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# LANGUAGE, TEXT, TRANSLATION

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# GLOCAL FOOD AND TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITIES: THE CASE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

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## **Abstract**

In 1958 the physiologist Ancel Keys discovered that a specific nutritional regime was associated with lower rates of coronary heart disease and mortality. This was the origin of the “Mediterranean diet”, namely a dietary pattern defined by a high intake of vegetables, fruits, bread, legumes and unsaturated fats, a moderate intake of fish, and a low intake of dairy products and meat (Keys 1980; Nestle 1995). Since Keys’ discovery, interest in the Mediterranean diet has increasingly grown, making it extend beyond the simple definition of healthy rules regulating nutrition and embrace the social and cultural implications of a specific “lifestyle” (UNESCO 2013; Moro 2014; Stano 2015a). Building on these premises, we aim to analyse the processes of “translation” (Stano 2015b) of the Mediterranean diet into different foodspheres: which changes affect the material and structural dimension of food? And what happens at the sociocultural and symbolic level? The analysis of relevant case studies will lead to general conclusions on the transition of the Mediterranean diet from a merely “scientific” to a predominantly “cultural” paradigm. Furthermore, it will help shed new light on the processes of identity-building and the ideological implications of food traditions and their transnational adaptations.

## **1. Introduction: contemporary foodscapes between globality and locality**

Whether eagerly exalted or strongly criticised, globalisation is a factual characteristic of contemporary societies, and it has increasingly affected food: as Sidney W. Mintz and Christine M. Dubois state in *The Anthropology of Food and Eating*, “not only do peoples move across the globe, so also do foods” (2002: 105). As a result, a particular taste for the exotic and the ethnic has rapidly spread within contemporary societies, making people incline to what Claude Fischler (1980; 1988) calls *neophilia* -- which drives us to adapt to environmental changes and explore a multitude of new foods and diets. On the other hand, a special praise of authenticity, typicality, and locality -- which can lead to forms of *neophobia* and even xenophobia, as Leone

(2016) argues referring to the so-called “Km 0 phenomenon” -- has also become increasingly evident in present-day foodscapes.

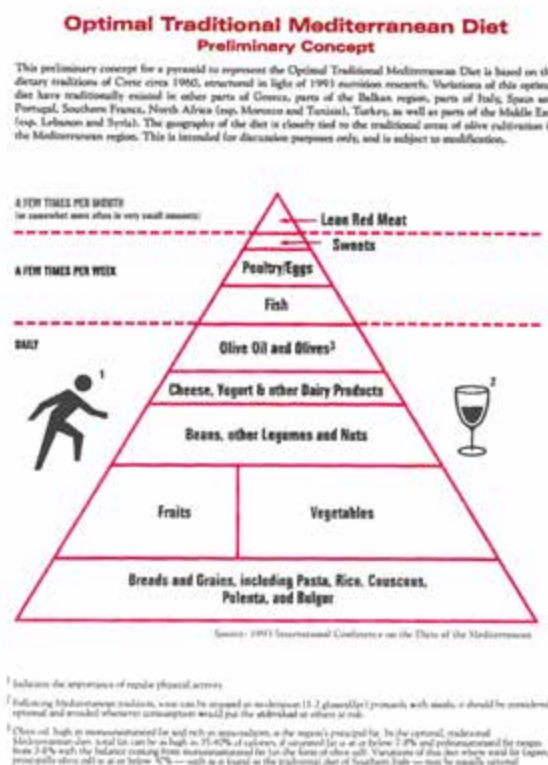
## 2. The Mediterranean diet between globality and locality

### 2.1. The discovery of the “Mediterranean way”

Within such a perspective, it is very interesting to focus on a peculiar case study: the so-called Mediterranean diet. It was 1958 when the American physiologist Ancel Keys discovered that a specific nutritional regime seemed to be associated with lower rates of coronary heart disease and mortality. This was the origin of the so-called “Mediterranean diet”, namely a dietary pattern defined by a high intake of vegetables, fruits, bread, legumes and unsaturated fats, a moderate intake of fish, and a low intake of dairy products and meat (Keys and Keys 1975; Keys 1980; Nestle 1995). The reference to the Mediterranean context therefore initially came from the place where such a diet was adopted at the time of Key’s intuition, which was also the place where its healthy foods were *naturally* and *materially* available.

### 2.2. The Mediterranean Diet Pyramid and the Inclusion in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

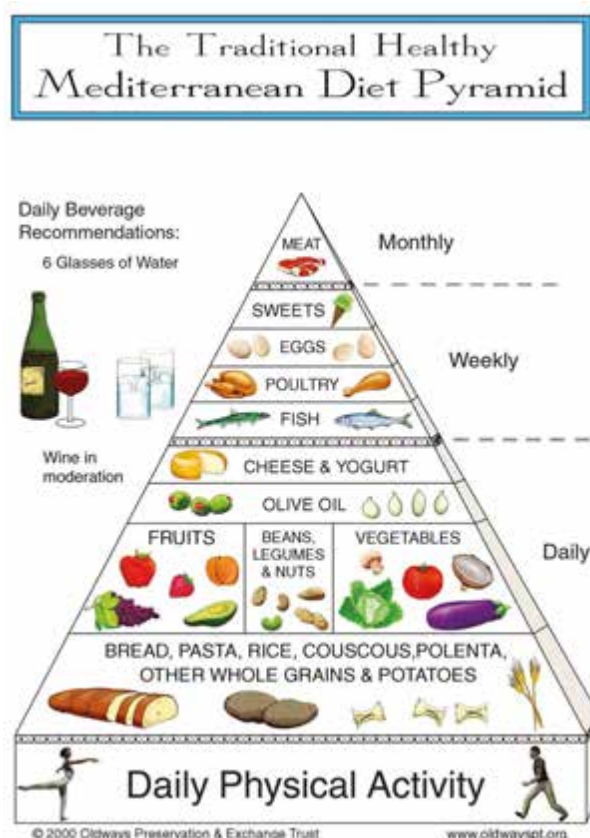
In 1993, drawing on Keys’ observations, the American NGO Oldways, the Harvard School of Public Health and the World Health Organization (WHO) developed the so-called “Mediterranean Diet Pyramid” -- that is, a model illustrating the Mediterranean diet pattern by suggesting the types and frequency of foods that should be eaten every day. Already the original model (Fig. 1), which mainly consisted of simple words, included regular physical activity within it,



