



READING IMAGES: A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

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Synopsis: The present work is the transposition of the methodology used by the author in her PhD thesis, where analyzes media images of actresses /Brazilian celebrities printed in Portuguese generalists magazines, for images published in fashion magazines. The purpose of her research is to contribute to more effective reading media representations, where fashion magazines are inserted, developing, like that, a mechanism for the interpretation of one kind of imagery universe. Thus, the author seeks to consolidate a set of media decoding images. Fashion magazines are inserted into the media universe, in the same way as the generalists' magazines. Fashion magazines are opinion formers, announce fashion trends, thoughts, behaviors, products, services and, mostly, lifestyles. The generalists' magazine, in some way, also does it. Therefore, a developed methodology for reading media images, that establishes four analysis categories, supported by the theory of PANOFKY, pre-iconographic, iconographic and iconological, may well, be applied to reading fashion images with small modifications. This work aims to demonstrate the development of the methodology used in this thesis by the author and the possibility of this methodology be applied to the images reading in fashion magazines.

Keywords: *Methodology, printed media, images reading.*

1. One concept

Generalists magazines and fashion magazines can be considered a graphic product of mass media, It have a fairly significant range and eventually become an important means trendsetter, after all, cultural industry is considered one of the behavioral and ideological foundations of society. Like this, the magazines are able to provide us with ample material for study.

"While interpreting systems, a social representation rules our relationship with the others and guides our behavior. The representations are still involved in such varied processes as diffusion and knowledge assimilation, the construction of personal and social identities, intra and intergroup behaviour and the actions of resistance and social change. While cognitive phenomena, social representations are considered as the product of an activity of appropriation of external reality, and, simultaneously, as a process of psychological and social development of reality." (Cabecinhas, 2009)

"One aspect that characterizes research on social representations it's the fact it does not privileges any particular method of research. It is a tradition of very heterogeneous research and not prescriptive in terms of methodology." (Ibid., p.13)

We must take into consideration that print media, television, cinema, among other media, are part of the same system and each media has its role in the construction of contents. The printed image has never been present in the everyday life of a "intensively visual society". José de Souza Martins, studying photography and everyday life, states that " the sociological reflection about photography can contribute to unravel aspects of social imagination and mediations in social relations ". "(...) In this sense, the photography is one

of component of this intensely visual functioning society and intensely dependent of image ". (Martins, 2008)

The only way to make the photograph as one mirror is go through the mirror, as in fiction of Lewis Carroll, who was also a mathematician and photographer not only in his fiction the inspiration of the negative proposes the visualizing from reverse. Also in the positive mirrored, achieved by the culture of photographic reversal, Carroll explores the fictional character of photography, opposing contrasts and opposites. the same photographic scenario can contain messages opposing, depending on the other components of photography. (...)

Go through the mirror is seek in the reverse and in the absurdity of the logic of the opposite, the sense of what is meaningless, riddle of possible questions of the revelations of the negative. It is get the details and distant fragments of the punctum of photography, the secondary elements and to unforeseen in the composition of the image, deconstruct that allow opposit it to understand it and understand it to understand society, that through which it proposes and imagines. If there is a punctum in photography that attracts the eye and contains the unspeakable, as noted Etienne Samain (apud Samain, 1998, PP. 130-131), there is also the secondary, the irrelevant, the purely indexical, the occasional, the imperceptible to the naked eye, this is, the concealment that is in all photographic composition. (Ibid.)

We can then say, that interpret images trying to identify "secondary elements and even unforeseen in the composition of the image " and symbolic contents subject to state the existence of one classification or categorization of identity elements is one way to perform a reading of a speech grounded in the visuality.

