. You have four other children who love you and are worried about you. Promise me, swear to me, that you won't do anything wrong to help Sandro.

[Lurdes] No need to swear anything, I won't swear, of course I won't do anything wrong, now I need to swear... (Dias & Villamarim, 2019-2021, Chap. 12, 20:28)

Later, another daughter, Erica (Nanda Costa), will also reproach her: "It seems that our mother has become a criminal's mother now". That's when Lurdes answers, incisively: "A criminal's mother? What am I? Isn't my son in jail? What does that make me? I am a criminal's mother. So what? I am a criminal's mother" (Dias & Villamarim, 2019-2021, Chap. 12, 42:35).

Lurdes gets to know the boss Marconi (Douglas Silva) and the members of the criminal faction Sandro had joined. They often address her as "tia", an expression indicating kinship (in this case, a forged and somewhat ironic family tie), and show respect towards her – sure that the new mother of their accomplice is "fechamento" (reliable, faithful). Lurdes helps her supposed son and, consequently, the faction, when, at Sandro's request, she agrees to take a cell phone chip from the prison to Marconi; later, on another visit, she gives Sandro, at Marconi's request, a cell phone: "I brought a cake. Chocolate, with brigadeiro icing, and a cell phone inside". Subversively, going against the family prescriptions, making it possible for the newly met boy to regain his freedom (legally, with the support of a lawyer), while guaranteeing his survival (by illicit means, collaborating with Marconi), Lurdes becomes Sandro's mother (even though he is not the Domênico she so desperately wanted).

By openly and warmly taking the maternal place in Sandro's life, Lurdes gives the young man the opportunity to become her son, and thus establishes a genuinely virtuous circle of affective sharing. Free from the State's sentence, but still tied to crime, Sandro, during a violent police confrontation, sees his mother in the midst of the crossfire, in the line of fire, and throws himself in front of her to take the bullet. Attentive to the boy's moral dilemma (if she promises to be on his side from then on, as the bandit Marconi had been until then), Lurdes goes to the crime office willing to negotiate a sum of money to release her son from his obligations to the faction. There, she is kidnapped by opposing thugs, and he rescues her – and Marconi, with his gang, frees Sandro from his bonds.

The family bonds between Lurdes and Sandro are built and consolidated through the mutual support, the gift they offer each other, both willing to risk themselves to maintain the ties that bind them. Their respective modes of appropriation of the restrictive circumstances to which they are subjected make possible, in the diegesis, the construction of escapes<sup>5</sup> that allow them to subvert fictional reality and produce unusual privileged sites – then to some degree in conformity with their own desires.

This article deals with the telenovela *Amor de Mãe*, dealing with (1) the placement of these two characters in the frame; and (2) the resulting images on the screen, analyzing the affective constructions operated by these figures – despite the limitations, interdictions and obligations imposed on them – and the resulting effects of meaning. The approach relates to the recognition that, in their diverse nuances and perspectives, the routine subjects of public and private life are the ones to provide material to telenovelistic plots, and relies on the understanding that the staging of facts and themes of social and political nature refers, in the terms of Lopes (2009), to the mentions about the “naturalistic’ character of telenovelas”, as well as explicit references to “the life of the nation”<sup>6</sup>. Lopes (2009), in fact, advances the hypothesis that telenovelas exert the function of *agenda setting*, “such is their power to set a thematic agenda that is followed and discussed by the country during its eight-month duration” (p. 27). In this sense, the author continues, sets of themes such as

land reform, coronelism, real estate speculation, multinational companies, political corruption, racism, minorities, among others, are some examples of this vocation of telenovelas to incorporate themes of the public sphere to the private universe in their narratives. (Lopes, 2009, p. 27)

Such issues obviously do not exist and do not develop in isolation. In the reality of daily life and in the diegesis of fiction, they are articulated, in their various aspects, in the weaving and unfolding of both narratives (the fictional and the non-fictional):

These themes are inseparable from romantic plots, family plots, love, marriage, and separation. It is the logic of personal and family relationships that presides over the narrative of social problems. That is where the power of this narrative seems to reside, its ability to translate the audience through affective relations, at the level of the lived, mixing itself in the experience of everyday life, lived itself in multiple facets, subjective, emotional, political, cultural, aesthetic. (Lopes, 2009, p. 27)

<sup>5</sup>We appropriate relatively freely the notions of *fracture* and *escapement* established by Algirdas J. Greimas (2002). In Greimasian terms, the fractures are effected by moments of dawning, which enable aesthetic and aesthetic experiences. The escapes, on the other hand, present a possibility of the aesthetic and aesthetic that, unlike the fracture, is not an accidental effect, but a constructed one; it is the effort for a construction of the sensitive and a dynamic search for the deautomatization of daily life.

<sup>6</sup>In this regard, see also studies by Maria de Lourdes Motter, such as *Ficção e Realidade: A Construção do Cotidiano na Telenovela* (2003).



In the case of *Amor de Mãe*, we will see that, even in the apparently borderline and interdicted enclosures of the cloister, emphasis is placed on the display of *modus vivendi* that allow the characters not to submit to the hindrances, conventions, and consequent anesthetic paralysis imposed on them: seeking slivers of space in the eventual inconsistencies of the repressive system, they move towards the aesthetic experience, appropriating the physical and affective places in the most diverse environments, be they marginal, stigmatized (detention house) or legitimized (family housing). Considering that the “fusion of the public and private domains performed by the telenovelas allows them to synthesize broad problematics in figures and punctual plots and, at the same time, to suggest that personal and punctual dramas may come to have a broad meaning” (Lopes, 2009, p. 27), besides functioning as a field of the symptom (see note 4), it seems quite plausible to establish more or less close connections, metaphorical or not, between what is seen on the screen (regarding the telenovela in question, militias, children trafficking, concentration of income, racial prejudice, abuse of authority, illicit procedures of child adoption etc.) and what is experienced on the outside (particularly, although not only, regarding contemporary Brazil). The exercise of glimpsing, from these entanglements, opportunities of constructions that can make transgressions possible, in the realm of extraterrestrial reality, of crystallized prejudices and alienating determinisms, is encouraging.

#### **DUNGEON AND SHELL, GRIDLINES AND GAP**

The ways in which we daily construct and accommodate our affections in the convivial gridlines imposed on us by architectural and hierarchical mechanisms etc., determine whether the peculiar appropriations we make of them are built in dungeon-houses (Fischer, 2006) and/or shell-houses (Bachelard, 1989), the first insidiously imprisoning, the second benevolently welcoming. The same place can be configured as a specific, particular type of *corner in the world* (sheltering dreams, memories, daydreams) or be structured based on containment mechanisms which, aiming at protecting/preserving memories, conventions, traditions, vicious/deleterious relations, end up configuring, to a certain extent, a sketch of a mausoleum (a tomb-house?). However, a site originally defined with more or less explicit purposes – of limiting or restricting experiences, hindering possibilities of coming and going, can nevertheless be fractured by symbolic escapes, transforming itself, subversively and upside down, into a place of affective welcome (a mother-house?).



This lability in the constitution and characterization of the physical and/or symbolic topologies will be given by the vivacity of the bodies that may settle (1) in the anesthetic landscape of an environment delimited by gridlines and compressed by the rarefaction of physical and affective appropriations (the image of the dungeon-house) and (2) in the aesthetic space of a landscape constituted by the fluid and undulating relational movement inherent to the vicissitudes of shared dwelling that enables, in the measure of the conformation of its environmental characteristics, the appropriation and understanding of *being* in the world (the image of the shell-house).

The telenovela *Amor de Mãe* privileges framings of addresses, and moves the characters Lurdes and Sandro, focused here, between (1) the environment of the detention house in which Sandro is serving time for armed robbery and (2) Lurdes' house, shared with her four children, Magno, Ryan (Thiago Martins), Érica (Nanda Costa) and Camila (Jéssica Ellen); and (3) the former house of Sandro's adoptive mother, which, taken over by Marconi, becomes the *crime office*. These environments will be paradoxical, making up a physical and affective architecture that is both an instance of repulsion and welcoming. In other words, neither the detention house nor the crime office are strictly configured as dungeon-houses, just as Lurdes' house is not just a shell-house. The grids of this gridlines present fissures and in them the transitory movements organize themselves, mutating, into anesthetic landscapes/aesthetic spaces.

When assuming Sandro as her son Domênico and visiting him in the fictitious Afonso César Prison, the figure of Lurdes in the penitentiary is repeatedly framed appearing between bars (Figure 1) – a clear allusion to the fact that, as the mother of an inmate, she is subjected to the coercive gridlines of the state prison even without being sentenced. The framings equalize the “between bars” situation in which we see Sandro, the convict, and Lurdes, trapped by family ties (Figure 2). Were it not for the content plane in juxtaposition to the expression plane, if we looked only at the framings detached from their narrative context, we would not identify which of the two characters would be, in the staged prison environment, serving time. At the same time, the situational coincidence that can be seen in these framings gives an affective tone to the grayish physicality of the cell, *despite...*<sup>7</sup>: it minimizes, rarefies the barriers between prisoner and visitor. Thus, both taken in identical positions, it is inferred that the vertical concreteness of the bars cannot hinder the flow of affections. Lurdes and Sandro may be trapped, but they find fissures, they inhabit the gaps in the imposed railings and overcome the oppressive ordinances that separate subjects who are on the inside and outside, becoming at that moment only mother and son.

<sup>7</sup>Taking Jacques Fontanille's idea (2014, p. 70) regarding the subject's attitude of “continuing the course of life despite X,” we employ the expression *despite...* Punctuation, here, functions as a shelter for interrogations, exclamations, dots and commas (uncertainties, perplexities, pauses) of a life whose course is not interrupted. The ellipsis indicates the omission of something that one does not want or cannot reveal, a suspension or hesitation, besides the allusion to openings of possibilities, which in the tracing of the three dots would represent paths to be traveled (except for the uncertainties that nestle between the cracks of the unknown).

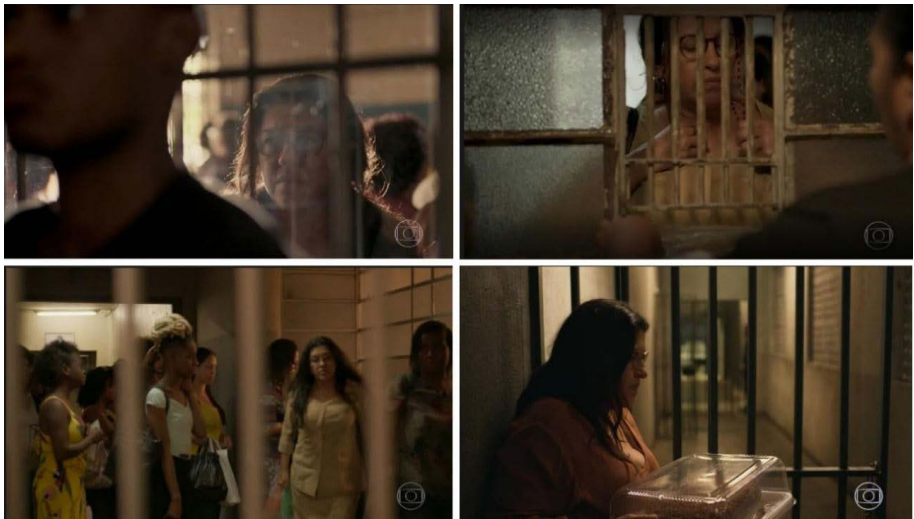
# A

## Images of *Amor de Mãe*: Gridlines and Escapes

in principle, what seemed to be only condemnation can also be perceived as freedom, since the failures in the communication processes create gaps – and, through such gaps, established from what is not fully said or simply not said (there is an unfathomable dimension contained in the genesis of every communicational relationship, especially regarding the field of word) we can be saved from the “horror of the real”. (Fischer, 2006, p. 204)

**Figure 1**

*Lurdes between bars*



Note. Dias and Villamarim (2019-2021).

**Figure 2**

*Lurdes and Sandro: Physical and emotional bars*



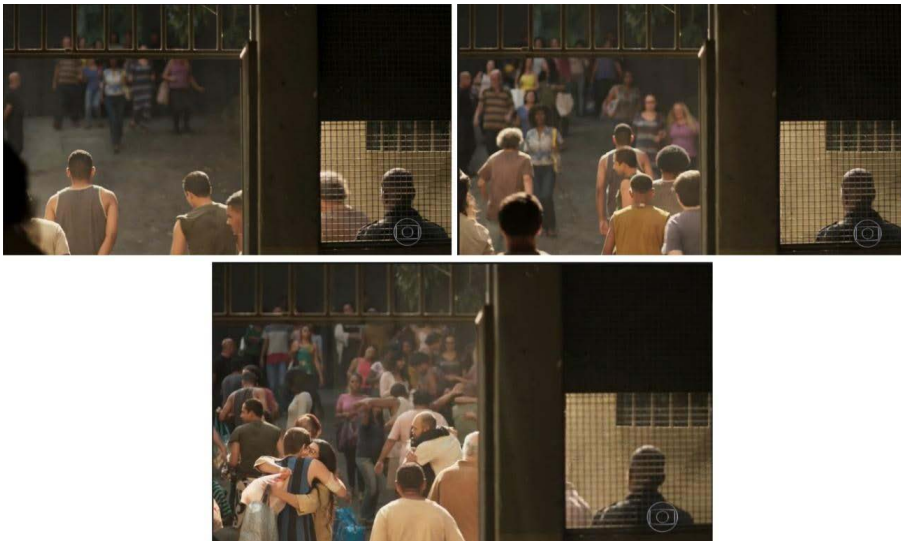
Note. Dias and Villamarim (2019-2021).

If there are communicational barriers (properly architected, symbolically overcome) between the inmates and their families, the gathering of these subjects is enhanced, in the telenovela, in the sequence that reveals two gates opening

simultaneously to the prison yard (Figure 3). While one of them allows the entrance of visitors (coming from the outside, from the shared living in society), the other one allows the entrance of interns (coming from the confinement in the building, lives shrunk at *the borders of*). In the movement of steps and hugs, the bodies that meet in the space – although regulated, delimited, and watched – of the “open” patio, are mixed and confused.

**Figure 3**

*Openings and closings*



Note. Dias and Villamarim (2019-2021).

The courtyard destined for socializing no longer shows blatant divisions and differences – indistinctly, everyone appropriates the place through affective encounters, through sharing in the scope of what seems to be a space *in between*: not the enclosure of the cell, not the vastness of the streets. A fissure, a gap that lodges itself in the architectural grid of the prison and becomes an escape route, physically uniting – temporarily, that is – people separated by legal systems theoretically designed to protect those outside the walls and discipline the ones inside.

Such outside world, however, also reserves gridlines for its occupants. If Lurdes is frequently framed between the bars that structure the environment that imprisons Sandro, the house where she lives with her other four children is also a place that constantly places her between bars (Figure 4).

**Figure 4**  
*Barred household rooms*



Note. Dias and Villamarim (2019-2021).

In addition to the striated and opaque glass of the barred windows, sparse beams – support columns planted amidst the cramped interior of the rooms that make up the suburban family’s home – outline verticalities that not only give the environment a certain air of enclosure but also allude to the bars of the detention house (Figure 5).

Until the moment Sandro is recognized as a member of the family, Lurdes’ address proves to be welcoming, and there the channels of communication are considerably unimpeded. As soon as the woman learns that the boy could be her son, the residents of the house clash. The children believe that the mother should arrange for DNA tests to prove Sandro’s parentage, but she refuses: she does not accept the idea of subjecting her son – for whom she had searched for so long – to an uncomfortable situation. Lurdes *wants* Sandro to be her son, and that is enough for her. Family disagreements then intensify, as she admits the young man into the residence, “my house is your house, you are my son.” Although Lurdes’s house is also the house of her children, as she claims, she insists, when her decisions are contested, in saying that the house belongs to her, and that she is the one in charge: “He didn’t ask to come here, no, I offered it to him, I insisted for him to come, you hear me? . . . in this house, you hear me, I’m in charge, this is my house and this is how it’s going to be, you hear me?” (Dias & Villamarim, 2019-2021, Chap. 18, 16:26).