**Figure 1.** The 1993 Mediterranean Diet Pyramid (© Oldways Preservation & Exchange Trust; <https://oldwayspt.org/>).



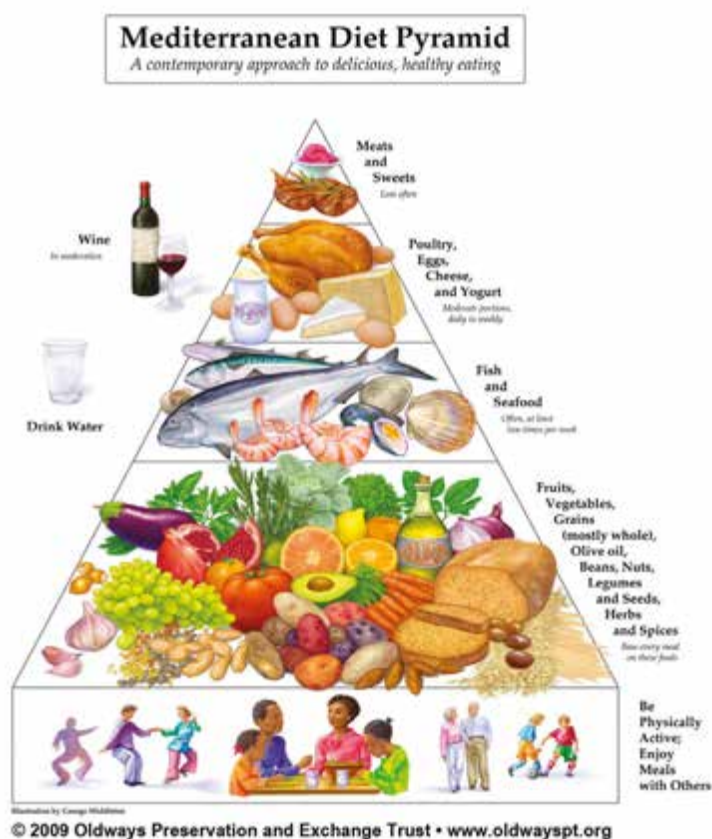
therefore recalling an ample definition of the word “diet” -- which, coming from the Greek *δίαιτα*, *diáita*, goes well beyond the simple ingestion of food and embraces a real “way of life”. Moreover, the 2000 edition (Fig. 2) gave an iconic form to the advices on physical activity and brought them inside of the pyramid, within the daily section, further increasing the need of combining exercises to food choices.



**Figure 2.** The 2000 Mediterranean Diet Pyramid (©Oldways Preservation & Exchange Trust; <https://oldwayspt.org/>).

The 2009 update (Fig. 3) then introduced other interesting novelties: herbs and spices, for instance, were added for reasons of both health and taste, as well as on a cultural base – since they were recognised “to contribute to the national identities of various Mediterranean cuisines” (Oldways n.d.: n.p.). Furthermore, together with images recalling physical activity, it introduced a reference to a new element: a family sitting at a table figuratively recalls the words on the right (“Enjoy meals with others”), highlighting the importance of *conviviality* as a key element of the Mediterranean diet.

Since Keys’ discovery, in fact, interest in the Mediterranean diet has increasingly grown, making it extend beyond the simple definition of healthy rules regulating nutrition and physical activity to embrace the social and cultural implications of a specific “lifestyle”, in which conviviality plays a crucial role. In this sense, the genealogy of the inclusion of such a diet in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity is emblematic. When the first proposal was submitted to the agency of the United Nations, in 2008, it was rejected. Among



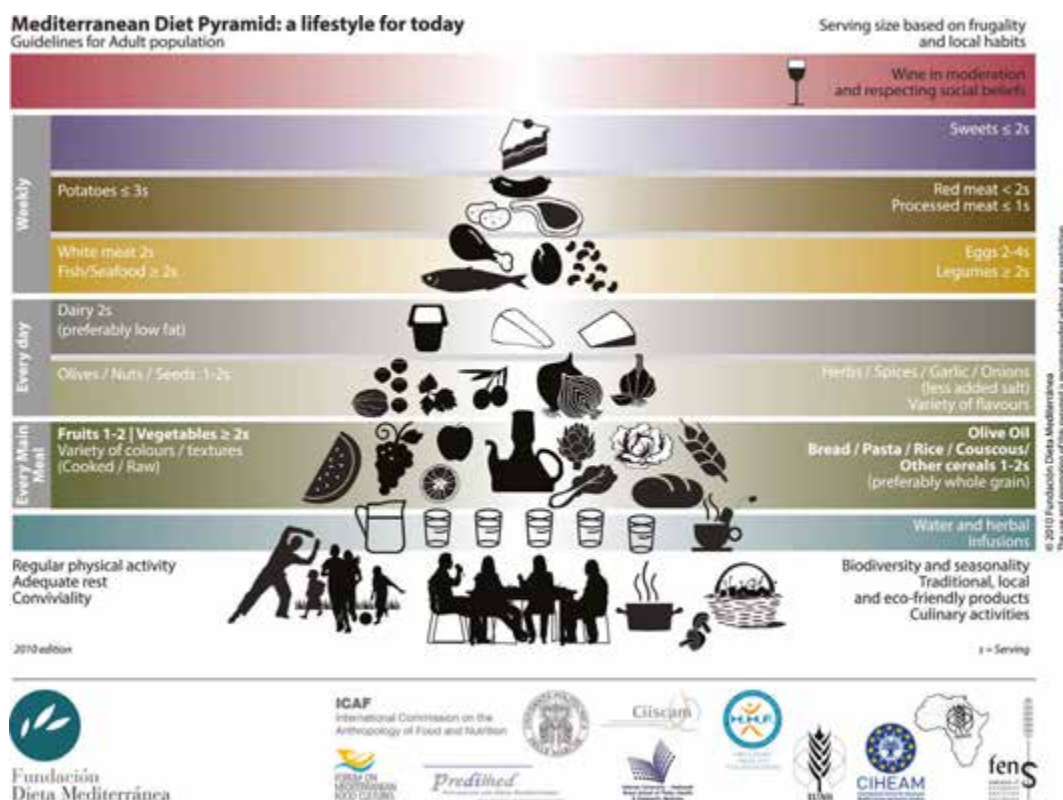
**Figure 3.** The 2009 Mediterranean Diet Pyramid (©Oldways Preservation & Exchange Trust; <https://oldwayspt.org/>).

the reasons for such a refusal, UNESCO reported that the definition of the Mediterranean diet provided in the request was limited to nutritional criteria and factors, almost disregarding anthropological and cultural aspects. This made it hardly applicable to the extensive and very varied context (i.e. Spain, Italy, Greece and Morocco) to which the application made reference.

Only in 2010, after substantial redefinition, such a problem of “translatability” found a solution, and the Mediterranean diet was included in the List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, also coming to encompass Portugal, Croatia and Cyprus in 2013. What made its acceptance and extension possible was precisely the inclusion of sociocultural elements in its definition:

The Mediterranean diet involves a set of skills, knowledge, rituals, symbols and traditions concerning crops, harvesting, fishing, animal husbandry, conservation, processing, cooking, and particularly the sharing and consumption of food. Eating together is the foundation of the cultural identity and continuity of communities throughout the Mediterranean basin. The Mediterranean diet emphasizes values of hospitality, neighbourliness, intercultural dialogue and creativity and plays a vital role in cultural spaces, festivals and celebrations, bringing together people of all ages, conditions and social classes (UNESCO 2013: n.p.).