Interpret the aesthetic representations of identities and symbolic content contained in images is a way to classify and sociologically categorize the identity elements, respecting its social meaning and cultural context. This is a way to use the images as a model of speech, a visual narrative whereby aesthetic values and documental are represented and open to interpretation, in other words, susceptible of a visual hermeneutics. (SILVA; 2007)

Silva, citing Barthes, states that " the relationship between symbolic image and literal image and the connotation process and the denotation in the interpretation of images must respect the content of meanings that accompany aesthetically what is seen. (also) In that case the "contents of meanings" are, also, other elements contained on the pages in which images are inserted, because configure as highlighted or not highlighted, greater or lesser importance of the imagistic texts and verbal, relationship between verbal imagery and text, graphic elements, typography, placement on page, among others.

Silva, still citing Barthes, speaks of the interpretation process where the "symbolic messages and literals present in the composition of an image must overlap each other, for it possible to develop the universe of aesthetic significance which is present in the image content ". (also) Adds the thought Bittencourt to assert that " that overlay process composes a basis for interpreting the reading of images because it is from this it becomes possible the identifying the content of signification of the same and, with that, the visual pronouncement that the images compose. "according to him, is with understanding between the image produced and the interpretation of the same that gives "such visual pronouncement ". (Ibid; 2007) " the reconstruct the symbolic message represented in image, the viewer treats the image as a visual pronouncement and indicates, thus, the other dimensions of meaning that can be attributed to image ". (SILVA, apud Bittencourt; 2001)

This gives to the picture one character of double-hand. On one hand, it expresses imagistic statements that earning analytical meanings from the worldview of the photographer in the act of documentation and record of what was seen by him; on the other hand, it is a field of reflective interpretation on the cultural representation of the records contained therein by his interpreter / analyst. (SILVA; 2007)

looking at the representations taken from magazines, whether generalists or of fashion, from this thinking, we can say that added to the worldview of the photographer "in the act of documentation and record" there are other overlapping as, for example, the makeup, the clothing, and other elements that make up the "visual" of photographed people. It is a fact, also, that the body posture should be considered as integral part of this process of signification. This entire context, generally, is built not only by the photographer, But by an entire team of professionals, makeup artist, fashion designers and fashion producers.

There is an indexical character of the scenarios, creating the image before that image exist and reveal what it is. In that case, stay clear how much of the definition of the person and of the social relations themselves, in modernity, became images dependent and in the framework in the imagined view, anyway, How much the stereotypical image is today the social life meditation. (MARTINS; 2008)

But what is image? Belting, in his entitled text **by one anthropology of image**, begins his reflection with the following question: "What, then, is an image? Or: where is the image? It is in our look or just in our memory, and to what point it is in the printed?" (BELTING, 2005)

The Question "what is an image,, Needs an anthropological approach, since an image, as we shall see, ultimately reaches an anthropological definition. the art history usually answer to other issues, cause she studies the work of art (be it a picture, sculpture or print), a tangible and historical object that allows classification, dating and exhibition. One image, on the other hand, defies such attempts of reification, even on that scale at which it usually fluctuates between physical and mental existence. It can live in a work of art, however it does not match.

The English distinction between image and picture is relevant in my case, but only in the sense that distinction allows us to sharpen the image search in the picture. On a general level, the question concerns to the image in one kind of environment, be it photography, painting or even video. But it only makes sense when it is us who make the questions, because we live in physical bodies, with which we generate our own images and, thus, we can to align them with images of the visible world. (Ibid.)

We can say that image is speech, especially when the image is inserted in a magazine and thus "linking" with publication content. The Foucault's thought speaks of the speech power that the classical thought does arise.

This is, from the language to the extent that it represent the language that appoint, that cuts, that combine, that articulates and disarticulates things, becoming visible in the transparency of words. In this sense, the language transforms the sequence of the beings in characters. where there are speech, the representations are exposed and juxtaposed; the things come together and articulates. (FOUCAULT; 1999)

Imagistic representations are considered speeches. Discourse as social practice of producing texts, being those texts of any whatsoever nature. Discourse as social construction, not individual, and can only be analyzed if we consider its historical and social context and their production conditions. Any speech reflects a certain vision of the world, necessarily, linked to its author and the society in which he lives.