**Figure 5***Domestic barriers*

Note. Dias and Villamarim (2019-2021).

One way or another, family gatherings make the house an environment that germinates ambiguities, in such a way that the rooms (and discomforts) bring together welcoming and domination in networks of affections that imply sharing and splitting, in a hierarchical-repressive ordering:

*domestic* comes from the Latin term *domus* (house), which in turn is linked to *dominus*, meaning *lord, chief, sovereign, owner*: whoever is inside the house, therefore, is either the master or under the dominion of a master (it is, more or less, something like one of his possessions) – and one does not trespass with impunity on a place that has an instituted owner. (Fischer, 2006, p. 23)

In this perspective, all architectural buildings would be destined to fulfill a certain paralyzing dynamic, operationally instrumentalizing the “submission to specifically established parameters, modeling for the perfecting of such subjection, and containment in determined positions and places – so that the preservation and continuity of this domination process is guaranteed” (Fischer, 2006, p. 22). The images of the telenovela under analysis do not only frame Lurdes’s dwelling with railings (and verticalizations) that refer to the oppressive gridlines of the detention houses. Other spaces bear explicit grids, and several characters appear gridded and/or in gridlines on the screen. Combinations of horizontal and vertical lines, in the foreground,

are superimposed on figures placed, for example, in their work environments (at the school where Camila teaches and in Álvaro's office, owner of PWA, a company that pollutes the Guanabara Bay); in their homes (at the entrance of Vicente's [Rodrigo Garcia] building); and even in public spaces, as demonstrated by the framing in which the grid pattern is practically inked on the surface of the body of a dog centered in the video (Figure 6)

**Figure 6**

*Framings and gridlines*



*Note.* Dias and Villamarim (2019-2021).

In addition to these, one of the scenes that most evidences this hypertrophied and gridded gridlines is the house of the character Betina (Isis Valverde), Magno's girlfriend, who was a victim of domestic violence committed by her ex-husband and who, at a certain point in the plot, starts a love affair with Sandro. Access to the site is through a doorway that resembles the entrance to a prison cell or penitentiary (Figure 7).

Notwithstanding the profusion of bars that are repeated on the expression plane, the content plane makes it clear that no security is guaranteed there: the residence is repeatedly invaded, and more than once the young resident suffers physical aggression on its premises. It is not the bars, the plot reveals, that in the domestic environment or outside ensure that the characters are protected and sheltered. In Betina's case, this seems to be provided by the physical presence and

the gesture of affection that takes shape, through the gaps in the railing, in the relationship – about to escape her, it must be said – built with Magno (Figure 8).

### Figure 7

*House or prison?*



Note. Dias and Villamarim (2019-2021).

### Figure 8

*Insecurity railings*



Note. Dias and Villamarim (2019-2021).

Although the bars, in the background or in the foreground, are visible in all the frames brought here, one can see, in Figure 9, peculiar framings that are particularly similar: they are images of Magno and Betina, taken against the backdrop of the girl's house, and of Lurdes and Sandro in the detention house.

**Figure 9***Grids of multiple prisons*

Note. Dias and Villamarim (2019-2021).

In a decontextualized way, it is hard to believe that one of the frames puts in the scene and presents not the facilities of a penitentiary complex, but the room of a residence; it is the image of the house that reveals itself even more claustrophobic, because the railing and the wall are superimposed and appear practically glued, while in the chiaroscuro of the image of the penitentiary, the railings lead to a corridor that extends, interspersed with several thresholds. An almost *mise en abyme* perspective is constructed, producing a depth effect that evokes the sensation, somewhat vertiginous, of multiple movement. What is in the foreground, in both frames, is the corporality of the characters: very close to each other, they are in physical contact; and, despite..., they appropriate the places (not very welcoming, at first), by means of the sensitive relationship, constructing escapes in the alleys – seemingly dead ends – in which life has put them.

However, if in the interior spaces in which the characters move, squares and grids acquire protagonism, in the external environments references to grids are also present. That is, enclosures that in one way or another still encompass certain figures are expressively reiterated on the screen. Sandro, for example, after serving the sentence imposed on him in the detention house, is released and allowed to leave: it is, however, a conditional, limited freedom – a situation readily homologated by the expression plane. In the scene in which the young man, after leaving the building in which he had been imprisoned until then, walks down the street next to Lurdes, his supposed mother, in the background the presence of electricity poles build verticalizations that evoke grids, and high voltage wires, in a polluted tangle of crossings and labyrinthine horizontalities are suggestively stamped on the screen and present themselves to the screen and present themselves to the spectator (Figure 10).



**Figure 10***Urban verticalization*

Note. Dias and Villamarim (2019-2021).

In the diegesis in question, the content plane emphasizes that, if Sandro “paid his debt” to the State/society – an expression popularly used with regard to ex-prisoners – an outstanding debt to organized crime remains. On the level of expression, the character remains imprisoned. His figure is displayed amidst frames that reiterate the presence of verticalized bars. There are moments when his corporality is captured behind explicit bars – as in the occasion when he is inside Marconi’s office building, the gang boss, trying to negotiate his dismissal from criminality (Figure 11).

Sandro is finally freed from the world of banditry when Lurdes goes to Marconi and pays for his freedom, stipulated at R\$ 50,000. During the negotiations, an opposing gang surprises the boss and his accomplices, taking Lurdes hostage. Sandro arrives on the scene and joins the faction, striving to rescue his supposed mother. On the way to the fleeing car, Marconi grants him the debt paid receipt, and Sandro and Lurdes disembark – now free, one from the kidnapping and the other from the underworld he had been introduced into during childhood. The framing that ends this sequence blurs the entire background of the scene, leaving the two characters in the foreground, framed by the diffused light of the clear day. The clean image, then, is revealed to be unsquared and devoid of any grids, metaphorical or literal (Figure 12).

**Figure 11**  
*Imprisonment of crime*



Note. Dias and Villamarim (2019-2021).

**Figure 12**  
*Grids come out of the picture*



Note. Dias and Villamarim (2019-2021).

There is a horizon of possibilities, it is inferred, for mother and child. An opening declared in the flash that surrounds both characters, in a blur that can work as an indication of uncertainties and questionings, yes, but that can

also suggest the erasure of suffering and helplessness that preceded the encounter (even if mistaken) and the mutual welcoming.

The relational movement between Lurdes and Sandro is motivated by a sense of care: in gestures of support and construction, they build an affective “family” togetherness. There are several situations implied in the scope of family bonds; conflicting and paradoxical conjunctures – inclusion/exclusion, openness/closeness, attraction/repulsion, comfort/discomfort – that are tensioned and can be joined in the same sensitive interaction, operating controversial and simultaneous feelings. In *Amor de Mãe*, it is possible to observe that the inclusive and exclusive, comfortable and uncomfortable family relationships that develop in the content plane end up being imaged homologically in the expression plane by the way in which the characters are framed and squared in scenographic environments sketched at times as welcoming houses (shell-house), at other times as oppressive spaces (dungeon-house).

In the telenovela under analysis, the scene of the house-dungeon is actualized in the anesthetic landscape delimited by relational squares and shortages. The image of the shell-house, on the other hand, will accommodate the aesthetic space constituted by the fluid and undulating sensitive movement of the escapes that install themselves, sneakily or not, in the cracks of the disciplinary orderings. It is a content woven by values and passions that insist, persevere, and build passionate movements of resistance, demolishing obstacles and breaking institutional barriers of the most diverse natures. In this perspective, it is inferred, to *coexist* is to *overcome*, to continue together despite... The economy of images in *Amor de Mãe* aesthetically assures that the topology of anesthetic landscapes can be altered, to a lesser or greater extent, by breaches in relational dispositions that allow both the accident that fractures crystallized conventions and the escape that prevents or avoids numbing. Diegetically, the aesthetic space is drawn in a kind of search for *how* and *why* a life takes shape in the physical-affective-social place. It is possible to exist, to survive, in the anesthetic landscape. But one only acquires existence (*re-existence*?) animated in the aesthetic space that reveals the course of life in its phases of sensitization and perseverance: despite... it is possible to continue as an active body, assuming and sustaining the synesthetic relations and affective dispositions. The character Sandro exists in the television plot as a subject linked to misdemeanors that confined him to marginality; nevertheless, he acquires re-existence – despite... – in the figure of the misguided Domênico, and starts experiencing the (co)experiences of a son. Lurdes, in turn, despite having had her two-year-old son taken away from her, resists and perseveres: indifferent to the aridity of the search and the passage of time, she insists and



never abandons the search. Assuming and sustaining the (mistaken?) fracture constituted by the advent of the chance encounter, she constructs escapes and (unmistaken) ways to re-exist, establishing with Sandro a maternal coexistence.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of this study was to look at how the language and aesthetic options of a popular audiovisual product<sup>8</sup> – in this case, the telenovela *Amor de Mãe* – support reflections about images that deal with bonding, coexistence and family groupings and their ways of accommodation to the physical and psychological factors that make up the environment of places of residence. To consider the affective movement in juxtaposition to the movement of bodies in architectural spaces is to look at how social dynamics are, in turn, given *body*. The framings that show squared characters, whether in the realm of exteriors (on the street, in prisons, in the maladjustments of economic and social marginality etc.) or interiors (in domesticity, the family home, the maladjustments of non-belonging etc.) communicate with everyday practices that are often ultimately organized between bars. In domestic environments, the same dynamics that supposedly tend to provide welcoming and safeguard warmth and intimacy, privileging regimes of privacy and security, also lend themselves to viciously create and implant barriers. Thus, ensuring the maintenance of deleterious interpersonal relationships and hierarchical orderings long established and reinforced by architectural solutions that oppress and hide – preventing possibilities of opening, interrupting lines of escape and installing regimes of confinement typical of incarceration – the images of imprisonment – symbolic or literal – that intertwine in the narrative of Manuela Dias allude in greater or lesser intensity to the oppressive reality manifested in an increasingly polarized and violent Brazil. As a symptom field, the telenovela re-presents, critically and metonymically, the syndrome of a world recognized by the spectator in the paradoxical figure of a city considered wonderful (Rio de Janeiro), which at the same time dazzles and horrifies, welcomes and oppresses, condemning its inhabitants to compulsory confinement. This sometimes occurs due to living on the borders of..., which penalizes them to social exclusion (concretized in prisons, impoverished schools and public hospitals, deficient public transportation, proliferation of poor communities permanently exposed to militias and police arbitrary actions and abuses etc.). And, in other circumstances, by the enclosure in social stratifications that multiply barred condominiums and residences, automobiles (expensive or not, armored or not), discriminatory and excluding consumption centers, full of guards and security

<sup>8</sup>The narrative has significant and reiterated power of communication, as it reveals the thickness to reach diverse audiences, and not only because it was produced and shown by the largest – and most controversial? – television network in the country. In a way, it also becomes “militant”, considering what, at the moment, the broadcaster is interested in “appearing to be”.

cameras (shopping malls, village malls, fitness center complexes, elitist private educational institutions, luxury clinics etc.). Added to the obvious evidence is the relative invisibility of claustrophobic domestic routines, largely shaped not only by socioeconomic factors, but by naturalized customs and crystallized traditions. The opening theme of *Amor de Mãe*, hummed by Camila in the second chapter, is Gonzaguinha's, a musician who is on the list of most censored musicians during the Brazilian military dictatorship – of the 72 lyrics he wrote that were submitted to the dictatorial government for analysis, 54 were censored. “The 30 NIS reports on the ‘named LGJ’ (Luiz Gonzaga Júnior) show that the singer and songwriter was persecuted from 1972 to 1985, amidst the democratic transition. Almost all of these accounts make reference to protest concerts in which he participated” (Eboli, 2012).

The lyrics of the song “É”, whose original recording dates back to 1988, the year in which the current Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil was promulgated, claims, already in a supposedly democratic country, the “full right”, “all respect.” And he assures that “we want to live freedom”. Even living in the Democratic State of Law, eventually building/inhabiting houses that are shells, not dungeons, experiencing aesthetic spaces, not anesthetic, one recognizes in the expression of popular creativity the need to keep alert, asserting the saying “our love,” untying bodies, installing possibilities of promoting libertarian physical-affective coexistence. In *Amor de Mãe*, grids show in fiction the obstacles that permeate the attempts to move in a so-called democratic reality, but not always able or willing to guarantee the experience of effectively emancipatory freedoms. When Sandro is shot, Lurdes, indignant, rebels: “My son was shot, he was under the responsibility of the State.” Visiting him in the hospital, his wife hears from the policeman guarding the door of his room that, “if he was a worker that wouldn't have happened.” The mother replies, “There are plenty of honest people out there getting shot.” Without a doubt, we know – the policeman manifested on the television fiction screen and us, part of the people seated on the “sofa” of reality – that both sides resist and persist with institutionalized orderings – militarized or not – that distinguish, classify, separate. And imprisons, one way or another. In the condition of social actors, however, gathered in the making of the plot that has been developing in Brazil – for a long time and especially in contemporary times – before our eyes and by our hands, we ask: in which chapter, exactly, did the progressive erasure of principles guaranteeing social justice, of individual liberties, of effective mechanisms to reduce inequalities begin? What images, what – inter-screen? – landscapes reveal fractures and possibilities of escape that lead to narratives – intra-screen and extra-screen – with less grids? ■



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# Towards the Violated Face: The Mugshot of Bophana and the Cambodian Tragedy<sup>a</sup>

## *Perante o Rosto Violado: O Mugshot de Bophana e a Tragédia do Camboja*

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### ABSTRACT

Can a face in fact be totally annihilated? From this provocation, we aimed at the mugshot of Bophana, the guiding thread of this text. The essay tries to reflect on the vestigial testimony of her face based on philosophical concepts present in Lévinas and Butler, seeking a policy of images, especially those that expose faces and bodies victimized by violence. We also sought to understand the method of filmmaker Rithy Panh, who made an important documentary on the memory of the Cambodian genocide motivated by Bophana's photograph. By making the archival images of the extermination a kind of gravestone for the dead, Panh's method also approaches the epistolary gesture present in the elimination of Bophana and her husband, Ly Sitha.

**Keywords:** Rithy Panh, testimony, Khmer Rouge, face, trace

### RESUMO

Um rosto pode ser totalmente aniquilado? Com essa provocação, miramos o *mugshot* de Hout Bophana, fio condutor deste texto. O ensaio tenta refletir sobre o testemunho vestigial de seu rosto a partir de conceitos filosóficos presentes em Lévinas e Butler, visando uma política das imagens, especialmente daquelas que expõem rostos e corpos vitimados por violências. Também buscamos compreender o método do cineasta Rithy Panh, que, motivado por essa fotografia, realizou um importante documentário sobre a memória do genocídio cambojano. Ao fazer das imagens de arquivo do extermínio uma espécie de lápide para os mortos, o método de Panh também se avizinha do gesto epistolar presente na eliminação de Bophana e de seu esposo, Ly Sitha.

**Palavras-chave:** Rithy Panh, testemunho, Khmer Vermelho, rosto, vestígio

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MATRIZES

# A

CAN A FACE, in fact, be *totally annihilated*? Before we can answer this question, we must define what is meant by annihilation, which is understood here as absolute destruction, a violating process of something or someone that is completely consummated, that time consumes with total fury, like a devouring *Chronos*. However, there are experiences that are, so to speak, *indigestible*. And ironically, from the bowels of time, they persist and endure; they return to demand from us, from viscera to vomit, a response to the violence that *returns* (revolts). In the face of history, traces, grooves, and remains testify to *what fails* in the processes of annihilation; something that *exists*, that remains cracking through the images, reports, gestures, as *they say*, despite the erasure imposed by historical violence.

Prompted by this question, we risk an attempt to write about the film by Rithy Panh (1996)<sup>1</sup>, *Bophana, Une Tragédie Cambodgienne*. On the one hand, a small image (just over six centimeters), fragile, a type of vestigial testimony of the face of a Cambodian woman, *like any other* Cambodian victim of violence imposed by the Khmer Rouge regime, of yesterday and today; and not *like just another* woman eclipsed by the totality of the regime, deleted by anonymity, because in the human face there is a type of silent eloquence that, despite not acting, *it acts all the same*, and for this very reason cries out to us through its presence, through its dignity.