Such a definition, which evidently recalls Tylor’s description of culture, i.e. “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (1871: 1), does not merely refer to the peculiar climate and geographical conformation and so the foods characterising the Mediterranean area, but encompasses social interactions and cultural values which are inherent to food systems. This



**Figure 4.** The 2010 Mediterranean Diet Pyramid (©Fundación Dieta Mediterránea; <https://dietamediterranea.com/nutricion-saludable-ejercicio-fisico/#pyramid>).

in turn stresses the need of emphasising such elements at the visual level, as Oldways did immediately after the initial rejection.

In addition to Oldways' models, a number of other Mediterranean diet pyramids exist. The pyramid designed by *Fundación Dieta Mediterránea* (Fig. 4) highlights another crucial element, that is, the role played by “traditional, local and organic food” in the definition of such a diet. This in turn emphasises two interesting aspects:

First of all, a sort of supposed “naturalness” thought as inherent to the Mediterranean diet; according to a well-spread contemporary trend, such a naturalness is generally conceived both as the praise of everything that opposes artificiality – as the adjective organic suggests – and as a return to an original and idyllic past, namely a “tradition” crystallised in “authentic” recipes, “typical” restaurants, etc. (Marrone 2011; Stano 2015; Sedda 2016).

Furthermore, a particular emphasis is put on locality, following another current trend in the food realm, as it was argued above.

But if, on the one hand, locality is emphasised, on the other hand, the Mediterranean diet has soon gone well beyond the borders of the Mediterranean area, becoming very popular abroad (cf. Moro 2014). What has this caused? No evident changes seem to have affected the material and structural dimension of food, since the Mediterranean diet can be mostly seen as the “non-diet” *par excellence* (Ventura Bordenca 2015): while common diets rely on regulating systems



requiring the subject to strictly follow a number of peremptory prescriptions and procedures, which are generally dictated by an external authoritative entity (cf. Grignaffini 2013; Stano 2014), the Mediterranean diet is a safe nutritional model *by definition*, which does not imply acting as an *engineer* (that is, following a system of strict regulations and prohibitions), but allows acting as a *bricoleur* (Lévi-Strauss 1962; Floch 1990), inventing new contingent solutions by reusing and readjusting the various tools (i.e. food products and practices) at one's disposal. So, if common diets involve programming and predictability, the Mediterranean way rather implies adjustments and unpredictability (cf. Landowski 2005). By contrast, more consistent changes can be noted on the sociocultural and symbolic level, as it will be described in the following sections, which will deal with two relevant case studies referred to the collective imaginary of the place where Key's intuition originated: Italy.

### 2.3. The 2013 commercial by Nicola Paparusso

In 2013 the Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies decided to celebrate the confirmation of the inclusion of the Mediterranean diet in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity with a commercial<sup>1</sup> realised by Nicola Paparusso. Since the first monochrome frames, the isotopy of rural tradition is evident: the first sequence shows a cart pulled by a horse, which brings a young woman, her husband and their son back home through a sunny street in the countryside. The next sequence introduces a strong opposition by showing a military car (modernity vs. tradition) that crosses the same environment. When meeting the young boy in a field of olive trees, the two American soldiers who are driving the car ask him in a broken Italian where they can eat macaroni and wine ("Hey boy! Come on, come on... we mangiare maccheroni ...vino, vino"). The young boy answers with the stereotyped paraverbal sign expressing his inability to understand them, therefore symbolising a substantial incompatibility between the two semiospheres that these characters represent. This is when the animated rhythm of Glenn Miller's *In the Mood*, which opened the commercial, gives the way to Dean Martin's *Mambo Italiano*, whose first verses, song by a choir, recall the acoustics typical of folk songs and explicitly refer to the Italian context through their lyrics ("A boy went back to Napoli because he missed the scenery / The native dances and the charming songs"). In the meanwhile, very short sequences show a young lady dancing with an elder woman, then a plough tilling the soil, and finally the previously introduced young couple joyfully running through a field of spikes. Then the camera moves to some fruits and vegetables on a big table, and finally it is captured by the sensual dance of another young couple, whose harmonious movements re-interpret traditional food rites (such as setting the table or pressing the grapes by feet, as it was usual in Italian rural societies) with a ludic tone. Suddenly, the American soldier reappears on the screen, moving closer to the young lady dancing on the grapes and offering her an apple (a sin fruit?). She winks at him and takes the fruit, but finally pushes him away, just a second before the arrival of another young bare-chested boy (whose outfit reveals his rural identity), who takes her off the barrel where she was pressing the grapes and continues dancing with her.

The soundtrack then slightly changes to a more recent version of the previous song, *Mambo Italiano* by Flabby Feat. Carla Boni. At the same time, polychromy invades the scene and fading figures referring to different cultural backgrounds (such as Asia, France and the United States) appear on the screen. The final sequence takes place in a restaurant, where the child appearing in the opening of the commercial brings some "maccheroni" to the American soldier, who is now wearing a different outfit. The screen then turns black to host the white mes-

<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.nicolapaparusso.it/2016/09/22/spot-dieta-mediterranea/>.

sage: “DIETA MEDITERRANEA – AMBASCIATRICE DELLA SALUTE NEL MONDO” [THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET: AMBASSADOR OF HEALTH IN THE WORLD]. Finally, the emblem of Italy and the name of the Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies appear on the screen, together with the Italian flag, thus legitimising the entire message.

“Here” and “there”, local and global, past and present, which are at first radically opposed (so as to originate incomprehension and incommunicability), find in the end their point of contact in the Mediterranean diet — which is presented not only as a set of healthy foods, but also and above all as a real “lifestyle”. In Flochian terms (Floch 1990), the resulting valorisation is a *uto-pian* one, since the basic values of local identity and global otherness are here opposed to each other. A *ludic-aesthetic* valorisation is also noticeable, and finds expression in the fusion of food rituals and the passionate dance of the young characters. Health, which is made explicit by the verbal language in the closing of the commercial, is also incarnated by the Italian characters’ toned and beautiful bodies. Such a “form” (Boutaud 2013), as opposed to the clumsiness characterising the American soldier (who is also muscular, but lacks the other characters’ “innate” lightness and easiness of movement), allows the Italian men and ladies to take part in the sensual and harmonious dance that embodies Italian identity. Definitely, health does not merely depend here on the nutritional value of food products, but rather on identity, nature, and tradition. In Ferraro’s terms (1998), the first part of the commercial is therefore marked by a *positional* regime, according to which participating in the harmonious dance requires belonging to the represented rural “here”, while no access is given to “others” coming from any “there” (as the young lady pushing away the American soldier, or the lack of communication between the soldiers and the child prove). Yet the end of the commercial somehow celebrates inclusion, partially recalling a *multiperspective* regime by means of specific figures (i.e. the ideograms, the Eiffel Tower and the Statue of Liberty) and plastic formants (i.e. polychromy).