Navarro, when he speak of " three central themes of Foucault's work – the knowledge, the power and the subjectivity -, studied by him in his 'three times", says that speech analysts were led to "problematize, from the 'enunciative series' cutted from a 'file', the relations between power, knowledge and the various forms of subjectivity of individuals in modern society. "

Research projects currently underway in Brazil attest to the opening of the analysis field of the discourse theory. from an initially restricted approach to political speech, the discourse analysis began to consider statements that circulate in print and television, in the religious and educational institutions, in judicial practice, among others. Anyway, are new objects and new

prospects that await interpretation and understanding of the effects of meanings that are produced by different discourse genres and by the crossing of different languages whose syncretism seems request increasingly mitigated boundaries between discourse analysis and other analytical perspectives of language. (NAVARRO; 2011)

How, then, can we analyze "printed" images in magazines, generalists or fashion, considering the statements of the authors cited here?

1. One methodology

When thinking about the methodology that we should use to perform the analysis of the corpus of research, images of actresses /Brazilian celebrities printed in Portuguese generalists magazines, **Focus** and **Sábado**, we reached the conclusion that using semiotics and speech analysis would be a good way. The analyzed images, are visual signs and it need to be regarded as such. Represent meanings of values and a product: Brazilian women. As a sign, the Brazilian women's images conveyed in Portugal are imbued with ideologies, sociocultural values and symbolic values, setting a connotative direction capable of being deconstructed and read through discourse analysis.

What is the semiotic potential of images? Can it express ideas that correspond to the verbal messages, as suggested by the proverb: " A picture is worth a thousand words ", or will the semiotic potential of an image is less than the language, to a certain extent, once a picture is necessarily vague and in principle incapable of representing any truth about the world, how want certain semioticians? If pictures can not tell the truth, should also be impossible to use them to convey a lie.

The question of truth or falsehood in the images have a semantic aspect, one syntactic and one pragmatic. From a semantic point of view, a real image must be that one who corresponds to the facts that represent. From a syntactic point of view, should be that one who represents an object and transmits a predicate on this. From a pragmatic point of view, there must be intent to deceive on the part of the pictorial message sender. (SANTAELLA e NÖTH; 2001)

From then on these assumptions, we left for the elaboration of the analysis method. The research corpus is composed of twenty-two pages of two Portuguese general magazines, **Focus**, with twelve pages and **Sábado** with ten. After the pages have been handled a lot and observed, were placed in chronological order on my bedroom wall, divided by weeks, like this, when in the same week of the publications we found images of actresses /Brazilian celebrities, one page was placed next to each other, as we can see in the following figure.

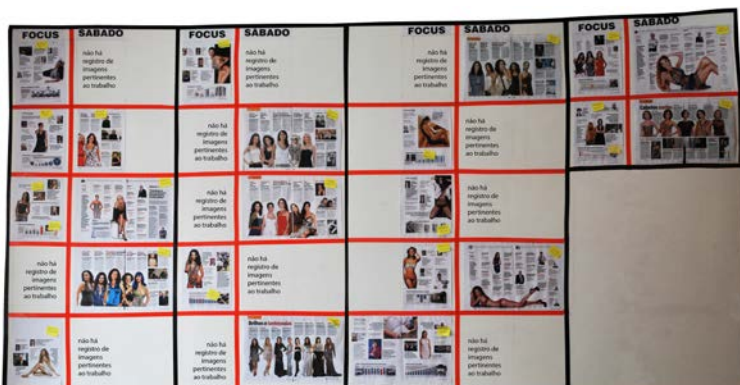


Figure 1: Wall panel containing corpus organized chronologically.

Before the panel be drawn, the quantitative data were organized in tables, in order to make easier the understanding of why the actress / celebrity was in the magazine, the relationship of her speech (verbal text) with her own image, among other information the collected data in the tables were analyzed from the thought of SANTAELLA and NÖTH, like that, considering the semiotic potential of the images and the ability possess to tell the truth or lie. If the authors state that, from a semantic point of view, an image to be true, it "must correspond to the facts that it represent", we observed that many of the images, imagistic texts, were not in sync with the verbal texts. From the observations made, in the collected data and organized on tables, we started looking at the verbal texts and imagistic, seeking elements that could confer, or not, truthfulness to the message.