Thus, we come before a *fissure-image*<sup>2</sup> (a mugshot of this young woman). A symptom of ingested violence, perpetrated in a more or less recent past. The fissure fascinates (how can one refrain from looking at it, despite everything<sup>3</sup>?); it is polarized to a small portion of the world, which, however modest it may be, gives rise to a story (when and why was the image taken?) of a memory or an archaeology – and over which subsoil of history does this fissure open before our eyes, this scar of the temporality of the suffering of a human face?

With a more or less black background – because we cannot say that it is completely grey or entirely black, because in this image too, its hues, its variations are sustained with difficulty –, a light seems to come from behind, this face looks at us, front on, in relative darkness. Her shoulder-length, black, lank hair is enhanced by the uniform the same color as the Khmer Rouge prisoners were forced to wear. Her oval face – an indelible mark of her genealogy – seems to bring out the rarefaction of her physiognomy: a dilated nose with irregular openings (and in the photograph the bone of the nasal cavity appears to be camouflaged by the light), arched eyebrows

<sup>1</sup> Rithy Panh (1964-) was one of the Khmer victims; his family was eliminated due to exhaustion and starvation in the forced work camps in the rural zone of Cambodia. At the end of Pol Pot's regime, Panh sought refuge in Thailand, later travelling to France and graduating in film from the Institut des Hautes Études Cinématographiques (IDHEC).

<sup>2</sup> When proposing the concept of the fissure-image we attempt to get closer to these images created in spaces of suffering (like Bophana's photograph) but that are, however, able to crack the temporality of their creation and testify against those who created them. The fissure-image is this apparition that awakens us when we decide to look at the images of history in order to extract some understanding, some knowledge, however incomplete and fissured it may be.

<sup>3</sup> The expression "despite everything" (*malgré tout*, in French), that sometimes appears in the text, is a reference to Georges Didi-Huberman's thinking, especially with regards to his great book *Images Despite Everything* (2003). In this work, for the author, the "look (their ethics but also their singularity) materializes from the incessant search for pieces of historical legibility in the singular sequence of four photographs taken by Alberto Errera in the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camps" (Lessa Filho & Marques, 2022, p. 7).



and the intrinsic flaws of this beardless face which are also relativized by this light (the color of which, by all indications, is responsible for revealing the imperfections of any physiognomy), and then the eyes, geometrically irregular, which appear to confront the gaze of the photographic camera, a device undoubtedly activated by a perpetrator of violence; a raised gaze which, today, forty years later, is a trace of the testimony of this *suffering face* (Figure 1).

This mugshot of Bophana acts as an icon of the repression and dehumanization perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge. These eyes, without a doubt, that look straight onto the device used to take the mugshot, change object each time they are located in different contexts and in front of different people: they observe as victims in the panels of the *Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum* (which is where Bophana's photograph is located). They are illuminated by the contagion of the image of the young woman who comes to life. And yet, they remain in Tuol Sleng. "In these migrations of the image through different spaces and time", writes Vincente Sánchez-Biosca (2015), "there are so many other forms of memory management: from repression to art, from testimony to accusation, from biography to intellect"<sup>4</sup> (p. 345). Regardless of the wanderings that arise when confronting this image, something ruthless and wild remains constant: the gaze that founded it. Because this photo is an image of a perpetrator, that is, a capture, a theft, or a forced or consented surrender:

If the total destruction (of Bophana) was decided, something – miniscule – failed in the enterprise (of the exterminator): the survival of this image. From it, anonymous, others can be born. For an image always carefully guards, whether or not its author is aware, whether they know it or not, its reverse shot. In it, however, dwells, forever, the executioner<sup>5</sup>. (Sánchez-Biosca, 2015, p. 345)

Therefore, we cannot continue our attempt to write about Rithy Panh's film, *Bophana, Une Tragédie Cambodgienne*, without summarizing, as much as possible, the story of the life and death of this woman and her husband and obviously, inevitably, the filmmaker's life and method which, *contaminated* by this image, made Bophana a type of tombstone for the dead in Cambodia, and through her was helped to trace the painful journey about his own history and that of their country, both torn apart by the genocide.

<sup>4</sup>In the original: "En estas migraciones de la imagen por espacios y tiempos distintos hay otras tantas modulaciones de la gestión de la memoria: de la represión al arte, del testimonio a la acusación, de la biografía a la intelección". This and other translations, by the authors.

<sup>5</sup>In the original: "Si la destrucción total estaba decidida, algo –minúsculo– falló en la empresa: la pervivencia de la imagen. De ella, anónima, pueden nacer otras. Pues una imagen guarda celosamente siempre, lo sepa o no su autor, lo sepa o no ella misma, su contra-campo. En él habita todavía, y para siempre, el verdugo".

**Figure 1**  
The frontal mugshot of Hout Bophana



*Note.* From *Bophana, Une Tragédie Cambodgienne*, by R. Panh, 1996.

Thus, we will start with a brief biography of this young Cambodian woman (and everything that led to her becoming a symbol, today, of her country) and we will then discuss how the testimony image of Bophana can associate such concepts such as *the face*, *ethical violence*, *Illeité*, and *trace* and how her mugshot is configured as a *perpetrator's photograph*. And concomitantly with the analysis of the film *Bophana, Une Tragédie Cambodgienne*, we will reflect on the filmmaker's, Rithy Panh, method of thinking about the images and trauma. Therefore, we attempt to collect, from death, from the perpetrated elimination, the traces of the vulnerable alterities that emerge from the cinematographic work and expose the eloquent ethical demand for its living affirmation in the present.

#### **HOUT BOPHANA: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF HER ELIMINATION**

In 1996, Rithy Pahn created their film *Bophana, Une Tragédie Cambodgienne*, which was the first cinematographic production in the Khmer language addressing

the genocide carried out by the Khmer Rouge dictatorial regime. Pahn was a survivor that was able to migrate to France after losing his family in the dictatorial work camps. Just as the British photographer Nic Dunlop was haunted during his youth by Kaing Guek Eav, the Duch<sup>6</sup>, based on a photographic register of Chan Kim Srung, the Cambodian filmmaker was also marked by an image, a *mugshot* (an identification portrait, like that of Kim Srung's) created by the S21 destruction machine and, from this face, he chose the guiding thread of *Bophana, Une Tragédie Cambodgienne*.

This portrait – the face of this woman –, like her biography, was discovered and reconstructed for the West in the early 1980s by the American journalist Elizabeth Becker of the *Washington Post* while she investigated the Tuol Sleng archives (also known as S21) and the confessions of the repressed victims. Guided by the center's archivists, Becker came across an unusual file where the incriminatory evidence was comprised of love letters. In her important book, *When the War Was Over*, Elizabeth Becker dedicated an entire chapter to this unusual set of documents and intitled it “The Romance of Comrade Deth – Destroying the Personal Life” (Becker, 1986, pp. 212-225). When Pahn became aware of this unique file, in which a paranoid conspiracy and a personal tragedy were so terribly combined, he asked Becker (2010, p. 80) for permission to elaborate a film script. In a recent book, Vincente Sánchez-Biosca (2017) wrote the following about Bophana:

In any case, the uniqueness of Hout Bophana is also due to other reasons, which the filmmaker brilliantly explores: firstly, the young woman embodied, in Pahn's eyes, the human, familial and cultural values of the old Cambodia of the 1960s, characterized by economic development, the attainment of a certain social well-being and access to a culture of Western accents, combined with Buddhist traditions, which is no obstacle to recognizing that the country also suffered the consequences of the corruption of Prince Sihanouk's government, repression and even torture practices... The filmmaker interweaves (*entreteje*) the main character's personal drama with Cambodia's history as two manifestations of the same unfortunate fate<sup>7</sup>. (pp. 154-155)

Bophana was an educated young woman, fluent in the French language. Her father adopted her cousin, to whom she would marry during the wartime. Bophana's life trajectory reflects, in some way, the fate of her own country. Her personal tragedy began with the start of a civil war, where North American bombings which began in 1969 (with the pretext of preventing the Viet Cong guerrillas from taking refuge in Cambodia) led to the coup d'état in 1970 of general Lon Nol, who defeated king Norodom Sihanouk. Both phenomena

<sup>6</sup> He was the head of the Tuol Sleng/S21, the biggest and most fearsome space for torture and murder in the Khmer Rouge regime. Rithy Panh made a film about him intitled *Duch, The Master of the Forges of Hell* (2011) in which he confronts him with photos of the victims, including the mugshots of Hout Bophana.

<sup>7</sup> In the original: “En cualquier caso, la singularidad de Hout Bophana se debía también a otras razones que el cineasta explotó con brillantez: en primer lugar, la muchacha encarnaba a los ojos de Pahn los valores humanos, familiares y culturales de la antigua Camboya de los años sesenta, caracterizada por el desarrollo económico, el logro de un cierto bienestar social y el acceso a una cultura de acentos occidentales, combinada con la tradición budista, lo que no es óbice para reconocer que país sufrió también las consecuencias de la corrupción de los gobiernos del príncipe Sihanouk, la represión e incluso la práctica de la tortura... El cineasta entreteje el drama personal de la protagonista con la historia de Camboya como dos manifestaciones de un destino desafortunado”.



resulted in the exponential growth and legitimization of the Khmer Rouge guerilla. Following the murder of her father during an ambush by the Khmer Rouge guerilla, the young woman was forced to flee at only 20 years old from the areas that were most torn apart by civil war:

on her solitary journey ... [Bophana] settles in the city of Kompong Thom, where she is raped by government army soldiers and becomes pregnant. In 1971, the doctors that attend her save both her and her baby, who Bophana leaves to the care of her younger sister<sup>8</sup>. (Sánchez-Biosca, 2017, p. 155)

<sup>8</sup>In the original: “en su periplo solitario, se instala en la ciudad de Kompong Thom, donde sufre una violación por los soldados del ejército gubernamental y queda embarazada... los médicos que la atienden logran salvarla, así como a su bebé, quien deja Bophana al cuidado de una hermana menor”.

From then on, the young woman, by her older sister’s side, survives by selling rice in the central market in the capital Phnom Penh. In May 1974, after also working as a seamstress for approximately one year in a center for widows called La Maison des Papillons run by Gaetana Enders – the wife of the man that had organized the devastating North American bombings, Thomas Enders – and carrying out translation work, Bophana happens to reunite with her cousin and childhood friend, Ly Sitha, who had converted and became a monk, at a cremation ceremony in Langka Pagoda<sup>9</sup>. Although the encounter was fleeting, passion was rekindled in both (Becker, 1986; Sánchez-Biosca, 2017).

<sup>9</sup>And as Elizabeth Becker (1986, p. 212) reminds us, becoming a monk was one of the rare options for young people that did not want to fight on either side of the war.

It is not until September 1975 that Ly Sitha reappears in Bophana’s life, when he visits her mother. Ly Sitha, once a monk, had now become *Comrade* Deth, the trusted man of Koy Thuon, a leader of the North Zone and responsible for the economy of Khmer Rouge. “His monk’s robes have been replaced by the black uniform and he is armed with a pistol.... This is when Ly Sitha’s mother, conscious of the danger that surrounds the young pair, decides to unite them in marriage”<sup>10</sup> (Sánchez-Biosca, 2017, p. 156).

<sup>10</sup>In the original: “Su túnica azafrán de monge sido substituida por el pijama negro y va armado con una pistola.... Es entonces que la madre de Ly Sitha, consciente de los peligros que acechan a los jóvenes, toma decisión de unirlos en matrimonio”.

Following the strict rules of the Pol Pot dictatorship and of the Khmer Rouge army, families were not allowed to gather and travel was prohibited, except in cases where safe-conducts were signed by the leaders. The fact that Deth held a high position in the party, led to his permanent distance from Bophana, leaving them both with the alternative of sending *secret love letters*, in which the feeling shared by the couple was evident.

The fragility that this young woman shows in front of her beloved, the regrets for her loneliness, contrasting with her apparent exterior strength in the face of the ordeal she has lived. Nothing encapsulates her mind better than the *secret love letters* that she writes, bypassing the ban. These are in tune with the former monk’s feelings. In these letters, Bophana takes refuge in the imaginary world of *Reamker*, the Khmer version of *Ramayana*, and attributes the personality of her

heroine to herself, Sita, the wife of the hero, torn from her lover's arms by threatening demonic powers. Following the epic poem's roots, Bophana's experiences take on allegorical colors in which the universe created by Khmer Rouges acquires a dangerous infernal face, which revives the childhood stories that were told to the children of her time. On his part, Ly Sitha's responses appear impregnated with literary evocations, no less strange to the society that surrounds them and in which he actively participates. In his letters he seems to seek asylum, sometimes quoting verses from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, sometimes bringing up the limpid couple of lovers painted in Edenic colors by Bernadin de Saint-Pierre in *Paul et Virginie*<sup>11</sup>. (Sánchez-Biosca, 2017, p. 156)

Following the fall of Koy Thuon, Ly Sitha/Deth's protector, a wave of arrests was unleashed in the party. Upon discovering and investigating comrade Deth's home, the Khmer Rouge police found five letters from Bophana, three photographs and a fake safe-conduct that Ly Sitha had used to travel by his wife's side and take her to the capital Phnom Penh (Sánchez-Biosca, 2017, p. 157). Inevitably, both Ly Sitha and Bophana were captured and made prisoners of the regime. Bophana was even named a *femme fatale* spy that had dragged her lover into a conspiratorial network.

On 19<sup>th</sup> September 1976, Deth was arrested, taken to *Tuol Sleng*, tortured like his superior, and finally *officially destroyed* (this was the term that the Khmer Rouge used when a prisoner was murdered), on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1977 (Sánchez-Biosca, 2017, p. 157); whereas for Elizabeth Becker (1986, p. 221) his official destruction was conducted on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1977. Bophana, in turn, was arrested on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1976, accused of being at the behest of the Central of Intelligence Agency (CIA), and interrogated at S21 by her old literature professor, Mam Nai, the right-hand man of Duch who served in the genocidal army by the nickname Chan, according to Rithy Panh's (2004, p. 122) notes in the film script. Bophana was eliminated on the same day as her husband (according to the date defended by both Sánchez-Biosca and Rithy Pahn). And for about five months, Duch tortured her to make her assume the inexistent conspiratorial relationships on behalf of the CIA, even going so far as to writing instructions to her interrogators/torturers telling them how to conduct the sessions in order to obtain the "confession" that the charity institution that the young woman had worked at was, in fact, a space linked to the North American intelligence agency.

Bophana's last "confession", dated January 1977, declared that she had never loved Deth and that she seduced him with the intent of boycotting the distribution of rice (Becker, 1986, p. 223; Sánchez-Biosca, 2017, p. 157). This biography ends with the painful question asked by her: "After confessing all of these betrayals,

<sup>11</sup>In the original: "La fragilidad que muestra esta joven ante su amado, lo lamentos por su soledad, contrastan con su aparente fortaleza exterior ante el calvario vivido. Nada condensa mejor su estado anímico que las *cartas de amor secretas* que, burlando la prohibición, le escribe. Estas sintonizan con el sentir del ex monje En ellas, Bophana se refugia en el mundo imaginario del *Reamker*, la versión jemer del *Ramayana*, y se autoatribuye la personalidad de su heroína, Sita, esposa del hero, arrancada de brazos de su amado por funestas fuerzas demoníacas. Siguiendo los cauces del poema épico, las vivencias de Bophana van tomando tintes alegóricos en los que el universo creado por los Jemeres Rojos adquiere un peligrosísimo cariz infernal que reaviva las historias de infancia con las que fueron medidas las niñas camboyanas de su época. Por su parte, las respuestas de Ly Sitha aparecen preñadas de evocaciones literarias no menos extrañas a la sociedad que le rodea y de la que participa tan activamente. En aquellas parece buscar asilo: ora cita versos del *Macbeth* shakespeariano, ora trae a la memoria la límpida pareja de amantes que pin tó con edénicos colores Bernardin de Saint-Pierre en *Paul et Virginie*".



what does life matter?” (Becker, 1986, p. 224). Bophana would remain for another two months in Tuol Sleng, being forced to denounce friends and family as part of the spy network, and Duch, with total contempt after her official destruction, would note in his own writing that the young woman was nothing more than an ordinary whore (Sánchez-Biosca, 2017, p. 157).