#### 2.4. RAI commercial for Expo 2015

A more critical perspective is presented in the commercial<sup>2</sup> released by Italy’s national public broadcasting company RAI on the occasion of Expo2015. The first scenes of the video show a natural environment that is similar to the one characterising the previously analysed example: the image of an insect moving on lettuce follows that of a plough tilling the soil, and finally gives the way to an aged hand cutting a bunch of grapes and another one picking up a tomato. At the same time a voice over says: “Nella Campania povera del dopoguerra, il medico americano Ancel Keys nota un fatto singolare: i contadini che fanno una vita dura e mangiano una grande quantità di frutta e ortaggi, oltre a pane, pasta, pesce e pochissima carne, hanno un cuore più sano dei ricchi borghesi napoletani dalla dieta molto più ricca” [In poor post-war Campania, the American doctor Ancel Keys noticed a curious fact: the farmers, who made a hard life and ate a lot of fruits and vegetables, as well as bread, pasta, fish and a very low quantity of meat, had a healthier heart than the rich Neapolitan bourgeois, whose diet was much more varied].

At this point an infographic is added in order to clarify this concept: while fruits and vegetables correspond to a pulsating heart that gets bigger and bigger, meat and sausages are associated with a broken heart. So the voice over continues: “La stessa cosa la osserva nel resto del nostro Sud e in Grecia. Nel 1975, con un libro che diventa subito un best seller, Keys annuncia al mondo le virtù della dieta mediterranea. Nel 2010 viene persino riconosciuta dalle Nazioni Unite come patrimonio immateriale dell’umanità” [The same fact characterised other southern Italian regions and Greece. In 1975 Keys announced to the world the great virtues of the Mediterranean

<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://www.expo.rai.it/non-sola-salute-vive-dieta-mediterranea-expo/>.

diet, through a book that immediately became a bestseller. In 2010 the Mediterranean diet was even recognised by the United Nations as part of the intangible heritage of humanity]. Then the camera moves from the rural background to a metropolitan setting, showing the United Nations headquarters and, finally, — a restaurant. Accordingly, the relaxed rhythm characterising the presentation of the places and subjects inhabiting the former suffers a sharp acceleration, leading to the frenetic movements of some waiters, who are in fact barely visible. The voice over then introduces the crucial issue animating the commercial: “La dieta mediterranea, insomma, si è globalizzata, ma la seguono soprattutto quei salutisti che si possono permettere vegetali freschi e pesce, piatti ben cucinati e ore di sport alla settimana” [The Mediterranean diet, definitely, has been globalised. But it is now mainly followed by health-conscious people who can afford fresh vegetables and fish, well cooked meals, and hours of sport a week].

After showing images of the mentioned health-conscious people, an urgent contemporary concern is introduced, while on the screen the hand of a child quickly “steals” an apple (here used as a symbol of health) from an elder hand (symbolising tradition): “Lì dove è nata, invece, non esiste quasi più” [By contrast, there where it was born, it has almost disappeared]. A new infographic therefore illustrates better this issue, together with the voice over: “I consumi di ortaggi e frutta scendono anno dopo anno, e aumentano quelli dei cibi spazzatura. Oggi, proprio in Campania, quasi una persona su due è sovrappeso, e una su dieci è obesa” [The consumption of vegetables and fruits decreases year after year, while that of junk food is increasing. Today, precisely in Campania, almost half of the population is overweight, and one person in ten is obese]. The rhetorical figure of irony is used to reinforce such an idea: a fat man in a pink tutu struggles to keep standing while trying to dance (which can somehow be conceived as a meta-textual reference to the harmonious dance analysed in the previous case). The voice over finally informs that the problem is not limited to Campania, but concerns a wider reality: “E il resto del Sud, come la Grecia, non sta molto meglio. La dieta mediterranea tornerà mai a casa?” [And the other southern regions, as well as Greece, are not better”. Hence the commercial ends with a provocative question: “Will the Mediterranean diet ever come back home?].

Interestingly, in this case the emphasis is put primarily on the beneficial effects of the Mediterranean diet, which can rely on natural food products and traditional practices, or rather on physical activity, depending on the case. In rural past societies health was a characteristic natural to all people, therefore finding expression in the quiet smiling figures of elderly men and women. By contrast, in globalised present societies it necessarily involves playing sports and physical activity, whose lack leads to “deformation” (Boutaud 2013). This change reveals a practical valorisation of the Mediterranean diet, which is here associated with a causal regime: the “Mediterranean way” — with all the benefits deriving from it — is no longer enabled by geographical or cultural belonging (that is, a “being” that is natural to human beings), but rather by people’s will and actions (namely a “doing” characterising only a few individuals — the health-conscious ones — who play sports and do not succumb to junk foods). And such a condition is presented precisely as a direct consequence of “globalisation”.

### 3. Conclusion

As the above-analysed case studies effectively show, the case of the Mediterranean diet significantly recalls the oxymoronic tension between globality and locality characterising contemporary foodscapes: while the definition of such a dietary regime emphasises locality, by making reference to a specific and circumscribed geographic area, as the considered pyramids also highlight, the collective imaginary concerning it rather insists on its globalisation, and the effects deriving from it. Such effects, as it was highlighted above, have a highly dysphoric connotation,

since they are charged with having caused the contamination and in some cases even the disappearance of the Mediterranean diet. More precisely, oppositions such as tradition vs. modernity, or rural vs. metropolitan environments, are used to emphasise the shift of the Mediterranean diet from a utopian valorisation and a positional regime based on *being* (“Mediterranean”, which generally means “naturally healthy”) to a practical valorisation and a causal regime based on the dogmatic *doing* typical of common diets. Such a doing somehow challenges the pyramids analysed in the first paragraphs, since it seems to deny the complementarity of nutrition and physical activity, and even the conjunction between the material and cultural dimension of food, by strongly opposing them. To conclude, therefore, the case of the Mediterranean diet clearly shows that the globalisation of food is not just a matter of the movement of food stuffs between nations; nor is it simply the amalgamation or accommodation of different cuisines. On the contrary, it is a complex interplay of meanings and values continuously redefining our relation with food, and hence our relation to the world surrounding us and, last but not least, the way we conceive our very identity.

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# SCIENCE IN TRANSLATION: MEMORIAL TO SOLOMON MARCUS (1925-2016)

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## **Abstract**

Thomas A. Sebeok introduced Solomon Marcus to me in Bloomington (1988). Marcus advised me to read his article “Eight types of translation in the scientific language” (1975) in *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique*. The Romanian journal was politically unknown in the West. Marcus, a passionate genius for mathematical language and mathematical poetics, contributed to the East-West discourses across global divides uniting science and culture. Concretely, Marcus constructed mathematical linguistics in natural and artificial languages, reshaping literary translation into the novelty of scientific languages and cybernetic systems, linguistics, literature and arts, and cultural patterns. The memory of Solomon Marcus’s 1975 article speaks for his cultural friendship and multiple pedagogy. The translation of scientific language has synonymy as strategy. The battle from natural to artificial language and vice versa was violated by the “replacement” with “paraphrase” in deconstructive set of homonyms. Artificial or mathematical language is the algebraic notation for synonymy in scientific reasoning. Marcus’ translation in eight different types points to semiosis and quasi-semiosis of semiotranslation anticipating the dynamics of Western cryptography, automatic language and computational linguistics.