About the point of view of the syntactic, that tell us that the authors, the object presented, in the case of this study, it is the Brazilian woman and we found that the predicates transmitted from the images were linked to sensuality and sexualization in most of the images belonging to the *corpus*.

And what was referring to the pragmatic point of view, in which the authors claim that "there must be an intent to deceive", we assume that the "intention to deceive" is, in most cases, this. When magazines establish a relationship between imagery text that is not in accordance with the verbal text, is clear to us that this is a way to "make some kind of illusion" to the reader and assign, to the women represented there, predicates and values that were not present in the images when these images were produced. Here is good to remember that the images used by Magazines **Focus** and **Sábado**, are images produced in Brazil and sent to Portugal.

From then, the way how the Portuguese magazines make use of these images, we realized a mechanism of redefinition of values, of predicates and, mainly, the characteristics that represent Brazilianness in Portugal. Brazil sends images, or Portugal capture these images in some way, once, mostly, there is no reference concerning the origin of the image, and the Portuguese magazines, when establish relationships between the imagery text and the verbal text in decontextualized way, eventually provides readings that do not correspond with the purpose of the images when they were made.

we realize that is required the development of analysis categories. We start by selecting the analyses method that Chandler who proposing the image observation by seven topics that Milani and Martins used in the analysis of an advert. The authors say "even presented and chained for reasons of epistemic methodology, are (topics, including my point of view) triggered in the simultaneity of a perceptive block". The method comprises seven perceptive windows that correspond, briefly, to understanding the advertising, to the identification of significant, to the observation of codes, to the observation of syntagmatic relations, to the observation of intertextual relations, to the verification of relations of meaning and, finally, to the target.

Those seven perceptual windows, organized in the order of the external image for the mental, are not static; are always in the practice of semiosis, or it be, in a process continuun (sic.) ad infinitum of construction of meaning, once it is each specific viewer-audience, situated in a time and space of their meaningful life that builds meaningful interaction. (MILANI e MARTINS; 2010)

We performed, then, an adaptation of perceptual windows that Milani and Martins they use in the analysis of an advert for us to be able to elaborate the categories of analysis to be used in the pictures pasted on the wall:

1 – The attributes of Brazilianness and their representations. Are elements such as exposure of the body, facial expression and body language, sensuality, sexualization and clothing;

2 – the relations of images of actresses / celebrities with other elements on the page. Issues such as image position on the page, highlight or no attention given to actress / celebrity, relations of image size compared to the size of the other images and the presence or not presence of graphics that make up the images;

3 – **Intertextual relations.** Respect to events, novels and other media exhibition that somehow justifies the presence of actress / celebrity in the magazine in question;

4 – **the reader and his potential to relate the content to different levels of meaning.**

Are issues relating to the possible induction of an interpretation by the reader, the elements that aim to confirm the stereotype of Brazilian women, concluding, a hypersexualized and eroticized woman.

To perform the analysis through the categories described above, we sought theoretical basis in the text of Panofsky, **Iconography and Iconology: An introduction to the study of Renaissance art.** Was necessary to perform a transposition of the author's thought, about the levels of interpretation of a work of art, for levels of interpretation of the images in the research corpus. But either way, Panofsky's theory applied to the analysis and could really contribute to the enrichment of our "reading". Then we conducted according to the theory of Panofsky, for each category of analysis three levels of interpretation, the pre-iconographic, iconographic and Iconological. The pre-iconographic is considered, according to the author, primary or natural and is embedded in the world of motives. therefore, are formal aspects of the configuration of images, lines, colors, volumes, shapes. These aspects ultimately set the images as images of women, because lines, colors, shapes and volumes are able to establish that. But not, necessarily, are able to provide elements that define the images as images of Brazilian women. For such, there is a need for more information, which leads us to the second level that tells us Panofsky, the level of iconographic interpretation.