### ETHICAL VIOLENCE AND THE TRACE OF OTHERS THROUGH IMAGES

The Lithuanian philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas (1993), defines *trace* as a sign that “decomposes the order of the world”, that comes as an “overprint”, and exemplifies: “he who left traces because he wanted to delete them, did not want to say or do anything through the traces he left. He irreparably decomposed order” (p. 64). Since trace is therefore unlike any other sign for Lévinas, its significance does not reside in *making it appear* or even in *dissimulating itself*; it does not belong to phenomenology, but to that which interrupts it. And if there is a sign in the trace, this does not only lead to the immediate past but to a past that is more distant than the entire past and future, “to the past of the Other where eternity is outlined – the absolute past that gathers all times (Lévinas, 1993, p. 66).

Such a Levinasian outlook allows us *to face the images* of others, of *someone* who looks at us as a trace but who also throws us beyond, a species of inescapable appeal. It is presented as a face on display, not because it binds me to what appears but because it holds me hostage to what goes beyond the perceived form. Despite wanting to see, the trace *is up to me*. When the other person in the image looks at me, I am responsible for them without having to rationally assume responsibilities for them, since we are talking here of an ethical responsibility that goes beyond what I do.

Judith Butler (2017) recalls that Lévinas, in *Autrement Qu'être*, says that suffering is the base of responsibility and that it does not exist without one being held hostage. The alterity as Another that is not “out there” but that constitutes me; yet it does not only constitute me – “it interrupts me, establishing this irruption at the heart of the ipseity that I am” (Butler, 2017, p. 66). It is also important to remember how the notion of trace is linked, in Lévinas’ thinking, to the concept of face. For him, the face is present in the refusal to become content, and therefore cannot be understood, encompassed.

The face refuses possession, my powers. In its epiphany, its expression, it is transmuted from total resistance to apprehension.... The expression that the face introduces to the world does not challenge the weakness of my powers, but the power

of my ability. The face, a thing among so many other things, traverses the form that contains it. (Lévinas, 1961/1980, p. 176)

Thus, insofar as the images are the result of processes that try to possess the other, take their expression, apprehending them (as in mugshots), on the other hand, the trace revealed in violent images, which are the products of violence, opens passages, cracks, to the ethical appeal of the face in what it says, what it expresses. Still a thing but uncapturable, the face traverses the form and transmutes otherness into the repercussion of significance, as something that resists and *speaks*. This difficult equation of the encounter with the face, whether concrete or through images, is challenged in the act of death, potential or real.

As such, Butler (2015) problematized the statute of ethics, not from the positive and commonplace manner in which the concept is understood: ethics can be associated with violence against otherness, including when an image or other word can generate a framework given a priori from a self that names and delimits others. As Butler (2017) questions: “would I be inclined to kill the Other if I did not already have a relationship with them? Is this Other fragile and so my desire to kill arises because of this fragility?”. And he concludes: “Or would I see my own fragility there, and be unable to bear it?” (p. 64).

The answer that Lévinas brings with the sentence “Thou shalt not kill”, expressed in the face, is positioned as an ethical commandment; it is face to face that the temptation to kill and its prohibition exist:

If the face is “accusatory”, it is in the grammatical sense: it takes me as its object, despite my will. This is the foreclosure of freedom and will through the imposition that is its “violent” operation, understood alternately as persecutory and accusatory... I am responsible for what the other did, which does not mean that I did something; it means that I suffer with what was done, and by suffering, I assume responsibility. I stop occupying my own place. (Butler, 2017, p. 66)

Thus, we reflect on how images can adhere to a fight for non-violence, i.e., an ethical battle against revenge, a form of *making* an image, of doing photography, filming the traces so that it becomes possible to meet and honor the face of the other even though it is too late for justice.

There is another fundamental concept in Lévinas’ thinking: that of *Illeité*<sup>12</sup> – the approximation of others to others, to these third parties, is capable of doing justice and interrupting the ethical violence that imprisons Bophana and the other Khmer Rouge victims and looking at the past again. As such, this essay

<sup>12</sup>The vocabulary comes from the Latin term “jil” (3<sup>rd</sup> person): Lévinas writes “Illeité” as a neologism, which designates the Other (3<sup>rd</sup> person) not as You or another alter ego, which would affirm the transcendence in immanence, but as absolutely another.



brings light to the images, the fragments of the love letters, and the faces and lives of those that the regime insisted on eliminating.

That, which in each trace of an empirical passage, in addition to the sign that it can become, retains its specific significance of the trace, is only possible because of its situation in the trace of this transcendence. This position in the trace, which we call *Illeité*, does not begin in the things, which, in themselves, do not leave a trace; they produce effects, that is, they remain in the world.... The *Illeité* of this He is not the it of the thing that is available to us.... The movement of the encounter does not add to the motionless face; it is in the face itself. The face is itself visitation and transcendence. But the face, completely open, can at the same time be in itself, because it is in the traces of *Illeité*. The *Illeité* is the origin of the otherness of being, in which the in-itself of objectivity participates, betraying it. (Lévinas, 1993, p. 67)

Indeed, in relation to this idea of Levinasian trace, *Illeité*, and ethical violence, we found equally stimulating perspectives traced by Carlo Ginzburg (2008) in his work on the (re)formulation of an *evidential paradigm*: this very old constellation of disciplines based on deciphering signs – and deeply influenced by the studies of Aby Warburg. Here, we propose a contribution from this perspective in light of the physiognomy of this Cambodian woman. Therefore, following Ginzburg, we want to insist here on the dimension of the expression of Bophana's face, that is, to try to grasp, beyond the immobile features of her mugshot, the movement of a subjectivity and, as such, place from the signs that manifest at the surface of her body and face the question of *individual identity* that expressed these signs based on traces and on indexical fragments (beyond her photograph, the story of her love letters to her husband and her arrest and subsequent murder), as well as the collective history of the entire Cambodian people who from 1975 to 1979 suffered immeasurably at the hands of Khmer Rouge and to whom the mugshot of Bophana, today, symbolizes something like a tombstone, like an inscription for the dead.

### **RITHY PANH: THE MEMORY OF THE LIVING AS A TOMBSTONE FOR THE DEAD**

In his admirable book (a work that deserves to be placed alongside the great testimonials such as those of Primo Levi, Jean Améry, or Robert Antelme, to focus only on a crucial rant about the Shoah) *The Elimination* (2013), Rithy Panh offers us some terrifying memories about his childhood during



the rule of the Khmer Rouge regime. This book – written with the help of Christophe Bataille – ought to be read and understood as a fundamental need for a historical memory and above all as crucial complementary material of the filmmaker’s cinematographic work, because without the words of this text and the images of his films, the Cambodian horror would be unspeakable, unimaginable – because how could one believe in such a crime if there was no transmission of these words, these images? Thus, in a specific passage, Panh writes: “the dead are dead and have been blotted out from the face of the Earth. *Their tombstone is us* [emphasis added]”<sup>13</sup> (Panh & Bataille, 2013, p. 135).

“Their tombstone is us”. Words that echo at the same time for both their testifying and poetic force, transforming us (us, the living) into stelae, into the traces of others who are no longer, biologically, in this world, and words that require from us, the living, a fundamental ethical demand, a demand that knows how to encompass the dimension of this suffering and that also knows how to restore the dignity of the dead. But these words show, intensely, Panh’s own work as a filmmaker, archivist, historian, teacher; he follows in the footsteps of his own father Panh Lauv<sup>14</sup>, who was an esteemed Cambodian professor and intellectual until Pol Pot’s rise to power and genocidal regime: “I continue my father’s work. To transmit. To offer knowledge. I sacrificed everything for this work, that occupies my entire life. And I do not get used to it. Not to the images, nor to the words”<sup>15</sup> (Panh & Bataille, 2013, p. 160).

And how can we see the symptoms of this in a state of transformation, the signs of destruction and of what remains of it? How then can extermination be seen in its course, which remains only in testimony, in the verbalized memories of the survivors and executioners, in the traces inscribed in archival documents, as a way to show the world the marks of the crime? How, in fact, do we become accustomed to these images, these words of an immeasurable number of mutilated bodies? Because to show the marks of the crime it is necessary to work on memory, to transmit it despite everything, especially “a memory (which) has still not been sufficiently elaborated” since “the first trial of those responsible (for the Cambodian genocide) only began in 2009 and witnesses’ speech is still under threat” (Leandro, 2016, p. 2).

When his next film, intitled *S-21 – The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine* (2003), premiered seven years after *Bophana*, Rithy Panh noted passages in their notebook that indeed effectively show his vocation as a transmitter of memory, in which he recognizes very humbly that despite everything, memory should only be taken as a reference – still fundamental but nothing more than a possibility

<sup>13</sup>In the original: “los muertos están muertos y han sido borrados de la faz de la tierra. Su estela somos nosotros”.

<sup>14</sup>Rithy Panh’s father dies of starvation since he cannot condone the crimes and humiliations to which he was submitted by the Khmer Rouge regime. As the filmmaker himself affirms in his book *The Elimination*: “my father is a compass for me: a resister in his own way” (Panh & Bataille, 2013, p. 63). In the original: “mi padre es para mí una brújula: un resistente a su manera”.

<sup>15</sup>In the original: “Prosigo el trabajo de mi padre. Transmitir. Ofrecer conocimientos. Lo he sacrificado todo por ese trabajo, que ocupa mi vida entera. Y no me acostumbro. Ni a las imágenes. Ni a las palabras”.

# A

of understanding the event, and for this it should not be raised to the level of a cult, of an absolute response to all questions since it is

the filmmaker who should find the right measurement. Memory should only be a reference. What I seek is an understanding of the nature of this crime and not the cult of memory. To conjure repetition.... The basis of my documentary work is listening. I do not fabricate events. I create situations. I try to frame the story, as humanly as possible, in the day to day: at the level of each individual...I have never contemplated a film as a response or as a demonstration. I think of it as a question<sup>16</sup>. (Panh & Bataille, 2013, pp. 67-68)

<sup>16</sup>In the original: "Es el cineasta quien debe hallar la justa medida. La memoria debe ser sólo una referencia. Lo que busco es la comprensión de la naturaleza de ese crimen y no el culto de la memoria. Para conjurar la repetición... La base de mi trabajo documental es escuchar. No fabrico los acontecimientos. Creo situaciones. Trato de encuadrar la historia, tan humanamente como sea posible, en la cotidianidad: a la altura de cada individuo... Nunca he contemplado un film como una respuesta o como una demostración. Lo concibo como un cuestionamiento".

The work of questioning is, above all, endless – as is the work of or about testimony –, meaning there are no easy or absolute answers but paradoxes, bifurcations; hence, without a doubt, the philosophical and poetic essence of Rithy's films: a philosophical essence because his images are always dialectical, complex, and often perforated by a *voice-over* which attempts to deepen and anachronize everything, and a poetic essence because his work knows exactly how "to find the right measurement", that is, it knows how to measure with the deepest delicacy the act of listening to the words of victims and also to respect the intrinsic duration of the breath from which the intonation of the testimony arises. Poetic content that never adorns the object of its construction with trivial phrases but knows how to touch the wound with the fundamental awareness of its affliction. And as Jacques Derrida (2000) writes, "all the responsibility of the testimony involves a poetic experience of language" (p. 181), a lesson which Rithy Panh apparently knew how to carefully extract.

Panh's films may be understood as gestures where the humiliated films others who are humiliated, or where the humiliated films those responsible for this humiliation (an enemy or an executioner, for example). And always with the "exposure of the filmed face of humanity" (Leandro, 2016, p. 10) because, as Jean-Louis Comolli (1995, p. 55) says in *Mon Ennemi Préféré*, "cinema can only respond to war through a critique of war. The only thing left to cinema is to give a human face to the enemy"<sup>17</sup>, despite everything. Because Panh's *méthode* resides in, in front of the perpetrators and their survivors, "filming their silence, their faces, their gestures: this is my method. I do not fabricate events, rather I create situations so that the old Khmer Rouges think about their acts. And so that the survivors can tell what they suffered"<sup>18</sup> (Panh & Bataille, 2013, p. 16). Therefore, his method is his mark, his inscription (his tombstone), but also his wound, the damage inflicted upon him, fossilized.

Concomitant with the reconstruction of the horror from the archives and testimonies, there is also the reconstruction of Rithy Panh himself over the ruins of

<sup>17</sup>In the original: "le cinéma ne peut répondre à la guerre que par une critique de la guerre. Il ne reste plus au cinéma qu'à attribuer un visage humain à l'ennemi".

<sup>18</sup>In the original: "Filmar sus silencios, sus rostros, sus gestos: ése es mi método. No fabrico el acontecimiento, sino que creo situaciones para que los antiguos jemereros rojos piensen en sus actos. Y para que los supervivientes puedan contar lo que sufrieron".

the genocide, over its fissure-images. A reconstruction that is only possible through this indelible work of investigation, of pouring over the smallest detail of an image, of a signature, of a word from a testimony – a gesture which helps, Panh tells us, to give back humanity in the very act of learning about the history of that suffering and even of giving back a part of a life defrauded by horror, turning investigative work, just like the bodies and memories of the living, into a *tombstone for the dead*:

But there is another tombstone, the work of investigation, of understanding, of explaining, which is not a painful passion since it fights against elimination.... This work does not exhume the corpses. It does not search for the bad lands or the ashes.... This work does not provides us rest nor peace, but it gives us back our humanity, harmony and history. And sometimes, our nobility. It makes us feel alive<sup>19</sup>. (Panh & Bataille, 2013, p. 135)

Rithy Panh is a survivor and therefore he is a witness in himself, who seeks other possible testimonies to spread the memory of the event they shared. Thus, he knows that for the testimonies themselves to be configured as a method, as a *lesson*, it is necessary to persist in the investigative work with the images, with the archives of horror, because no one ever testifies to themselves but always testifies to another, since the testimony

arises from an agonizing experience, experienced several times as unspeakable of and of which the testimony, from the position it occupied (actor, victim or observer), must give faith to the eyes of others, the eyes of the whole world. So, the testimony gives shape to what it owes – in the sense of an ethical debt – as well as to what it sees. The witness gives, owes, sees and offers faith based on the experience they lived, in whatever way they are involved, towards the other. They give their voice and their look to another, hence its fundamental conflict, its instability so difficult to measure. (Lessa Filho & Vieira, 2020 p. 136)

Indeed, Rithy Panh's method is excellent at capturing the memory of the pain and trauma of genocide, and above all, his best cinematographic works are great montage exercises. As such, in *Bophana*, the Cambodian filmmaker's method is also exercised by a dialectical montage which radicalizes the present itself by transforming it into the past, that is, it strictly follows the montage teachings of some theorists and filmmakers (from Walter Benjamin to Pasolini, crossing Sergei Einstein or Godard) who approached montage as a way of *unearthing* the past, of turning it over, in other words, to decipher its historical legibility. Or as Pasolini wrote in *L'Expérience Hérétique*:

<sup>19</sup>In the original: "Pero hay otra estela, el trabajo de investigación, de comprensión, de explicación, que no es una pasión doliente puesto que lucha contra la eliminación. Por supuesto, ese trabajo no exhuma los cadáveres. No busca las malas tierras o las cenizas. Por descontado, ese trabajo no nos proporciona reposo ni nos sosiega, pero nos devuelve la humanidad, la armonía y la historia. Y a veces también la nobleza. Nos hace sentir vivos".