At the Research Center for Language and Semiotic Studies at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, USA, Thomas A. Sebeok introduced Solomon Marcus to me in the summer of 1988. In our first conversation, Solomon Marcus (Bucharest) suggested that I should read his 2-page article “Eight types of translation in the scientific language” (1975), that appeared in the *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique* in Bucharest. This journal was politically unknown for the Western world. In his long scholarly career, Solomon Marcus was especially concerned to advance “the literary dimension of human creativity in fields like exact sciences, natural and engineering sciences, information sciences, linguistics, medical sciences, economics, sociology, psychology, juridical sciences, etc.” (Marcus 2016). Those were his last words to the semiotic members during the 12<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the *International Association for Semiotic Studies* (IASS) in Sofia, Bulgaria (2014).

Solomon Marcus focused his attention on human language and literary poetics to formulate the fictional narratives into the system of mathematical linguistics, and *vice versa*. He explored the notion of translation as a technical philosophy of automatic information processing about the parallelism of concrete languages and abstract codes. The goal was to represent the possibilities of integrating semiotics into hard and soft sciences. Marcus' special background and knowledge prepared these scientific and cultural fields for the East-West interrelations, pointing out that mathematical linguistics can be applied to the transformation between natural and artificial languages. Professor Solomon Marcus was considered in the West as the passionate genius of the intellectual conscience of Eastern Europe. Invited by many Western Universities, he was regarded as a priceless teacher and a cherished colleague.

Marcus' article influenced my views to broaden the computational and statistical theory of the conservative practice of translation to discover alternative or radical theories of translation theory from the broad range of semiotics. The philosophical and logical foundations of Roman Jakobson, Charles S. Peirce, and Charles Morris have expanded my imagination, reshaping the old idea of translation into the new discipline under a semiotic approach of cybernetic systems, linguistics, and literature to establish the cultural patterns of the arts in the idea of "semiotranslation" (Gorlée 1994, 2004, 2007, 2015). As described in my contribution to Marcus' *Festschrift* for the *Meetings with Solomon Marcus* (Spandonide and Paun 2011, 1: 753-754), we have from 1988 through all those years remained close friends. I wish to express my profound sense of loss in the untimely passing of the pioneering mind of Professor Solomon Marcus, who unfortunately died on March 17, 2016 in Bucharest.

On the occasion of this lecture, the short article "Eight types of translation in the scientific language" (1975) serves a serious purpose: the obituary to Solomon Marcus' cultural friendship and multiple learning. He was well aware of the fact that "scientists, artists, and artisans tend to develop a terminology of their own" (Freudenthal 1960: 1). Yet Marcus' horizon of understanding and responding to the idea of translatability was for him the special fields of formal mathematical linguistics and informal mathematical poetics, brought together within the doctrine of semiotics. The history of the term "scientific language" was referred to the language of medicine, astronomy, mathematics, optics, logic, geometry, and natural philosophy, including the mythical aspects of anthropomorphic thinking about astrology, alchemy, and geomancy (Marcus 2016, Montgomery 2000). Marcus reduced "scientific language" to the technical terms of mathematical language transformed from plain language into the expert system of scientific language, such that the abstract logic is translated into the equivalent metatext of the "corresponding symbolic representation" of mathematics. In the language of logic, which is done partly in mathematical symbols, the "particular form of transformation between synonymous strings" settles the language of science, which must reflect the truth, but continually pushing towards the illogical untruth. The norm of the translation of scientific language is the two-way trade of synonymy between the source and target texts, applicable to the symbolic translation of natural language into artificial language or even artificial language translated into natural language.

Marcus explained, but did not define in the short article (1975), the terms natural and artificial languages. While natural language is the active skill of learning the cultural native language, such as English, French, and even Latin, the artificial language is no longer concerning with the historical project of foreign languages, but refers to scientific and "unnatural" languages, invented by a definite author (sign-maker). Artificial language is enlarged into coding and decoding the mathematical rules of technical terms of symbolic logic in Morse code, Esperanto, Lincos, as well as other mathematically transparent languages developed through the rules of coding and decoding. Regarding the unnatural languages, Esperanto, composed by the Polish physician,

L.L. Zamenhoff at the end of the 19th century, is a constructed language made of features of natural languages. This means that Esperanto is not a formal language subordinate to scientific language, such as the Morse code for the technical tool of communication. Lincos, composed by Hans Freudenthal (1960), is genuinely a formal language, identifying a basic set of intelligent rules to construct the artificial language. Freudenthal's notion of "cosmic intercourse" translated the intransparent messages of astronomical intelligent beings to give information and signification to artificial life. This signified that the political metamorphosis of "cosmic language" (Freudenthal 1974) in science fiction tales were not enjoyed as rhetorical technique of cognitive estrangement in Otherness, but as science fact during the East-West conflicts in the Cold War (Suvin 1979, Gorlée 2015a).

Below the synonymous sequence of translating signs, words, and symbols, other forms of translation are called by Solomon Marcus forms of "replacement". The replacement is an attempt to translate pervasive features of language into one string of "paraphrase" in the simple set of homonyms. The term of "replacement" took on an increasingly depreciative sense of ambiguity, vagueness, and metaphor in untranslatability (Scheffler 1979). Translatability demands Marcus' "conjunction" to learn the system of transformation rules and transform common or plain language into new languages.

The description of the synonymous and quasi-synonymous qualities of the eight coded and uncoded types of translation, presented by Solomon Marcus' article on the level of increasing sophistication, moved from simple to complex representations (Marcus 1975: 375). **First, (a)** the "replacement" of the natural feature into another natural feature of a different language. Marcus' example means from plain Russian into plain English. **Second, (b)** the "replacement" of the artificial feature into another artificial feature. For example, from the mathematical symbolic representation into another one, such as the geometrical figures of logical diagrams or charts to check results obtained by algebraic formulae. **Third, (c)** the "replacement" of the natural feature into an equivalent artificial feature. For example, human interpreters (translators) can write from natural language computer programs or even the artificial language of (extra) terrestrial nature, such as Esperanto or Lincos (Freudenthal 1960, 1984). **Fourth, (d)** the "translation" of the artificial feature into natural language. This "translation" is, for Marcus, a practicable policy, because humans on Earth do not think in robotic or even cosmic language but in "ordinary" natural language.

In terms of logical terms and mathematical diagrams, the three cases of "replacement" are Marcus' "primitive" activities of human interpreters (translators) to try to transact the special knowledge of scientific language. The one case of "translation" could even manipulate the translatability of science fiction narratives into the human thrill of understanding the natural (for aliens) or artificial writing (for us). The degrees of the simplicity of "translation" in binary arguments stands for a single proposition of source and target not linguistically labeled nor conceptually or culturally connected; yet the bipartite graph has the complex structure to deal with the fuzzy logic and multimodal logics of scientific expert statements of "translation". Marcus' areas for exploration of the possibility of scientific translations are the "conjunctions" combining the sections **(a)**, **(b)**, **(c)**, and **(d)**, in which the mathematical figures are considered compound statements, based on the restraints placed on a set of variables. Marcus' compound statements with parenthetical expressions give various combinations of scientific reasoning to achieve high truth-values in mathematical representation of scientific translation.