The iconographic interpretation, considered by the author as secondary or conventional, it is that one who talk about the theme, ie, it is related with what the reader of the image has in its referential world, to his references, to his pre-knowledge, his references, like that , to what it is symbolic and finely identify the motives.

And lastly, we have the Iconological analysis because, as the author himself says, the Iconological interpretation is linked to the issue of interpreting while the iconography as regards the description, ie, two different levels.

The iconology is linked to the intrinsic meaning or content and requires more familiarity with concepts or themes. For the realization of a Iconological analysis are necessary data, facts, contexts and historical and cultural knowledge because it establishes an analogy between Panofsky's thought, in relation to works of art, and the reading we do about the images of the research corpus.

Following the same reasoning, we can transpose the categories of analysis for the reading of images belonging to the world of fashion.

2. One transposition

To begin an analysis of images belonging to a particular corpus, it is necessary to establish attributes and / or characteristics that affirm or not what we are trying to verify. In the case of the research described in this article, we sought attributes Brazilianness and their representations in printed images on the pages of generalist Portuguese magazines. However, when we think of fashion magazines without a specific focus, we face a range of possibilities, so everything will depend on the research topic in question. Just as an example, we can verify attributes of glamorization, fashionismo, exoticization, ethnicity, fast fashion, among others. For each attribute, we must establish the elements to be analyzed. For example, if the focus is the glamorization, we should probably check the body posture and facial expression of the model, if there is a model in the scene, the objects that compose the scene, or even the absence of objects, props, accessories, makeup. For each attribute that we want to check, we should establish the analysis parameters. Elements such as graphics, textures, light and shadow, typography and verbal message must also be taken into consideration.

When we treat of the relations of the images with other elements on the page, we can analyze the relations that the images, that are in the same page establish among themselves, the ranking of these images, the presence or non-presence of graphical elements and verbal texts and how these elements interact with each other, or even the lack of interaction. However, fashion magazines usually bring pages where we found only a scene, therefore, there is no relation with other elements or themes on the same page. Those cases usually are in fashion editorials, in the looks presented as trends, among other possibilities.

The popular saying "five minutes of fame" shows, in a way, the idea of the "lack of context" be the context itself. Marra, when think on the fashion photography says "sometimes it is enough the mention, or just the context, the inclusion within a code like that of a fashion magazine, to make born the desire and the dream." (MARRA; 2008) Therefore, we can consider the relations that the page where we find only a single scene sets with matter, if belong to one, or even with the rest of the magazine.

Regarding the intertextual relations, we must take into consideration the season and the weather, trends, fashion shows and basicly the magazine advertisers. We dont need to look long time to a fashion magazine to realize that most of the parts and "looks" (image) that they are showing, are products of the magazines advertisers.

According to Rocha, advertising sells "lifestyles, feelings, emotions, worldviews, human relations, classification systems, hierarchy in quantity, significantly larger than refrigerators, clothes or cigarettes. A product sells to who can buy, an advertising is distributed in indistinct way". (ROCHA; 1990)

And finally, in regards to the reader and their potential to relate the content to various levels of meaning, we must keep in mind the target audience of each publication Every magazine and every brand has an audience. However, we began to realize that most popular brands, regarded as fast fashion, for example, begin to advertise in more elitist magazines. The H&M and Mango advertise on **Vogue** along with brands like Prada, Miu Miu, Louis Vuitton, Carolina Herrera, Calvin Klein, Versace, Hugo Boss, among other renowned brands Consider issues such as these, where brands and audiences of different levels eventually they interact and create, in a way, another universe, where there is room for new relations between message and receiver, can be a very rich and interesting field of study. however, at this moment our proposal is to present a methodology for more effective reading media representations of images, where fashion magazines are inserted, thus developing a mechanism for interpreting the imagery universe applicable to other media, not only the general magazines.

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