From the moment of montage ... the present is transformed into the past (the coordinates were obtained through different living languages): a past that, for reasons immanent to the nature of cinema itself, and not by aesthetic choice, always appears as the present (it is, therefore, a historic present).... The montage then performs on the film material ...the same operation that death performs on life<sup>20</sup>. (Pasolini, 1976, pp. 211-212)

<sup>20</sup>In the original: "À partir du moment où intervient le montage ... le présent se transforme en passé (les coordinations ayant été obtenues à travers les différents langages vivants): un passé qui, pour des raisons immanentes à la nature même du cinéma, et non par choix esthétique, apparaît toujours comme un présent (c'est donc un présent historique).... Le montage effectuée donc sur le matériau du film ... la même opération que la mort accomplit sur la vie (quello che la morte opera sulla vita)".

Panh, in his act of montage, proposed an exposition of anachronies: images of a recent past that merge, that are dialectized with the off-screen narration of a certain present to make the images become more *legible*, more comprehensible to the spectator, that is, to our own actuality. It is then that the cinematographic montage of *Bophana* is converted into a dialectic exercise of that present (1996, the year the film premiered), capable of exposing, at the same time, its past (Bophana's face, as well as other destroyed lives between 1975 and 1979) and its future (a certain knowability, for future generations, of what happened in Cambodia dominated by Khmer Rouge). But the montage method used by Panh is also investigative par excellence, because to show a genocide you must know its marks, its fragments, make them visible in some way, make them, therefore, recognizable. Because Rithy Panh knows that in order to understand the past of this horror, it is necessary to reconfigure the present through an act of dialectic, anachronistic montage, making (as so well defined by Walter Benjamin) this image of the past be understood by the present as a crucial, defining event (Benjamin, 2007). In other words, the Cambodian filmmaker makes his cinematographic montage a re-reading of the past based on each present in which he presents himself, in order to reveal, in the space of the images, the space of his history, his politics.

Finally, because this investigative method is also an aesthetic and pedagogical method (Panh says he believes more in pedagogy than justice), which believes in "working with time over time" above all, the filmmaker's method is also a dialectic gesture with images and thoughts, because his films are "decanted by knowledge: they are all based on readings, reflections and investigative work"<sup>21</sup> (Panh & Bataille, 2013, p. 199).

<sup>21</sup>In the original: "Creo en el trabajo a lo largo del tiempo, en el trabajo del tempo ... se decantan por el conocimiento: todas se basan em lecturas, reflexiones y el trabajo de investigación".

### THE TRACE OF BOPHANA'S FACE AND THE MUGSHOT AS A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PERPRETRATOR

In the mugshot that we present of Bophana, is it possible to reveal the humanity of her face, her physiognomy, without burying the affective marks and suffering from the moment this photograph was captured? With this *firāsa*

(Arabic definition for the details of a physiognomy), we will now try to get closer to the image of the young exterminated Cambodian woman with some concepts about the face, about trace, about the indicial thing that this face bears; and despite the historical and material violence that her face emanates, we also glimpse something of a clamor, of survival in spite of everything.

As already exposed in the previous pages of this article, we know that one of the most well-known concepts, exhaustively worked by Lévinas, is the face, which, since *Totality and Infinity* (1961/1980) until his final interviews, the Lithuanian philosopher proposed that we think about from its ethical aspects that constitute our own humanity and in which the other precedes me and whose alterities are impossible to escape<sup>22</sup>. For Lévinas, it is the face that leaves men naked, not as a mere nakedness empty of meaning but one that frankly and vulnerably exposes us to an ethical outcry:

The way in which the Other presents themselves, having overcome the idea of the Other in me, we call it, in fact, Face. This does not consist in appearing as a subject under my gaze, in exposing itself as a group of qualities that form an image. The face of the Other destroys at every moment and overcomes the plastic image it leaves me, the idea to my measure and to the measure of the *ideatum* – the adequate idea. It does not manifest for these qualities but rather *kath'auto*. Expresses itself. The face, against contemporary ontology, brings a notion of truth that is not the unveiling of an impersonal Neutral, but an expression. (Lévinas, 1980, pp. 37-38)

The face, for Lévinas, must be understood beyond the concrete manifestation of the human face, being able to express itself many times in a kind of evidential paradigm (Giznburg, 2008) even before the concreteness of the human face, but transpiring to the multiple forms of otherness:

Its presence consists in undressing in a way that, meanwhile, already manifested it. Its manifestation is a surplus over the inevitable paralysis of the manifestation. It is precisely this that we describe by the formula: the face speaks. The manifestation of the face is the first speech. Speaking is, above all, a way of reaching behind the appearance, behind its form, an opening in the opening. (Lévinas, 1993, p. 59)

Thus, the frontal mugshot of Bophana (Figure 1), taken a few weeks before the total annihilation of the woman's life, is a type of naked materiality, manifested, *vocalized* (“the face speaks”), and which in the face of the horror caused by perpetrators could, as an image – that is, as material of fossilized time –, cross the temporalities of its destruction and reach our visual and historical field.

<sup>22</sup>For a better understanding between the analyses of mugshots and the concept of face by Lévinas, see the article “Da lágrima à resistência: o clamor ético das vítimas e a potência política do rosto exposto como imagem” (Vieira & Lessa Filho, 2019).



The pages of Roland Barthes' *The Camera Lucida* (1997), in which he theorized about photography and, above all for us, about this evidential (or trace) paradigm existing in an image that he named as *punctum*, are well known:

This time, I am not the one collecting him ... it is him who leaves the scene, like an arrow which comes to pierce me. In Latin there is a word to designate this pain, this sting, this mark made by a sharp instrument; this word would serve me, especially in so far as it already represents that idea of punctuation and the photos of which I speak are, indeed, as if punctuated, sometimes even mottled, with these sensitive spots; these marks, these wounds are precisely points ... for *punctum* is also a sting, a small hole, a small mark, a small cut, and also a throw of the dice. The *punctum* of a photo is this chance that, in it, stings me (but also mortifies me, wounds me). (Barthes, 1997, p. 46)

These marks and wounds of an image are what impelled Barthes to a gesture of writing about photographs (many times in his book, the illustrative photo is of pain or death), because at the same time *moving and mortifying*, it is the reason why we so devotedly push ourselves toward Bophana's face, this mugshot, this photograph, so small that *breaks out* in Rithy Panh's film and that is the spearhead of the text that is constituted here.

And beyond the indeclinable *punctum* of this photograph, the face of this young woman is that which Marianne Hirsh (2012) defined as a photograph of a perpetrator. Hirsch defines the act of taking a mugshot in two moments: (1) from the *gaze*, that is, the instant in which, while operating the photographic device, the agent of violence can register his perpetuating gesture, therefore the photographic act which will officially imprison both on the film and in the prison the individual photographed; and (2) the *look*, the countershot of the perpetrator's gaze, that is, the (often) confronting look of the victim that is discovered in front of a photographic camera<sup>23</sup>. The mugshot of Bophana, who wore black clothing, with the number three hanging around her neck, shows us the objectification of her life written in a perpetrator's photograph: her absolute innocence (after all, her crime was exchanging love letters with her husband, Ly Sitha, and wanting to be with him) perverted here, transmuted into guilt, into inexistent crimes; this image of a few centimeters that offers us the conversion of this young Cambodian woman into nothing but a traitor, which she never was – because not only was she innocent (untouched by political or ideological issues) but also because betrayal does not exist when the supposedly betrayed entity is a genocidal machine.

<sup>23</sup>Vicente Sánchez-Biosca (2019) expanded Hirsch's concept of perpetrator photographs, renaming it *perpetrator images* – after all, we know very well that it was not only in photographs that the perpetrators of violence recorded victims and their crimes.

Bophana's face deeply marked Panh and it was from the very experience of this mark, this laceration, which made the filmmaker turn his lament (for Bophana's face but also for the genocide of a large part of his people) into teaching. This means that Panh knew how to make this suffering face into an act of faith in the testimony, therefore a fundamental experience of reminiscence: to make the memory of horror rise so that it can be re-written, reimagined, and even reassembled indeterminately for the murdered human beings to be remembered, named, recognized both in the present and in the future.

And the reason why this fossil of the temporality of a suffering face was able to reach us (when it should have been destroyed with Bophana's own life) is that this revealed archive refused to become ashes, the absolute reverse shot of all the material evidence. Thus, with the transmissional simplicity of his words, Rithy Panh, in one of the last paragraphs of his memoir, appears to attempt to finish the work with a fair and painful measure about the recognition of the laceration of his own, Bophana's, and his country's history – and which is still what his cinematographic work, from the first moment, also offers us – but without ever abdicating his ethical responsibility and his honorific gesture to the dead: “I explained the world from before so that its bad side does not return. So that it may be in our memories, our books, in the flesh of the survivors, on the tombstones of the missing: and so there it will *remain* [emphasis added]”<sup>24</sup> (Panh & Bataille, 2013, p. 215).

Indeed, Bophana's face is a permanence, something which survived disappearance after all; and it is not a mere chance that the area designated to guard, preserve, and transmit the audiovisual archives of Cambodia is baptized with her name<sup>25</sup>, but a gesture to preserve her history in her own country and to honor and spread her memory across the world.

## FROM FISSURE-IMAGE TO EPISTOLARY GESTURE

The singularity of the letter is also its solitude: unique, each letter is an epistolary gesture which cannot be repeated. And from the most intimate essence of its solitude – because each letter is intended for those who are not there, who cannot be there, and who may never be there again before the eyes of the one who writes it, always offering it to the Other –, Bophana's letters are on their way to aspiring a presence – that of Ly Sitha. While solitary, unique, the epistolary gesture may therefore be in the “secret of the encounter” (Celan, 1960, as cited in Derrida, 2003, p. 13). This “secret”, here invariably mortal, could never be secret, because it has always been *shared* between Bophana and her husband.

<sup>24</sup>In the original: “He explicado el mundo de antes, para que su lado malo no vuelva. Para que esté en nuestra memoria y en los libros, en la carne de los supervivientes, en las estelas de los desaparecidos: y que allí permanezca”.

<sup>25</sup>Founded in 2006, the Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center is the name of the research, conservation, and distribution center of audiovisual and cinematographic material of Cambodia. Its general director is the filmmaker Rithy Panh. The audiovisual center is an official member of the International Federation of Television Archives (FIAT) and the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAPF).

# A

## Towards the Violated Face

In a book about the work of Paul Celan, Jacques Derrida finds, in Celanian poetry, a *schibboleth*, a secret pronunciation that is always dated – because Celan always dated all his poems – and thus brings poetry closer to the letter (or in a more complex manner, understands all of Celan’s poetry as an interminable epistolary gesture) given the impossibility of both existing if not through the gesture of writing and given that the letter, both for the recipient as well as for the sender, will also be dated, inscribed in time. However, Rithy Panh, when inserting Bophana’s letters into a voice-over using archival images of workers in the rice fields during the Khmer Rouge time (Figure 2), not only aims to think of the question of (de)ciphered words but of the alliance itself that arose from those words as a sign of belonging to and the condition of return – because all letters are written to be read and to create another letter returned with an answer.

**Figure 2**

Workers in the Cambodian rice fields



Note. From *Bophana, Une Tragédie Cambodienne*, by R. Panh, 1996.

This dialectic montage which Panh creates fuses two moments of the same temporality because both Bophana’s narrated letters and the archived images used are contemporary, legacies of the same destruction. Superimposing Bophana’s words onto the archived images allows us to see a more amplified dimension of the violence occurred because a love letter was a gesture that was absolutely prohibited by the Khmer Rouge and Bophana wrote them, exposing herself both in the gravity of her heart and in risking her life, while the slave labor in the rice fields was the main motto for the people under the dictatorship of Pol Pot, who made the whole population work, inhumanely, in the countryside. These letters are a way of remaining in a world of deteriorated humanity, which is certainly the reason for the dialectic gesture by Rithy Panh when he contrasts the tenderness of Bophana’s words with the brutality of the mandatory manual labor: to look at the same time at what opens (the life that endures, resists) and what closes (the lives that collapse) during



that time, that suffering. – In other words, Panh knew how to extract the instant in which an epistolary gesture could at once be glimpsed as the inconsolable alliance of dignity and a counterpart to the violence of the forced labor.

Thus, in the documentary, in the voice of a woman, we hear words being pronounced in a voice-over which indicates to us that the narrated excerpts are from Bophana's love letters to her spouse:

To my husband who I miss so much...

How many tears will a woman have to shed the moment she is separated from her beloved husband after only spending two nights together... I lie and wait for your return. I have been waiting to hear from you... terribly... it has been eight days and I still haven't heard anything. I know and understand that you and our two families are worried because of my problems. But what can we do? It is our karma. (Panh, 2004, p. 118)

Then another voice-over, this time by a man, verbalizes Ly Sitha/Deth's response to Bophana's letter:

To my beloved wife...

I am going crazy. I am so worried about your situation that I feel tortured... As you know, you have been accused of serious crimes. On my knees, I implore that you do not give up. There are many changes in the ministry... several defeats... Angkar relieved me of some of my responsibilities, without a doubt because I am no longer seen as someone trustworthy.... I am lost; this is the only word I can use. I have no strength left.

From a man who bears this pain,

Deth. (Panh, 2004, p. 119)

The words of both are snatched away, transported, carried away – and are finally blurred by the cruelty of their murderers, which is what *physically*, definitively, ends the epistolary gesture. The letters are archives of the affection that the lovers experienced and at the same time the brutal annihilation that their lives experienced. Everything that was left to die survives this annihilation and it is for this very reason that we can read the unavoidable names and spellings of Ly Sitha/Deth and Bophana today as a kind of testimony, a tombstone for the millions of other faces and epithets exterminated by Pol Pot and his genocidal regime.

But there is, in the face of the brutality that these letters show us, this survival, this testimony of the temporality of that suffering. If we can, today, read (and hear) the letters exchanged between the lovers, it is without a doubt thanks to a legibility of history that Rithy Panh's film provides us, in the way in which



<sup>26</sup>n the original: “Exposition der Geschichte als Leidensgeschichte der Welt”.

Walter Benjamin (1985) writes in his *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* about the “exposition of history as the history of the sufferings of the world”<sup>26</sup> (p. 179). This legibility of history precisely offers us this complex process of perceiving the past that suddenly collides with our present, that is, survival (this indicial, tiny, trace thing) that is capable of brushing against our visual and historical field when we would never have imagined that this would actually occur, to then reopen, *clamorously*, the cracks in the “history of the sufferings of the world”.

### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Trace is for many a mere superficial indication, a surface fact. However, if we agree to look at its fragility, this tiny thing, it can also be a manifest and migratory trace, a cry – ethical or historical – of an image emerged from the light of our visuality that resurfaces to *reveal* the visible points of a face, of a physiognomy whose features endure as survival and testimony to the violence perpetrated on them.

Thus, looking closely at its history and trace, we can perceive Bophana’s face embedded in the flesh – in the film – of her mugshot through the writing firmly recorded on the parchment of her skin. Our gaze is still on the arrival of the Illeité that does justice; Panh’s filmic offering positions us as the others of the other, with eyes searching for traces. Our ethical gaze betrays the past, tears with the silence of the victims’ screams; we update in the (un)archived alterities one of those who looks at us in their vulnerability. If with Bophana we escape the elimination of memory, before her face we seek to offer the other time of alterity, as well as attempt to constitute an albeit cracked writing gesture capable of dignifying, beyond Bophana and from Panh’s film, the lives and faces of those who were never named in the Cambodian genocide.

And if from the trace testimonies we dialectically tension the images of the cinematographic montage, what must be celebrated and *at the same time* reunited and repeated is, *at the same time*, what remains of these lives as history and memories that face annihilation, face the transformation of these human beings into a type of nothing, into a form of ashes. At the moment when they wrote their love letters (and with the intrinsic fear and trembling of this act), Bophana and her husband awaited the ashes of elimination. And today, before these images and these words, as well as before the discovery of the archives of the Cambodian genocide, we must guard them – in Illeité, as proposed by Pang – as a tombstone, this irremovable carving that names the nameless people of history, that dignifies them despite everything, almost as if taking them, in this gesture, from the humiliated land where their bodies and skulls were decimated to then reinscribe them, carved or not, in our longest lasting memory. ■

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# Participation as an organizational commitment in public service television<sup>a</sup>

## *A participação como compromisso organizacional na TV pública*

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### ABSTRACT

The sustainability of public broadcasters remains uncertain. One of the ways in which society can act in this scenario is through mechanisms of participation at the management and editorial production levels, which helps to increase the visibility of their relevance for citizenship and the fulfilment of the right to communication and information. This article assessed, through documentary analysis, whether the concept and practice of public participation was or was not incorporated by Brazilian public broadcasters as an organizational commitment. The results show there is a lack of adherence to participation: only four out of 23 broadcasters apply it institutionally, and even then, just partially.

