

## *Preface*

This volume opens with an article by Kwasu David Tembo that presents a critical reading of a fictional production in comic book format, centered on a mythological figure of substantive prominence in contemporary popular culture – the vampire. However, instead of a reflection centered on the characters (predators or victims) or narrative details, the author focuses the scenario, discussing the Arctic locus as an archetypal paradise for the living dead. Vampire stories may seem entirely far-fetched from the pragmatic concerns of social scientists, particularly in a secularized world dominated by technoscience. However, with proper anchoring in critical theory, it is possible to recognize that these narratives are highly relevant in addressing human beings' fears and desires concerning death, sexuality, alterity, and society, among others. By focusing the story of a vampire massacre in an Arctic community favored by the specific conditions of polar nights, the author ends up conceiving a poignant reflection on the collapse of day/night work/rest cycles in a context of oppressive capitalist predation, exacerbated by the pandemic conditions in which we live, and sustained by the accessibility and ubiquity of technologies that constrain human beings to never completely disconnect from the productive sphere, to live in an endless working day.

Ana Maia chooses, as an object of study, the Portuguese film from 1942, *O Pátio das Cantigas*, to analyze the representations of gender and emigration, adding some reflections on the construction of territorial images, the enhancement of rurality and traditional values during the *Estado Novo*, in Portugal. Through the analysis of the images, scenarios, narrative and discourse produced by the characters in the film, the author shows how *O Pátio das Cantigas* constitutes the “cinematic archetype of the ideological propaganda of the *Estado Novo*, and refers to traditional values, stereotypical representations of gender and emigration projects, in particular to Brazil” (p. 31). The dichotomies and morality expressed by the female characters in the film, to whom Ana Maia pays particular attention in her study, serve entertainment purposes

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and as a way of educating the masses to the patriarchal values that prevailed at the time of the Estado Novo.

In the following article, Joana Martins proposes to analyze the coverage of the death anniversaries of twenty Portuguese public figures, between 1970 and 2014, in three Portuguese newspapers (Correio da Manhã, Diário de Notícias and Jornal de Notícias). The author identifies two different scenarios in editorial options that reflect different newsworthiness criteria and different framing of events. In some cases, the anniversary of death served to remember the deceased personality, as in the cases of Álvaro Cunhal, Amália Rodrigues, Joaquim Agostinho or José Afonso; in other cases, such as the tributes to Miguel Torga and José Saramago or the inauguration of Francisco Sá Carneiro airport, the commemorations were used to address present and future events. As Joana Martins concludes, “death, by itself, is not the hook of the ephemeris, as there is a current event that gains greater editorial weight and this same event is the window through which the ephemeris is constructed” (p. 64).

Fernando Jesus da Rocha and Ricardo Morais analyze how the main clubs in Portuguese football and Brazilian football mark the International Women’s Day, thus evaluating these sports organizations’ role in gender equality issues. To this end, the authors carry out a qualitative analysis of the clubs’ official publications, on the social network Facebook, on that day. The objective they propose is to understand if the communication practices of these organizations reflect a critical position in relation to female empowerment or if they are no more than a reflection of an allegedly egalitarian rhetorical discourse. The results of his study show that the clubs, despite some differences between them, seek to draw attention to the role of women, “thus giving football a role not only in the field of entertainment, but above all in social transformation” (p. 86).

The article by Jeffrey Winner and Antonia Wurn seeks to fill a gap in research on the contextual factors in adolescents’ daily lives that determine the composition of the choices made in media repertoires. In this way, their study focuses on the interaction between the composition of the media repertoire and the daily lives of adolescents, also including the management of privacy in the process of acquiring digital media as part of this repertoire. After dividing the demographic group of young people into three different stages, taking into account their complexity, the authors conclude that the marked differences that exist between the various stages, particularly in the categories of information and participation, show that the composition of the media repertoire of young people represents a recursive process. Therefore, it

is necessary to include factors of a contextual nature, such as the family environment and peer groups.

The comparative analysis between the photographic representations, in the magazine *IstoÉ*, of Brazilian president Dilma Roussef and candidate Aécio Neves is the objective of Natália Gomes' article. Through Critical Discourse Analysis and the connotation semiotic processes used by *IstoÉ* magazine, such as pose, aesthetics, photogenics, object choice and trickery, Natália Gomes draws attention to the unequal treatment that Dilma received from the Brazilian media, contributing to the construction of a negative image, in contrast to the attempt to convey a positive image by Aécio Neves. According to the author, her analysis allowed the identification of "visual stereotypes linked to female non-belonging to public spaces of power, male rationality in contrast to female hysteria, the vulnerability and loneliness of political women and Dilma's links to the witch figure" (p. 125), which explains the symbolic violence that Dilma suffered as Brazil's President.

Francisco Fontes analyzes the editorials that three Portuguese generalist media have published about COVID-19, seeking to understand how the topic is framed and perceived in public discourse. The author bases his study on the concept of framing, despite recognizing some conceptual indefiniteness. The framings constitute a "tool capable of enabling an analysis of the directors' speeches, as well as the symbolic constructions, beliefs and values they express as representatives of the opinion of their media" (p. 158). Francisco Fontes considered two distinct periods of analysis, March 2020 and January 2021, which correspond to the first and second general confinement. He concludes that the frameworks change between the two periods, moving from a positive to a negative position, which emphasizes the failures in the public and health management of the pandemic.

The volume ends with Paulo Barroso's article on the application of semiotics of religion to the understanding of the structures of meaning in religious experiences. If the semiotics of religion is the study and interpretation of signs and practices in religious experiences, then it is also a semiotics of culture, as it involves communication, meaning and symbolism. The beliefs, practices, expressions, the production of meanings and the semiosis processes that determine ways of thinking, feeling, acting and representing reality are the cultural elements that define a religion. So, concludes Paulo Barroso, the semiotics of religion is an interdisciplinary branch of the social and human sciences and a type of semiotics of culture. On the other hand, religion is a semiotic phenomenon, as it is supported by "a system and structure of signs,

representations and processes of signification and cultural construction of the world, without which there could be no religion or worldview that each form of religious life proposes” (p. 196).

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