In Marcus' article (1975: 375), **fifth, (e)** is the "conjunction" of **(a)** and **(b)** as the adherence of some artificial formula explained into two natural languages. In his words, "when a mathematical theorem, with a standard proof, is exposed in both French and English — by means of

different mathematical symbolism and terminology". While the artificial formula was a coded system of signs, the natural language was an incompatible system of coded and uncoded signs, that is ruled and creative signs. This fifth "conjunction" is a motion of non-confidence in the loss of scientific language, which must be covered formally in some described manner to be a truth-functional proposition.

**Sixth, (f)** is the "conjunction" of **(a)** and **(d)** in the combination of the artificial feature in an algebraic theory in a French book explained to an English student "who knows neither Algebra nor French". The interpreter (translator) explains the artificial arguments into natural "French to English and from the algebraic symbolism into the natural language, by converting, for instance, algebraic simple facts in arithmetic ones". The strategy **(a)** gives an idea of the reduction of the variables of mathematical problems, transformed backwards into arithmetic problems. The artificial study of arithmetic about counting numbers constructs simple numerical conclusions. However, when re-phrased into the complex artificial system of mathematics, including arithmetic, algebra, calculus, geometry, and trigonometry, the "conjunction" almost included both fields into logical reasoning. The one-to-one correspondence of the calculation of logical words was further inferred into one-to-many rules to formal (or better, formalized) logic. The results of **(a)** to **(d)** can accurately be explained (translated) from the artificial systems of signs and symbols into the thought processes of natural language.

**Seventh, (g)** is the "conjunction" of **(b)** and **(c)** in the artificial translation of the formal theory of conceptual graphs translated from French terminology and notation into English. A graph is a network of words connected by lines, hyphens, and curves to construct sentences to imagine artificial parts of natural speech. For example, one of the pictorial representations I recall is the artificial model of the "dendrite" in the form of a tree to indicate growth and connectivity of natural language. Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* (1957) argued that artificial arguments provide the grammatical terms of natural language. In Chomsky's transformational grammar, language has a certain asymmetry, moving away from codes into uncodedness. Chomsky reconstructed language into formal relations of logic, analogous to using "chemical theory" (1957: 48) as theoretical, but artificialized, ground to discover the symmetrical grammar to analyze all possible compounds in natural language. Chomsky supplemented *Syntactic Structures* with appendices of notations in vocabulary and terminology (1957: 109-110), by which he described the "deep structure" of the formalized properties of linguistic structure. Abandoning the syntactical examples of Chomsky, Marcus moved away from of natural language into the experiment of artificial logic in logical terms and predicates, Marcus formulated artificial translation in the theoretical coherence of syntax with semantics (see Guenther and Guenther-Reutter 1978). Marcus went further, since he mentioned the artificial technology of graphs and hypergraphs, written by Claude Berge in French (1958) and translated into English (1973).

Finally, **eighth, (h)** is the "conjunction" of **(c)** and **(d)**. Marcus signified the possibilities, or better the practicalities of the translatability of natural into artificial features, together with artificial into natural ones. The activity of bringing both activities together does not seem practical, since they "neutralize each other". Since natural language is the tool of humankind, other "conjunctions" seem "contradictory" affairs not to engage in. When the implications of the source text are true, they can generate false target translations or the opposite: false source text can generate true target translations. For Marcus, the concept of synonymy in translation hardly exists in translation in its strict sense.

Overall, Marcus' article (1975) intended to be a synthetic and critical survey of applying mathematical applications into contemporary translation theory, which at the time of his writing did not yet exist in its present form. Marcus displayed a bias toward the formalism of logic applied to two claims: the concrete part of natural language demonstrated by the imagination of

symbols in artificial metalanguage. He discussed that the problem of synonymy is beyond (c) the “replacement” of the natural feature into an equivalent artificial feature, and remains a truism. The accurate one-to-one facts of scientific translation may often correspond to one-to-many notations in the artificial correspondence in mathematical or chemical associations, or even accounting science-fiction tales to develop modern science.

Replaced into semiotic terms, the double articulation between Marcus’ “replacement” expressed linguistic and mathematical signs into the circularity of semiotic signs. The circularity of signs interact with each other in contradiction or truth with each other, but had to proceed in complementary steps in a spiral of signs without expressing the real sign of “translation”. Instead of the semiotic effect of Peirce’s genuine semiosis, “translation” in its degenerate activity engages in human pseudo-semiosis, in which certain “replacements” mean untranslatability. Human speakers (interpreters, translators, interpreters) tend to weaken the mathematical-linguistic idea-thought of semiosis into the practical purposes of successfully (not always truthfully) interpreting the meaning of external messages. Pseudo-semiosis defies ordinary analysis of semiosis into “experimental” untranslatability. Still referring back to the full (and sometimes scientific) meaning of translatability, untranslatability challenges the experiments of translation to accept the human creativity dealing with open-ended language (Gorlée 2004).

Marcus’ article (1975) has transformed the notion of translation into a hypothetical puzzle. The signification still refers to the scientific nature of natural language, but Marcus reasoned about the statistical problem of translation in the mathematical syllogism of artificial language. The translation into eight different types limits translatability to the negative sense of untranslatability (Catford 1965: 93-103). In the positive sense, the readability of scientific language points out the semiosis and pseudo-semiosis belonging to the procedure of semiotranslation (Gorlée 2004). One can emphasize that Marcus is the forerunner to present-day cryptography, automatic language, computer linguistics, and computer graphics. At the time of writing the 1975 article, he had not read the important essays of Brower’s *On Translation* ([1959]1966) with the contribution of Oettinger about automatic or mechanical translation of technical reference in English and Russian languages (1959: 140-267; see 1955, 1960) and other important essays, written by Jakobson, Nida, Nabokov, and Quine about translation. Nor had Marcus had the opportunity to read the classic book *The Mathematical Theory of Communications* (1949, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. 1978), written by Shannon and Weaver. They argued that translation is a patterned behavior in formal units with graphic (mathematical) signals coded in lexical forms, close to Marcus’ view of decoding codes with the risk of unequal probabilities. To get access to the mathematical theory of computing machines, Marcus had to discover on his own the eight types of “replacements” and “conjunctions” to include the scientific investigation of meaning and information in mathematical “translation”.

Fortunately, Professor Solomon Marcus was a scientific genius at the University of Bucharest; but unfortunately, his life with Jewish origins had to live through the anti-Semitism of the Iron Guards during the Second World War and the communist dictatorships of the socialist republic of Romania, dependent on the Soviet Union. For miraculous and even mythical reasons, Marcus became the worldwide semiotic master of mathematical linguistics. He was curiously irresponsible to authoritarian thought. Thanks to his sponsor, Thomas A. Sebeok of Indiana University at Bloomington, Indiana, who introduced him from his homeland, a communist country without free speech and free thinking, to the invitations of the Western world. Solomon Marcus enjoyed free access to both Eastern and Western worlds of scholarship. He was an idiosyncratic and iconoclastic critic, the sort of scholar with whom you do not mind sharp disagreements because his opinions are so intelligent, joyful, and original. Thanks to his enthusiasm and warmth in praising other scholars, Professor Solomon Marcus fully deserves the tribute to the long friendship with semiotics. Now that he is no longer with us, let us thank him deeply.