**Keywords:** Participation, public television, communication policies

### RESUMO

A sustentabilidade das emissoras mantidas pelo poder público permanece incerta. Uma das formas de a sociedade intervir nesse cenário advém dos mecanismos de participação nas instâncias de gestão e produção editorial, o que poderia fortalecê-las ao ampliar a visibilidade de sua relevância para a cidadania e o atendimento do direito à comunicação e à informação. Este artigo verificou, por meio de análise documental, se a participação pública como princípio e prática foi ou não incorporada por emissoras públicas brasileiras como compromisso organizacional. Os resultados indicam escassa aderência à participação: somente quatro entre 23 emissoras efetivam-na institucionalmente, e ainda apenas de maneira parcial.

**Palavras-chave:** Participação, televisão pública, políticas de comunicação

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**T**HE BRAZILIAN INSTITUTIONAL and political structure is characterized by distinctive arrangements in a number of fields, including the public broadcasting system. Article 223 of the 1988 Federal Constitution provides for greater complementarity between public, state, and commercial systems, yet public communication suffers from a lack of regulation to effectively provide this, an aspect that, as we shall see, is somewhat explored in the specialized literature.

In this scenario, TV Brasil, operated by the Brazil Communication Company (EBC), shares a space with state and municipal broadcasters, higher education institutions, and private law foundations, which includes other institutional configurations for the provision of educational broadcasting services. One of the weaknesses that they all tend to have in common is the uncertainty about their sustainability, which could be rooted in forms of public participation and social control—an aspect that has not yet been studied in literature.

This article contributes to the understanding of this context by presenting the results of our study, which, through documentary analysis, traced evidence of organizational commitment in state broadcasters and federal universities that are part of the public broadcasting system. We analyzed editorial documents and organizational guidelines of TV Brasil and the 22 state broadcasters. Our objective was to assess the possibility of increasing the current social participation formats in Brazil.

This article is divided into four sections. The first section describes relevant aspects of the development of public policies for the broadcasting sector in Brazil and the concept of participation. The second section describes the study methodology, the third presents and discusses the results and, lastly, the fourth section presents the final considerations, which summarize the contributions of this article.

## **PUBLIC POLICIES FOR BROADCASTING**

In terms of public communication, broadcasting, from a theoretical point of view, presupposes the existence of social participation in different instances of production and management, including organizational and representational levels to elaborate public policies in the sector, according to how it was conceptualized in the redemocratization that followed after 1985 (Brandão, 2012; Duarte, 2011; Lima, 2015; Matos, 2009, 2012).

First, it should be noted that social participation agencies linked to public broadcasters are common in a number of countries. Councils, for example, may be

provided for by law or regulations, which, in turn, may nominate the entities that will constitute them or allow the public to vote for their members. As a rule, these agencies monitor TV programming to make sure it adheres to broadcasting principles. At an international level, there are other forms of participation, such as public hearing and consultation, mandatory publication of reports for external monitoring, and the creation of non-governmental enforcement agencies (Jakubowicz, 1998; Peranic, 2006; Pieranti, 2018; Spassov, 2010).

During Brazil's redemocratization period, the development of a new Federal Constitution was seen by many civil society entities as an opportunity to reduce the economic concentration in radio broadcasting and reverse the primacy it held in society. The constitution called this the private broadcasting system (Bolaño, 2007; Herz, 1991; Lima, 2015). The aim was to democratize communications by evaluating the criteria for broadcasting grants, which included measures to create and maintain social participation in broadcasters.

Nevertheless, clashes in the National Congress led to a model resulting from the lack of consensus in the subcommittee responsible for the topic (Bigliuzzi, 2007). As discussed in this section, the Federal Constitution assembled important provisions to transform broadcasting, however, these same provisions had a limited effect. On one hand, the complementarity between the three broadcasting systems (public, private, and state-owned) was recognized, the existence of monopolies and oligopolies in the sector was prohibited, and a new actor—the National Congress—was included in the process of providing grants. On the other hand, the establishment of a service that made annulments difficult and the lack of regulation of these issues helped to preserve, in practice, the model of grants that existed at the time. It is a format that began in the 1930s and was consolidated in the 1960s, when objective technical requirements were established and historically allowed political discretion over new grants, including the federal executive branch, as reported in several studies that go far beyond the scope of this article (Costa & Brener, 1997; Herz, 1991; Lima, 2015; Motter, 1994).

We need to recognize that, after the New Republic and even despite the lack of institutional mechanisms, radio space was significantly expanded for new non-commercial broadcasters. One of the reasons for this came from the political discretion for grants from educational broadcasters (Motter, 1994) and recent public policies for the universalization of services, giving rise to the National Plans of Licenses (PNO) (Pieranti, 2018). In addition, new technological possibilities allowed radio to advance beyond traditional broadcasting, including the ability to broadcast audio content over the Internet (Temer et al., 2019).



## Participation as an organizational commitment in public service television

The right to communication and information, which is upheld by the Federal Constitution, helped forge the concept of a public broadcasting system that could strengthen citizenship. Preliminary drafts debated in the National Constituent Assembly presented advances, such as instituting a regulatory agency and including mechanisms to protect citizens. However, most of the literature considers that these advances ended up privileging “personal interests involved in issues that should be addressed ... from the perspective of collective interest” (Lima, 2015, p. 140).

The National Constituent Assembly represented a moment when “the emergence of civil society as a space for the struggle for public communication policies occurs ... in a more systematic way” (Kerbaux & Demarchi, 2017, p. 69). The performance of the National Front for Democratic Communication Policies (FNPDC) stands out in this process. Murilo César Ramos stated in an interview (Pieranti, 2019b) that the FNPDC, founded in 1984, was the result of actions and the convergence of universities, unions, intellectuals, congressmen from the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB), the National Federation of Journalists (FENAJ), the Association for the Promotion of Culture (APC), and the Brazilian Association of Educational and Cultural Public Broadcasters (ABEPEC).

Article 5 of the Constitution (referring to social communication) presents mechanisms that have the potential to democratize the sector, such as the aforementioned concept of three broadcasting systems—public, state, and private—which should adhere to the principle of complementarity. The characterization of each of these systems should have been ensured by the grant control, but its effectiveness was compromised by the absence of infra-constitutional regulation (Carvalho, 2009; Leal Filho, 2016).

“The effectiveness of the constitution depends much more on facts external to the text than any constituent assembly will ever admit” (Bigliuzzi, 2007, p. 60). Most advances proposed for communication policies in the 1988 Federal Constitution were not subject to subsequent regulation, in other words, this act took a long time and was weakened in practice. The Social Communication Council is representative of this.

This council is mentioned in Article 224 of the Constitution, and operates as an auxiliary body to the National Congress. Its composition, function, and implementation were established under Law No. 8,389 of December 30, 1991. There have been periods, however, where it was disabled and its composition does not reflect what was put forward in the preliminary draft (Lima, 2015).



A specific definition for the public broadcasting system was partially released 20 years later, under Law No. 11.652 of April 7, 2008. This law created the EBC, a process that involved debates with society and representatives from broadcasters and non-commercial pay-TV channels. The 1<sup>st</sup> National Forum for Public Television, organized by the Brazilian Ministry of Culture in 2016, created principles for building the public broadcasting system, which required broadcasting management and programming to be open to social participation (Buriti & Carvalho, 2012). These principles must “be understood within the scope of the achievement of social rights, resulting from the mobilization of civil society in the periods of redemocratization and post-redemocratization” (Paulino et al., 2016, p. 59). Law No. 11,652 sought to establish a forum for participation independent of government, with members of civil society as the majority, using the EBC Board of Trustees as a path to social participation and editorial autonomy.

Another relevant moment in the democratization of decisions on the sector policies established by the government was the 1<sup>st</sup> National Communication Conference (CONFECOM) in 2009, which approved more than 600 resolutions. The CONFECOM provided “public participation from a wide range of actors, including civil society, to create, implement, and monitor policies” (Kerbaux & Demarchi, 2017, p. 60).

However, hundreds of resolutions issued by the CONFECOM are still awaiting developments that depend on formal political institutions. Pieranti (2019a) showed that 163 resolutions were considered too generic to be objectively implemented. Out of the remaining 470 proposals, 65.74% were not implemented, 25.74% were partially implemented, and 8.52% were fully implemented.

The proposal to expand social participation in the EBC management and other public broadcasting stations (which is of particular interest in the context of this article) was not only abandoned, but also encountered some setbacks: “not only has the board model not been expanded ... the EBC Board of Trustees was extinguished by a provisional measure that was converted into Law No. 13,417 of March 1, 2017” (Pieranti, 2019a, p. 281).

Law No. 13,417 of March 1, 2017 extinguished the EBC Board of Trustees and some of its responsibilities while assigned other responsibilities to the board of directors and executive board. This shift was also accompanied by changes in the budget, which became insufficient for producing content that could meet the demands of citizenship: there was “a consistent picture of financial asphyxia with no public and stable plan to reverse it” (Pieranti, 2020, p. 15).



The fragile legal structure used to create the EBC has been addressed in the specialized literature. Murilo César Ramos considers that, in the beginning, the EBC was seen as a breakthrough, but also as a late and circumstantial response to the movements for democratizing communication (Lopes, 2013). The EBC did not change the historical aspect of the public television system in Brazil; it was not created to compete for advertising and public funds with commercial radio broadcasters (Bolaño & Brittos, 2016). Even if the EBC sectors wished to dispute resources from commercial retail advertising, they are unable to, as the very law that created the company prevents them from doing so.

Nevertheless, this legislation was a step forward for the Brazilian standard with regard to establishing a pool of financial resources. On an international level, this diversity is usually part of the survival model for public broadcasting, as it helps public broadcasters to avoid overdependence on an only source, which is always susceptible, in theory, to contingencies and the political climate. In European countries, for example, there is no legal uniformity, but it is common for public broadcasters to have resources for which public readers or listeners, the government budget, and commercial advertising pay the fees. In Brazil, the EBC counts on resources such as a direct budget from the federal government, the Contribution for the Promotion of Public Broadcasting (CFRP), funded by telecommunications service providers and broadcasting stations, and the possibility of broadcasting institutional advertising. Other state and municipal broadcasters, however, do not receive a specific contribution and their sustainability is constantly questioned (Holtz-Bacha, 2003; Mungiu-Pippidi, 2003; Open Society Institute, 2005; Pieranti, 2018; Wimmer, 2014; Woldt, 2010).

This scenario presents challenges to the existence of public broadcasters in Brazil, and having civil society monitoring their performance through appropriate participatory measures could theoretically increase the visibility of their contribution and strengthen the right to communication and information. This requires organizations to be committed to uphold the principle and practice of public participation.

For most public organizations, including companies that run broadcasting stations, the decentralization of the decision-making process can occur by open participatory processes, which facilitate the participation of other actors who are not always active in the political arena, such as social movements that “broaden the scope of the political and make participation more heterogeneous and multidirectional” (Carpentier, 2012, p. 169).

Carpentier et al. (2013) state that public broadcasting companies have the potential to broaden democratic participation in an “effort to politically establish democratic control and accountability in the media” (p. 291). To do this, however, they must implement practices that go beyond receiving the public’s contribution in the name of the interests of the organizations themselves. The processes must be evenly controlled by professionals and the public (Carpentier, 2011) so that “the actors involved in decision-making processes are positioned towards each other through power relationships that are ... egalitarian” (Carpentier, 2012, p. 164). Furthermore, participation should not occur on a periodical basis, but be adopted as an organizational commitment expressed in both editorial documents and a conduct of public transparency.

In the next section, we shall describe the methodology used to identify organizational commitment in the Brazilian public broadcasting system.

## METHODOLOGY

We looked for evidence of organizational commitment to public television through a documentary analysis of sources from TV Brasil and 22 state broadcasters in operation during our data collection period (November to December 2018)<sup>1</sup>, maintained by state governments or federal universities: TV Aldeia (AC), TV Cultura do Amazonas (AM), TVE Bahia (BA), TVC (CE), TV Educativa ES (ES), TV Brasil Central (GO), TV UFMA (MA), TV Universidade (MT), TVE Cultura MS (MS), Rede Minas (MG), TV Cultura do Pará (PA), TV Miramar (PB), TV Paraná Educativa (PR), TV Pernambuco (PE), TV Antares (PI), TVU RN (RN), TVU UFRGS (RS), TV UFRR (RR), TV UFSC (SC), TV Cultura (SP), TV Aperipê (SE), and TVE Tocantins (TO).

The units of analysis consisted of editorial documents, codes of conduct, and reports from the ombudsman and management councils of these stations, all of which are available on their respective institutional web pages.

The organizational commitment to participation was identified and assessed using the following analysis criteria, according to the presence or absence of information to the following six questions: (1) *expectations*: has the public been informed about their participation and what they should expect from it?; (2) *feedback*: does the broadcaster give feedback to the public about this participation?; (3) *access*: are participation mechanisms easy to find and use?; (4) *transparency*: does the broadcaster make public opinions visible?; (5) *professionalization*: do internal documents and editorial codes favor participation?; and (6) *utilization*: does the broadcaster make use of the public’s contribution?

<sup>1</sup> Data were collected at a time when federal and state government terms were coming to an end, as a rule, by the reduction of social participation in public broadcasters, which can be exemplified, for example, by the extinction of the EBC Board of Trustees. This reduction in social participation continued in subsequent governments and thus the data we collected show an inflection in the scope of public communication in Brazil that continues today (at the time this article was approved).



Compliance or non-compliance with these requirements were used to assess public broadcasting companies' organizational commitment to public participation, both in management and editorial production.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Only four of the 22 broadcasters in our corpus had released information on forms of public participation in management and editorial production on their institutional web pages—TV Pernambuco; TV Brasil; Rede Minas; and TV Cultura (SP). TV Cultura do Amazonas did not have an institutional website at the time of our analysis. We were unable to find this kind of information on the institutional websites of the other 18 broadcasters.

We analyzed documents from the Pernambuco Communication Company (EPC), responsible for TVE Pernambuco, and found that social participation is one of this company's values and guiding principles of its organizational structure. Article 2 of its bylaws states a commitment to the "participation of civil society in controlling the application of the principles of the public broadcasting system, respecting the plurality of Brazilian society" (EPC, 2018b, p. 3). Its Business Plan 2019 and Long-Term Strategy 2018-2023 (EPC, 2018c) state that one of the company's goals is to "increase participation and social control in public communication" (p. 17).

A positive sign of commitment to participation by the EPC is visible in the way its board of directors is structured. It is composed of seven members, three of whom are "full representatives of civil society and their respective substitutes, chosen ... according to the plurality of professional experiences and representativeness of the cultural diversity of the state" (EPC, 2018b, p. 12). This company has 30 mandatory responsibilities, which include "performing its management duties of monitoring and strategic direction" (p. 16) and approving accountability reports.

The EPC Board of Directors manages *transparency* through its selection process and meeting minutes. A public notice is published for the selection process of civil society members. Each stage of this selection process, including the final result, is published on the broadcaster's institutional website. After analyzing the meeting minutes for the board of directors (available online), we observed that all members of the board have equal space for proposing agendas.

The EPC is not lacking ideals that may result in instruments or instances of participation, however, during our data collection period, we did not come across any information on applications or the development of said ideals

beyond the existence of the board of directors. The Code of Conduct and Integrity establishes the “EPC commitments in exercising corporate governance” with the goal of “creating a proactive relationship with its stakeholders, partners, and customers, in a precise, correct, transparent, and timely manner” (EPC, 2018a, p. 4). This includes the “EPC commitment to its relationship with the community” by “maintaining permanent communication channels and dialogue with the community, establishing a relationship of respect for people and local cultures”. The “EPC commitment to its relationship with society, government, state, control bodies, and regulatory agencies” involves “maintaining permanent channels of communication and dialogue with the public in a transparent, respectful, and constructive way” (p. 13).

In addition, its bylaws provide relevant mechanisms. Article 28 determines that the company must have an ombudsman to “offer communication channels with viewers and radio listeners, assuring them the right to criticize and make suggestions about the content and programming” and “send a reasonable response to viewers and radio listeners” (EPC, 2018b, p. 28). However, there is no information on the operation of the ombudsman on the EPC’s institutional website, which is in line with its character of internal instance, according to Article 28, which assigns to the ombudsman the task of “writing a weekly internal bulletin with critics of the program for the period, to be forwarded to the Executive Board”. In other words, in principle, there is an instance capable of expanding social participation in management, but in practice, it was statutorily closed.

The analysis of TV Brasil documents, managed by the EBC, showed there were two mechanisms in operation during our data collection period: the *Journalism Manual* (EBC, 2013) and the ombudsman (EBC, 2008)<sup>2</sup>.

The *Journalism Manual* prioritizes participatory journalism in its *collaborative agenda*, described as “another tool to qualify EBC’s journalism and embracing a focus on citizens. Special agendas are announced in advance so that the public can provide data and information, thus enhancing the quality of production” (EBC, 2013, p. 77).

However, this manual does not lay out the details for managing participation. Although the manual does meet the level of professionalization, there is no transparency management, such as information on expectations and access. We were unable to find any information in the reports on how public participation is achieved.

The EBC Ombudsman is a channel for public expression (<https://www.ebc.com.br/ouvidoria>). Its commitment to maintain open channels of dialogue

<sup>2</sup> As highlighted in the literature review for this article, the EBC Board of Trustees was one of the pillars of social participation in the company’s management (Pieranti, 2019a, 2020). It was extinguished by Provisional Measure no. 744 of September 1, 2016, and converted into Law no. 13,417 of March 1, 2017, which changed the EBC governance structure and was not available for data collection during the period of our study. This same law also replaced the Board of Trustees by the Editorial and Program Committee. Such committee had not yet been implemented by the time this article was completed.



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with society is listed in a number of institutional documents. Its obligations are also provided for in Article 79 of the bylaws: “the ombudsman should provide the necessary procedures for solving the problems raised and provide sufficient means for interested parties to follow up on the measures adopted” (EBC, 2018). The EBC Ombudsman inform the public about what they can expect regarding certain interactions. Its operation is detailed in a specific norm (EBC, 2008). Its regular reports (available on the website) publish feedback on how transparency is managed and how messages from the public are used. The literature on the achievements and limits of the EBC Ombudsman is growing, and Paulino and Silva (2013) and Coelho and Paulino (2020) are two specific examples.

Article 5 of the Rede Minas statute (Decree No. 47747/2019) provides a seat for “a citizen of unblemished reputation and outstanding performance in the cultural area” on its board of trustees. However, this position is appointed by the governor and tends to favor a political nomination and not necessarily one that represents society. There is also a seat for representatives of the Labor Union of Broadcasting and Television Companies from the state of Minas Gerais and higher education institutions from Minas Gerais that offer journalism courses. We did identify transparency management on part of the board by the fact that it publishes its decisions, however, the public access to the board was restricted. The board of Trustees is not directly responsible (Article 4 of the Bylaws) for public participation in management or programming.

Our analysis of the document suggests that the interaction in Rede Minas is expected to be explored within the scope of market positioning strategies. The department of the company responsible for serving the public and processing its eventual contributions is marketing and social communication management, which, according to Article 18 of the statute, provides for “the creation and maintenance of relationship channels between TV Minas and its public, as well as for analyzing and assessing satisfaction with the services offered to the public”. There is no provision that details the statutory application. The statute articles related to the journalism board (Article 20), newsroom management (Article 21), and content management (Article 22) do not mention any channels of public participation.

The TV Cultura (SP) Board of Trustees has seats for society representatives. The composition of the Board is laid out in its bylaws. There are 47 seats. The permanent members (non-elected), defined in Article 5, consist of the presidents of the National Union of Students (UNE) and the Brazilian Society

for the Progress of Science (SBPC), and the deans of state public universities, which include the Pontifical Catholic University (PUC) and the Mackenzie Presbyterian University (Father Anchieta Foundation [FPA], 2005). The 23 (elected) society representatives are “elected by absolute majority of the Board of Trustees, who must have untarnished reputations and are known for their dedication to education, culture, or other community interests” (Article 3). These representatives serve for a three-year term with partial annual renewal and re-election permitted. In addition, “only those candidates who have been nominated by at least eight elected or lifetime councilors may serve as representatives” (Article 3, Paragraph 2), which, despite of the diversity provided by the number of seats, may restrict participation.

Analyzing minute meetings allowed us to identify how suggestions made by councilors representing civil society are received. The TV Cultura Board of Trustees handles the access, transparency management, and utilization.

Editorial guidelines state that the content of TV Cultura is intended to be used as a space open for debate and mediation between different perspectives, but there are no practical strategies established to do so. According to the board of trustees’ guidelines for journalistic programming, the broadcaster “must present this diversity as a balanced, thoughtful mediator, equidistant from debaters in the civilized and democratic scope”. In this way, mediation must be “capable not only of identifying and giving space to socially relevant voices, but of ... providing information and analyzing and conducting debates in a clear and knowledgeable way” (FPA, 2017, pp. 2–3). In theory, social participation could be placed within this context, but the documents do not detail how this could be explored. Moreover, the document entitled *Fundamentals for the Elaboration of the Father Anchieta Foundation Strategic Action Plan* states that the foundation that manages TV Cultura “shares the principle of creating an informed, qualified, and participatory citizenship with democratic education and democratic press” (FPA, 2016, p. 18). This principle, however, does not appear to have any effect, at least on possible forms of social participation, as it relates to station management and programming. In short, considering the results of our analysis of four broadcasters, we identified three formats of organizational commitment to participation: society representation in management councils, ombudsmen, and principles of participatory journalism.

The TV Cultura Board of Trustees adopts a management format that meets (partially or fully) the six dimensions of participation defined in our methodology, while the EPC Board of Directors meets (partially or fully) four



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of the dimensions (Table 1). The Rede Minas Board of Trustees welcomes society participation, yet it is quite restricted, and the EBC extinguished a similar department in 2016, as previously mentioned.

**Table 1**  
*Dimensions of public participation met by public broadcasters*

	TVE Pernambuco	TV Brasil	Rede Minas	TV Cultura (SP)
<b>expectations</b>	○	○	–	○
<b>feedback</b>	–	○	–	○
<b>access</b>	●	○	○	●
<b>transparency</b>	○	○	●	●
<b>professionalization</b>	●	●	○	●
<b>utilization</b>	–	○	–	●

Note: ● Fully meets; ○ Partially meets; – Does not meet.

As its operations are visible online, the EBC Ombudsman (TV Brasil) is a positive example of transparency management, access, and source of information for expectations, in addition to taking advantage of public interaction. Its existence is necessary in order to maintain an organizational structure that establishes an institutional commitment to participation. Communication sent via the ombudsman can have an impact on other company decisions, which can be recognized given the transparency of its operating channels.

TV Cultura and Rede Minas do not have specific ombudsman functions despite maintaining a communication and service channel. The TV Cultura channel’s website defines itself as a “participation and service channel”. TVE Pernambuco has an ombudsman responsible for generating newsletters that circulate internally.

Despite meeting the dimensions of participation, TV Cultura, due to its board of trustees, and TV Brasil, through its ombudsman, are hindered by their undefined forms of participatory journalism. Both have an institutional commitment to participation in journalism—TV Cultura for its participatory citizenship and TV Brasil for its collaborative—but they do not offer practical and specific norms for their application. Rede Minas and TVE Pernambuco do not even show any commitment to participatory journalism.



One potential impact we identified is one broadcaster adopting a mechanism based on the experience of another broadcaster. This was the case of TV Brasil and Rede Minas: one of the minute meetings from the Rede Minas Board of Trustees contained a proposal to implement its own ombudsman, following the EBC model.

What stood out the most to us about TV Brasil was its weak participatory practices. Even though its guidelines recognize the importance of social participation, the company underwent two changes that compromised its institutional commitment to participation and its very existence as a public broadcaster. The first change occurred with the extinction of the board of trustees in 2016 and the second when TV Brasil merged with the government channel NBR in 2019. Both changes may have occurred as a result of a weak national public broadcasting system, which is subject to government decisions that challenge and modify previous determinations. In December 2020, the group called *Frente em Defesa da EBC e da Comunicação Pública*, formed by several civil society entities, released the EBC Citizen Ombudsman. This initiative receives, analyzes, and processes the company's performance and publishes periodic reports<sup>3</sup>. However, given the lack of relevance of public broadcasters perceived by society in general (Brandão, 2012; Duarte, 2011; Lima, 2015; Matos, 2009, 2012), these changes did not generate much stir among the public.

National and international literature suggests that social participation is fundamental in public broadcasting management (Jakubowicz, 1998; Leal Filho, 2016; Spassov, 2010). The diversity of instruments and formats of participation has grown, making interactions richer and more complex, mainly due to technology (Carpentier, 2011, 2012; Carpentier et al., 2013). Nevertheless, we discovered some limitations in Brazil. Participation as an organizational commitment is stated in norms in only four of the 23 public broadcasters run by federal and state governments and federal universities. Even still, we found that these four broadcasters themselves could do more to greatly improve their commitment by expanding and creating more stable instances of participatory practices.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We analyzed the organizational commitment to social participation in 23 Brazilian public television stations by analyzing editorial documents, codes of conduct, and reports on their institutional web pages. We identified

<sup>3</sup>The reports are available on the social network for the Front in Defense of the EBC and Public Communication (<https://www.facebook.com/emdefesadaEBC/>) and on a website dedicated to the memory of the extinct Board of Trustees (<https://conselhocurator.ciranda.net/>).



this commitment in only four of the 23 stations analyzed. We discovered there were three different types of commitment: ombudsmen, management councils, and principles of participatory journalism.

The development of internal management policies in public broadcasting in Brazil led to participatory experiences with meaningful proposals and results. But these were hard to achieve due to an adverse political scene. The fragility of the sector's regulation meant to meet the normative aspects of public communication would prove to be difficult.

We conclude that, in general, there is low adherence to participation as an organizational principle in public television stations. If we start from the premise that the public broadcasting system should meet the democratic demands that arise from social participation, we can consider that the system is at risk. With few and weak mechanisms of social participation, the existence of these broadcasters remains subject to the decisions of whichever government may be in power.

Even still, there are some experiences that stand out and can serve as a model for developing policies in this sector. We highlight the model of the EPC Board of Directors and the EBC Ombudsman as instances of organizational management and, to participatory journalism, the EBC and TV Cultura as instances of content production. It is worth remembering, however, that these references are restricted to a theoretical level, since the implementation of participatory journalism was not assessed in practice.

Even if they operate in an unfavorable scenario, public broadcasters occasionally provide inspiration for advancing democratic models of public communication. It is necessary that these exceptions become the rule so that a stable and democratic public system can be established. ■

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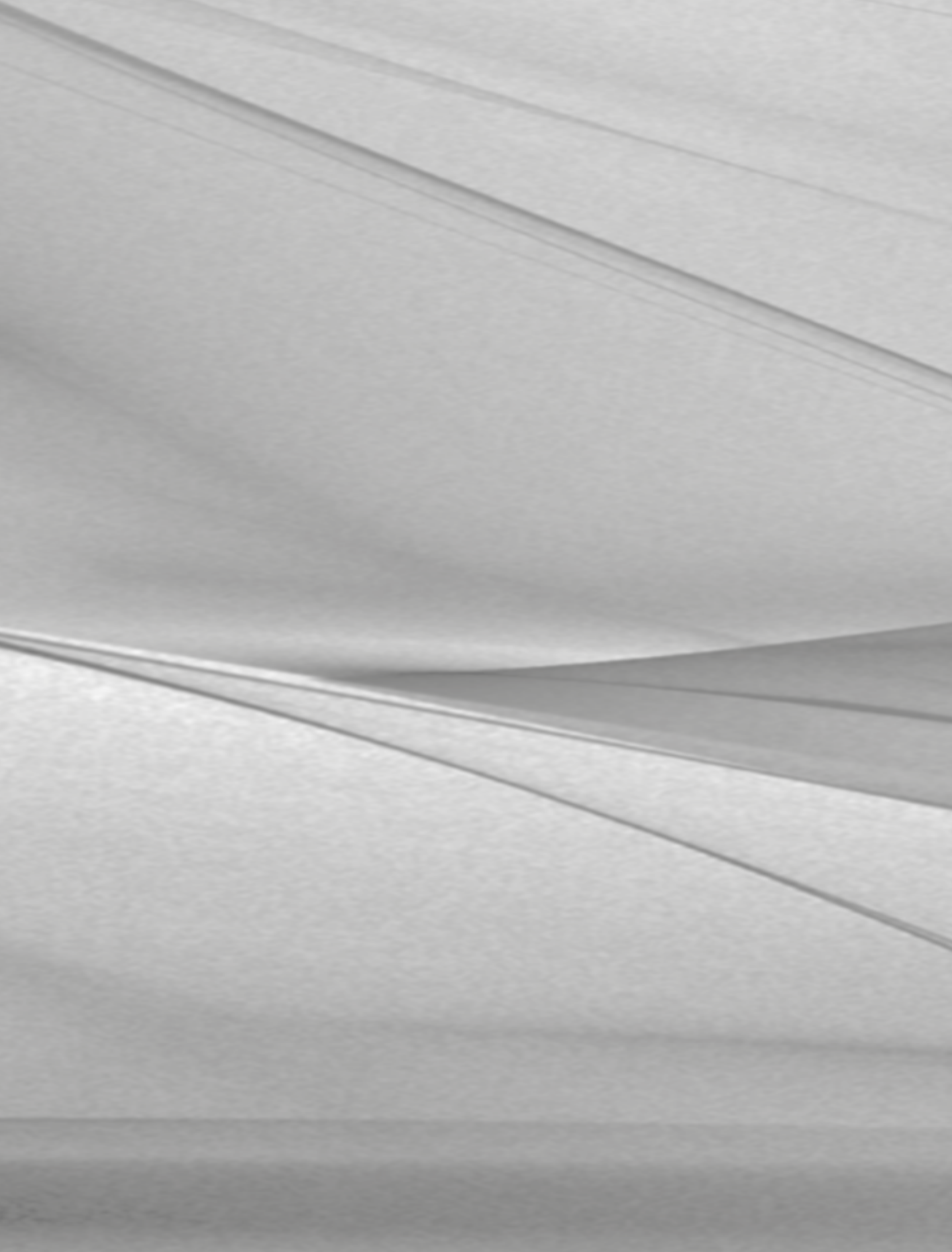
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# RESENHAS



# Praxis of Television Analysis in Four Theoretical-Methodological Axes

## *Práxis da Análise Televisiva em Quatro Eixos Teórico-Metodológicos*

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### ABSTRACT

Review of the book *Análise da Ficção Televisiva: Metodologias e Práticas* [Analysis of television fiction: methodologies and practices], organized by Simone Rocha and Rogério Ferraraz. It's the result of a fruitful dialogue among research groups from Brazilian and Chilean universities. Motivated by methodological, cultural, and contextual challenges of television fiction studies, the nine chapters propose analytical arrangements oriented on four theoretical-methodological axes: *televisuality analysis*; *interrelational analysis*; *stylistic and narrative analysis*; and *integral analysis*. It is a relevant contribution to the methodological discussion of television research, especially for those interested in analytical procedures.