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**FROM THE SESSION  
“TO THINK, TO SPEAK,  
TO WRITE”**

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# HUMANISM OF OTHERNESS, RESPONSIBILITY AND JUSTICE IN EMMANUEL LEVINAS

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## **Abstract**

Levinas is among the authors in contemporary philosophy who has most contributed to the critique of Western worldview based on identity and monologic egocentrism. Under this aspect his work can be related to contemporary trends in semiotic studies such as Bakhtin, Morris, Sebeok, reoriented in the direction of semioethics. In this framework, human semiosis is investigated in its vocation for otherness with special reference to the I-other relation, responsibility and justice.

## **1. Otherness and responsibility**

The problem of identity as traditionally conceived in mainstream Western thought, focused on theory, representation, knowledge, subjectivity and their implications, plays a central role in the philosophical investigations of Emmanuel Levinas. Originally from the city of Kaunas in Lithuania, Levinas resided in France, Paris where he lived as a foreigner at home. In his critique of Western culture and core concept of identity he typically raises the question of the other. Otherness thematised by Levinas indicates existence of something on its own account, autonomously, independently of the I's initiative, of volition, of consciousness, of willful recognition. The objectivity of otherness tells of the impossible evasion of signs from their destiny, which is the other. The inevitable implications of reading the signs of the other has contributed to reorienting semiotics in the direction of *semioethics* (Petrilli and Ponzio 2003, 2010; Petrilli 2010, 2014).

In Levinas, the I-other relation, the other *from* self and the other *of* self, is a relation that cannot be explicated solely in cognitive terms. I and other are not united in an intellectual synthesis, nor can this relation be reduced to the subject-object relation. Far from intellectual abstraction, the I-other relation is one of involvement among singularities, grounded in bodies whose distinctive feature is otherness, not relative but absolute otherness. In his discussion of the relation of otherness, in fact, Levinas writes "other" with a capital letter, intending to specify

that his reference is not to the other as s/he is interpreted, evaluated, understood or tolerated, or refused, in logic the other as an object, but rather this is the other on its own account, the other as absolute alterity. Echoing Mikhail Bakhtin and Charles Morris, the I-other relation is a relation of participation and responsiveness among unique, unrepeatable members forming the open community, demanding nothing less than dialogic intercorporeity, participative interconnectedness, responsiveness among differences, singularities unindifferent to each other.

In his conception of the otherness relation Levinas attributes a central role to the notion of “substitution”, “one-for-the-other” which leads to conceiving identity in the accusative. To speak is to speak with the word of others, which implies to keep account of the other, in a relation of involvement, mutual implication, such that to speak is always to respond, to answer to the other and for the other – firstly to answer for oneself, to justify oneself (Levinas 1998: 122-133).

In dialogue with Levinas at his home in Paris, 20th November 1988, Augusto Ponzio questions him on his conception of substitution in light of Western reason and his critique thereof (“Responsabilité et substitution”, in French in Ponzio 1996; in Italian in Ponzio 1989 and in Petrilli 2017). At the time Levinas had authored *Totalité et infini*, *Humanisme de l'autre homme*, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence*, *Hors Sujet*, and Ponzio had already published two monographs on him, *La relazione interpersonale* and *Soggetto e alterità. Da Lévinas a Lévinas*, with others to come (cf. Ponzio 1995, 2005, 2007).

Levinas relates the notion of “substitution” to “responsibility”. To substitute the other does not imply a relation of identification, empathy, convergence among two separate entities become one, whereby one replaces the other, becomes the other, to feel as that other feels, even the other's discomfort and desperation. Instead, to replace the other is to “bring comfort” to the other, to take responsibility for the other.

Identity of social roles is differentiated through the otherness relation, “relative otherness” limited by boundaries defining behavior according to roles and relative responsibilities. Instead, otherness irreducible to roles and identities is “absolute otherness”, connected with “unlimited responsibility”. Unlike “limited responsibility” and its alibis, “unlimited responsibility” does not admit of indifference to the other, but tells of total exposition to the other, vulnerability in the face of the other, otherness unshielded by alibis. Absolute responsibility for the other is responsibility without alibis, unlimited responsibility, understood as accounting not only *to* the other, but *for* the other.

The vocation for Being (Heidegger) in the human world is interrupted by another vocation, that for the other's existence, for the other's destiny. My neighbour's existential adventure is more important to me than my own, such that I am immediately responsible for this other in his or her daily trials.

The other is necessary to the constitution of the objective world in its species-specifically human form, but is at once the condition by which the I (the same) can never claim to reach a final, absolute truth.

The relation to the “other in one's otherness” comes to fruition as ethics. Levinas clarifies that “We call ethical a relationship between terms such as are tied neither by a synthesis of the understanding nor by a relationship between subject and object, and yet where the one weighs or concerns or is meaningful to the other” (Levinas 1967, Eng. trans.: 116). This is a relation which knowledge, the concept, abstract thought can neither exhaust nor unravel. Ethics in Levinas's understanding comes before ontology, the State or politics, given the implications of ontology in political realism, but it is also “ethics beyond ethics” (Derrida 1999). This is something different from “ethics” as traditionally understood. Levinas thematizes “ethics as first philosophy” as a re-

sponse to the problem of the relation to the other, to the other's singularity, a relation charged with responsibility towards the other, irreducible to an ethical formula and self-righteous assurance, with all the implications this involves for human action and communication (cf. Arnett 2017: 17).

Levinas considers the "face-to-face" as a primary relation. His reference here is not only to the direct relation to the other. No opposition is implied therefore between speech and writing, spoken language and written language, as instead has been erroneously implied. Well before it is fixed in representation, the face is language, an appeal to the consideration I owe others. Levinas speaks of "dés-inter-essement" (disinterestedness), the materialisation and modeling of encounter in the face of the other.

According to Levinas the sense of responsibility toward the other has no limits to the point that if the other is guilty for something, to some extent I too am involved in his or her guilt, to the point even of being even more guilty than another. Evoking one of Dostoevsky's characters from *The Brothers Karamazov*, Levinas maintains that we are all guilty, but I myself more than anybody else. Like Levinas, Dostoevsky, a master in literary writing, traces the "original constitution" of the I (*je*), uniqueness, in responsibility for one's neighbor, the other, and in impossible withdrawal from such responsibility, in the impossibility of replacement by anybody else.

It is this situation of irreplaceability precisely of each one of us in the face of the other that renders the each one singular, unique. To the I (*je*)'s uniqueness there corresponds the other's uniqueness, the other's face as other, and the uniqueness of responsibility occasioned for me by that other. I (*je*) and other in their uniqueness are not just individuals that belong to an assemblage, group, class, as anonymous members in the logically extended concept. The relation to the other as other, in its otherness, "*autrui*", is irreducible to subjective experience.