**Keywords:** TV Studies, TV Fiction, methodology, television analysis

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### RESUMO

Resenha do livro *Análise da Ficção Televisiva: Metodologias e Práticas*, organizado pelos professores Simone Rocha e Rogério Ferraraz. A publicação é fruto do diálogo entre grupos de pesquisa de três universidades brasileiras e uma chilena. Motivados pelos desafios metodológicos, culturais e contextuais dos estudos da ficção televisiva, os nove capítulos do volume propõem arranjos analíticos que se orientam em torno de quatro eixos teórico-metodológicos: *análise da televisualidade*; *análise inter-relacional*; *análise estilística e narrativa*; e *análise integral*. Trata-se de relevante contribuição à discussão metodológica da pesquisa em televisão, sobretudo para interessado(a)s em procedimentos analíticos.

**Palavras-chave:** Estudos de televisão, ficção televisiva, metodologia, análise televisiva

Rocha, S. M., & Ferraraz, R. (Coords). (2019). *Análise da ficção televisiva: Metodologias e práticas*. Insular.

IN THE FIELD of television studies, the question of the method has gained relevance from the relative abandonment of excessively generalist approaches and the adoption of perspectives which are more precise and aware of the stylistic, narrative, contextual, and cultural specificities of television programs. After all, how to analyze an object as complex and plural as television? By understanding it as a *cultural form* (Williams, 2016), it is understood that, to analyze it in its right measure, considering it not only as technology, but also as sociability, language, habit, format, gender, discourse, style, interaction, reception, and consumption would be necessary. Connected with the Latin American perspectives, focused on the study of media and mediations (Martín-Barbero, 2009), *Análise da Ficção Televisiva: Metodologias e Práticas* [Analysis of Television Fiction: Methodologies and Practices], a book organized by Simone Maria Rocha and Rogério Ferraraz, is part of the methodological debate of television studies, with nine chapters dedicated to the analysis of television fiction, situating it in the conjunction of technology with context and culture.

The book is the result of dialogues initiated in 2014 between the Research Group Communication and Culture in Televisualities, linked to the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), and the Research Group Innovations and Ruptures in Brazilian Television Fiction, from the Universidade Anhembi Morumbi (UAM). From the partnership, the groups organized, in 2014 and 2015, the First and Second Intergroup Research Day, focused on the theme of *audiovisual analysis and cultural aspects in television production*. In the following years, the debate was expanded, housing the participation of other researchers in seminars. Thus, the I PesqTV – Seminar of Methodology of Analysis of Televisual Products took place in 2016, at UFMG, and had the participation of members of the Research Group Communication, Art and Media Literacy, of the Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora (UFJF). In 2018, the II PesqTV – New Potentialities and New Sensibilities of Contemporary Television was held, also at UFMG, which included researchers from the Center for Advanced Studies on Television at the Universidad de Chile (UC).

The meetings promoted since 2014 and the constant scientific exchange between researchers have provided the sharing of ideas and contributed to consolidate television studies in Latin America. Although they articulate different theories, methods, and objects, the four groups unite in the interest in developing methodologies of television analysis capable of achieving their specificities and complexities as a cultural medium and form. This is a significant effort since

television is one of the most impactful communication experiences of the 20th century, which continues to play a relevant role in Latin American culture at the beginning of the 21st century, extending its domains to the digital sphere (Jost, 2019) and following as a “culturally, political, social, economic, and aesthetically relevant” (Rocha & Ferraraz, 2019, p. 23) phenomenon. Thus, the nine chapters gathered in the volume are organized in four parts, and each explores a theoretical-methodological proposal developed within the research groups, bringing together a varied set of strategies for the analysis of television fiction.

The first part is dedicated to *televisuality analysis* and presents studies developed in the Research Group Communication and Culture in Televisualities (UFMG). In the chapter “Análise da Televisualidade e Proposições Sobre o Regime Estético Televisivo” [Analysis of Televisuality and Propositions on the Aesthetic Regime of Television], Simone Maria Rocha approaches the concept of visuality, by William Mitchell, to the analysis of the television style, by Jeremy Butler. From this conjunction, the author proposes the concept of televisuality to reflect on the visual experience provided by television in its aesthetic and political dimensions. Starting from observing the stylistic innovations in Brazilian telenovelas, the researcher questions the extent to which such innovations reformulate the aesthetic regime of television and contribute to the political functioning of the acts of seeing. In this sense, the author analyzes a sequence of the telenovela *A Força do Querer* (Kelly & Cavaco, 2017), in which the theme of transsexuality is explored, discussing the aesthetic and political mechanisms used in the scene that expresses the conflict experienced by Ivana, a character who re-identifies herself as Ivan. Thus, the study is inscribed in the perspectives of Jesús Martín-Barbero and Walter Benjamin on aesthetic experience, linking it to the social and political dimensions of sensitive experience and, thus, enriching the debate about the aesthetic regime of television. Therefore, the chapter deepens Butler’s model by investigating the aesthetic dimension (scarcely explored by the author), strengthening it as a daily life experience and understanding transsexuality by the bias of its televisuality and, therefore, its political and social visibility.

In the second chapter, “‘Eu Sou Chique, Benhê!’ – A Televisualidade da mestiçagem em Márcia, de *Chocolate com Pimenta*” [‘I’m Chic, Dear!’ – The Televisuality of Miscegenation in Márcia, from *Chocolate com Pimenta*], Olivia E. A. Resende continues the analysis of televisuality by investigating the way in which the character Márcia invites the public to experience what *being a caipira* is like. The researcher goes from the studies of visualities, Mitchell, and televisualities, of Rocha, to access the cultural matrices of the urban and rural that are revealed in the regimes of seeing and showing triggered by the

character of *Chocolate com Pimenta* (Augusto, 2003-2004). For this, it uses the concept of *picture*, proposed by Mitchell, articulating it to the stylistic analysis formulated by Butler to understand how sensitive experiences about the urban and rural views are shared. This analytical path leads the author to conclude that the character Márcia creates a *metaimage* of identities in constitutively miscegenated societies (Martín-Barbero, 2009), such as Latin America. Thus, the *rurbanity* of the character reveals contradictions that involve the web of hybrid cultures (García Canclini, 2015), demonstrating how Brazilian television can express, with its televisuality, the complexity of cultural experiences.

Closing the segment dedicated to the analysis of televisuality, Marcos Vinicius Meigre e Silva signs the third chapter, “Imagens que Perturbam, Imagens que Confundem: Fissuras na Representação Visual da Mediunidade em Telenovelas” [Images That Disturb, Images That Confuse: Cracks in the Visual Representation of Mediumship in Telenovelas], in which he discusses stylistic and cultural processes in spiritualism telenovelas by Rede Globo. With a corpus consisting of three telenovelas – *A Viagem* (Granato, 1994); *Alma Gêmea* (Augusto, 2005-2006); and *Além do Tempo* (Kelly, 2015-2016) – the author seeks to understand the stylistic aspects of the televisual representation of mediumship and how such aspects could reveal sociocultural transformations about spirituality. By selecting narrative events linked to the mediunic manifestation, the researcher examines its stylistic resources and notices a certain development of spiritualist visuality in the Brazilian telenovela. Thus, using Mitchell’s *pictures* he observes a first movement marked by didacticism, necessary for unveiling the spiritualist theme, passing through an obscure representation of spirituality and, finally, reaching a more naturalistic approach to a theme that is now treated more openly in the sociocultural plane. Thus, the study reaffirms the scientific merits of the alliance between visual and stylistic studies for enriching televisual analysis.

In the second part of the book, we enter the field of *interrelational analysis* developed by the Research Group Communication, Art and Media Literacy (UFJF). The group has been dedicated to studying the relations between production and consumption of media content in the culture of convergence, seeking to understand the extent to which this interaction stimulates the so-called media literacy. From this scope, Gabriela Borges and Daiana Sigiliano (2019a) present two studies focused on interrelational analysis involving *twittertainment*, *social TV*, quality in television, and media literacy. In the fourth chapter, “A Ficção Seriada Brasileira no Século XXI: Inter-Relações entre a Qualidade e a Literacia Midiática” [Brazilian Serial Fiction in the 21st Century: Inter-Relations between Quality and Media Literacy], the researchers go back to the debate on the issue of quality in television and propose updating it by studying television fiction in

the environment of media convergence. Based on this review, they list quality indicators that guide the analyses by a semiotic approach that relates aspects of the expression and content plan. Thus, the study underscores the audacious analysis of fifty works (miniseries, episodic series, and series with transmedia action) produced from 2000 to 2016 by open and by subscription Brazilian channels, identifying indicators such as intertextuality, scarcity of flashy arrows, narrative special effects, storytelling resources and transmedia literacy. With interrelational analysis, the study aims to achieve “an understanding of the role of the public, and therefore of their media literacy, in the interaction with the work” (p. 117). Thus, the chapter presents an important contribution by bringing renewed discussions on the issue of quality in television in the context of the culture of convergence, relating it to the studies of media literacy.

In “Literacia Midiática e os Fãs de Telenovela: Uma Análise do *Twittertainment* na *Social TV* Brasileira” [Media Literacy and Telenovela Fans: An Analysis of *Twittertainment* in Brazilian *Social TV*], fifth chapter of the volume, Borges and Sigiliano (2019b) continue the discussions, this time highlighting the practices of *twittertainment* in *social TV* in Brazilian telenovelas. Starting from the studies of media literacy, the article considers interrelational analysis as “the dialogue between production and engagement processes” to “reflect on the contents produced by interagent viewers in *twittertainment*” (p. 121). The term is understood by the authors as a critical and creative appropriation of media content by fans by using Twitter, articulating the concept to media and transmedia literacy. Thus, Borges and Sigiliano analyze characteristics of two practices derived from *twittertainment*: *twitter literacy* and *remix literacy*. Such practices materialize the interaction of viewers with the fictional universe of telenovelas, standing out as fruitful objects for research situated at the intersection of media literacy with television studies in the context of convergence.

The third part of the book comprises two chapters focused on *stylistic* and *narrative analysis*. Fruits of investigations developed in the Research Group Innovations and Ruptures in Brazilian Television Fiction (UAM), the studies analyze formal and narrative aspects in television dramaturgy. From this scope, the group members adopt different theoretical-methodological perspectives united, however, by the objective of identifying the presence or not of transformations in television fiction. Thus, in the sixth chapter, “O Retorno a um Mundo Estranho e Maravilhoso: *Twin Peaks: The Return* e o Inquietante Freudiano” [The Return to a Strange and Wonderful World: *Twin Peaks: The Return* and the Freudian Unsettling], Rogério Ferraraz and Maria Ignês Charlemagne sat on the celebrated series *Twin Peaks* (Frost & Lynch, 1990-1991; Frost et al., 2017), which, in the 1990s, broke away from stylistic and narrative standards

and introduced on open TV the unusual mixture of soap opera with the strange universe of David Lynch. Thus, the Freudian concept of *unsettling* is mobilized, and based on it the authors seek to understand the return of *Twin Peaks*, in 2017, twenty-five years after the end of the second season. Thus, the study compared these two moments of the series, seeking to identify the presence or not of recurrences of what they call Lynchian style.

Already in “Narrativa e Estilo na Ficção Televisiva Brasileira Infantojuvenil: Poéticas da Migração na Telenovela *As Aventuras de Poliana* (SBT)” [Narrative and Style in Brazilian Children’s Television Fiction: Poetics of Migration in the Telenovela *As Aventuras de Poliana* (SBT)], the seventh chapter of the volume, the researcher João Paulo Hergesel (2019) focuses the telenovela for children and teenagers, according to him, a television product scarcely adopted by Brazilian open television, but which has relevance and significant audience in SBT. Thus, the researcher analyzes the narrative and style of *As Aventuras de Poliana* (Boury, 2018-2020), highlighting scenes that address the reports of the co-protagonist João about the adventures of his migratory journey from the *sertão* of Ceará to the capital of São Paulo. To perform the analysis, Hergesel used the telepoetics proposed by Jeremy Butler, articulated to the audiovisual composition studies of David Bordwell and the linguistic strategies defined by Charles Bally. When investigating thematic, narrative, and stylistic elements of the selected scenes, the author classifies the telenovela as a *puerile dramedy* with poetic nuances of great “communicative power that goes beyond the conventional, even in the case of a mostly stereotypical sequence” (p. 199). Thus, the chapter, by highlighting the children’s telenovela, contributes to investigate this segment scarcely visited by open TV and television studies.

Finally, two chapters make up the fourth part of the book, dedicated to *integral analysis*, a methodology adopted by researchers from the Center for Advanced Studies on Television (UC). Integral analysis consists in investigating the relations established between the production, the text, the reception, and the context of a television work. Thus, in the eighth chapter, “El Estudio de las Historias de la Ficción Televisiva Chilena: Aproximación Metodológica para un Análisis Integral” [The study of Chilean television fiction stories: methodological approach for full analysis], Javier Mateos-Pérez and Gloria Ochoa Sotomayor undertake the analysis of three Chilean series: *Los 80* (Gesswein & Pereira, 2008-2014), *Los Archivos del Cardenal* (Gandara et al., 2011-2014) and *El Reemplazante* (Goldschmied & González, 2012-2014). They are works that address, through fiction, the last fifty years of the country – from the military civil dictatorship established in 1973 to the present day. In addition, they are series positively evaluated by critics, industry, and the public, reaching large



audiences and, therefore, considered important in constituting the Chilean collective imaginary. With an integral approach, the study examines the socio-political, economic, and television contexts that allowed the series to be made. Then, their audiovisual and narrative proposals are analyzed. Finally, we investigate the reception of these works, especially by the youth audience, since it is a generation that has not experienced the facts related to the Chilean dictatorship represented in the fictions. Thus, such programs are understood as phenomena resulting from the conjunction of contexts, content, narrative, and audiovisual materiality and meanings of reception. The main findings of the research point to the relevant role of television in the growing memorialistic movement that has gained force in Chile, especially regarding to historical events scarcely studied in formal education. Also, as results, the study presents pertinent methodological reflections, such as the need to create a method capable of addressing television series in a complete way, as a massive audiovisual product, as well as its nature and television specificity.

Following the theme of historical memories in television fiction, Lorena Antezana Barrios presents the ninth chapter, “Docudramas Televisivos como Vehículos de Memorias Generacionales” [Television Docudramas as Vehicles of Generational Memories]. In this study, the author adopts the integral method to understand how television docudramas that address the period of the Chilean military civil dictatorship are interpreted by different generations of viewers. Thus, Barrios highlights the series *Ecos del Desierto* (Zúñiga & García, 2013) and *No* (Larraín, 2014), characterizing them as docudramas – since they are inspired by events and the lives of real characters – and questions which aspects of these works act in constructing collective memories of different generations. The study then investigates the production, content, and audiences of these television fictions. Based on information collected in interviews and focus groups, the author concludes that the generation that experienced the coup d’état grants a documentary value to the series, seeking to validate memories and relate representation to events sometimes experienced by them. The second generation, composed of viewers who grew up during the dictatorship, establish a more affective relationship, attributing melodramatic and situational value to the works. Finally, the third generation, which had no experience during the dictatorship period, attributes a historical and emotional value to the series, creating an emotional link and establishing critical balances of historical and political events. The relevance of these last two chapters is emphasized in reflecting on television fiction in memorialistic processes that place past and present in relation.

After examining the nine chapters briefly presented in this review, in conclusion, we recognize the contribution of the book by presenting more precise

methodologies that enable consistent results to reach the capacity of television to dialogue with the culture and society in which it is inserted. *Análise da Ficção Televisiva: Metodologias e Práticas* [Analysis of Television Fiction: Methodologies and Practices] presents to the reader a well-founded set of methodological strategies aimed at analyzing television, especially television fiction, adding to other no less important works, such as *Análise do Programa Televisivo* [Analysis of the Television Program] (2018), by Arlindo Machado and Marta Lucía Vélez. Proposing four methodological perspectives of relevance for contemporary television studies, the volume offers an overview of possible analytical paths of television fiction, however, without the intention of exhausting or ending the issue of the method in the television study. Despite not being its objective, when presenting different processes of analysis, the book provides a reflection on the plurality of possible approaches, demonstrating the power not only of theoretical-methodological proposals, but also of their alignments to the questions posed to this notably complex object that is the television. ■

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