Recognition of the other as other implies the primacy of ethics, not ontology, in human understanding, love for the other, which does not begin in the erotic. The "beloved", the "loved one" is unique in the world for the "lover", the "enamoured". Love here is clearly the disinterested love of responsibility, love in responsibility. Impossible escape from responsibility is not passive slavery, but election. As world religions teach us "election" is indicative of the supreme dignity of the human.

Responsibility for the other is asymmetrical: the other is elected and taken upon one's shoulders, in a relation that is unequal. The person I answer for is also the person I answer to. I must answer to the person whom I must answer for. Responsibility in the face of the person I am responsible for: responsible for a face that regards me (in French *me regarde* means both "looks at me" and "concerns me"), for its freedom. The other is out of proportion with respect to the I's power and freedom. Moral consciousness is this lack of proportion; it interrogates the I's freedom. But interrogation is constitutive of the I and at once of the I's freedom, it sanctions the transition from spontaneity to consciousness, from freedom as passive *jouissance*, that is to say the I's happy spontaneity, to freedom as a right and speaking that right. It is the other who renders me free each time s/he asks me for something simply with his or her presence, given that I can accept or refuse the request.

From the very beginning, the I's conscious is ill at ease, a bad conscience in front of others, which attempts to justify itself to the point of being able to present itself as a good conscious, a clean conscience, at peace, having found justifications and alibis that can guarantee it. In this way, the primordial situation of the I in the accusative, of the I that must account for itself, transforms into the I as it normally presents itself, as the I in the nominative, as subject, capable of making decisions and self-sufficient. As from this situation of being interrogated, accused, there come to be established the I's freedoms, the I's rights – "human rights" – elaborated to defend self summoned by the face of the other to account for the rights of others, in this sense to defend itself as "I."



In front of the face of the other, identity is called to question. Through its nudity, exposition, fragility, the face says that the other will never be eliminated. The otherness of the other resists to the point of calling for recourse to homicide and war — evidence of the other's irreducibility. Another one, *autrui*, this other puts the I into the accusative, summoning it, questioning it, calling it back to the condition of absolute responsibility, outside the I's initiative. Such responsibility allows for neither rest nor peace. Peace functional to war, intrinsic to war, a truce, is fully revealed in its misery in light of absolute responsibility.

Levinas thematizes the “properly human” given in the capacity for absolute otherness, unlimited responsibility, dialogical intercorporeity among unindifferent differences, characterized by a propensity for the nonfunctional, the unproductive by contrast to the functionality of identity and relative roles. The properly human tells of the condition of vulnerability in the relation to the other, of exposition to the other. Instead, functionality, productivity, competition is fostered through social roles based on the centripetal forces of identity, short-sighted egocentric identity, which regulates behavior connected to those roles.

In the time-space of otherness, nonfunctionality, and excess, differences understood as singularities interrelate dialogically, are responsive to each other. By contrast to *indifferent differences*, these are *unindifferent differences*, differences that are not indifferent to each other. Otherness thus described is not enfolded in roles, cannot be reduced to roles, but transcends and at once subtends the boundaries of roles and identities.

The places that best evidence the properly human are where time is given in terms of the relation to the absolute and nonfunctional other, the unproductive other; the time of mothering and nurturing, of friendship and eroticism, of aesthetic discourse (whether literature, figurative arts, music, cinema and their signs), of inventiveness and scientific progress, of the “play of musement”, the imagination, the ephemeral, the ineffable, the time of disease, aging, death. This is the time of otherness, excess with respect to closed identities, of dialogical de-totalization and proliferation of differences that cannot be recruited and put at the service of the World as-it-is. Despite our social form based on interest, self-serving advantage, gain, profit, we all know that parental care, friendship, love involve relationships and feelings that regard each one of us in our total nonfunctionality, as an end and not as a means. But most unfortunately, differently to the “private” sphere, in the “public” sphere the other's functionality, usefulness, productivity are generally, by law even, the conditions for hospitality toward the other (cf. Ponzio 2007).

Reading Levinas, “World” is associated with vulgar forms of realism, dominant ideology, identity, being, the order of discourse, the coherent and well defined subject with a clean conscience, the lying rhetoric of political systems and mass media. All this is functional to homologation in a totalizing world, to dominant ideology in today's globalized world. But the flourishing of special semioses, different languages and cultures signal the human potential for resistance and critique in front of globalization reductively understood in terms of the dominant values regulating the global market, of power and control exerted worldwide (Petrilli and Ponzio 2005).

A question raised by Levinas is whether there be no other sense than that of being in the World and for the World; whether the properly human can exceed the space-time of objects, of identity, with Morris (1948) “closed identity”; whether there exist relations that cannot be reduced to identity thus conceived, to relations between subject and object, based on exchange, equivalence, functionality, self-interest, productivity; whether there exist inter-human relations altogether *other*, yet at once material, earthly, corporeal; whether there be a sense that is other with respect to sense in the world as-it-is, a world of objects and relations to objects. Such questions are oriented toward a form of humanism different to the “humanism of identity”, what with Levinas we may designate as the “humanism of otherness” (1972).

The humanism of otherness implies a “movement” without return to the subject, a movement which Levinas calls *oeuvre*, exposition — at a risk — to alterity, hybridization of identity, fragmentation of monologism, evasion from the subject-object relation. *Hors-sujet* is the title of a book by Levinas; “hors-sujet”, outside the subject, also off the subject, unresponsive to thematization, representation. This orientation is founded on otherness, the condition of possibility for a form of humanism which in light of the rights of others interrogates the good conscious, the clean conscience, human rights understood as the self’s rights. The propensity for otherness contrasts with Reason without reasonableness, which incorporates and legitimizes the reasons of identity, forever ready to overwhelm and subject the other, to the extent even of acknowledging the reasons of war.

## 2. Otherness and justice

Humanism of the other is a pivotal concept in Levinas which overturns the sense of Western reason. It asserts human duties over human rights. Humanism of the other privileges the centrifugal movement of otherness, encounter with the other, responsibility for the other, responsiveness to the other over tendencies of the centripetal and egocentric orders that exclude the other.

Originally the relation to the other is characterized by unindifference, by impossible non-involvement in the life of other. Such unindifference, inevitable involvement is expressed in terms of responsibility for the other.

Recourse to justice, the invention of justice, the formation of courts and judges arise from the fact, as Levinas says, that my relation to the other is not only to *one* other, but to *many* others. The problem arises of why I am compassionate toward one and not the other, why I care for one and not for the other. I must welcome the first comer, but then there’s a second, a third. And so the question arises of why I must care for others, while others do not do the same for me, do not care for me. Consequently, there is a need for regulations, for laws, to equate that which cannot be equated, the singularity, uniqueness of each one of us, all equal before the law.

Intervention of the law and formation of the State regulate and limit responsibility of each for the other. Consequently, Levinas signals an essential contradiction between the primordial ethical orientation and the juridical order. All the same, laws, the State, comparison between that which is incomparable, that is, between the singularity of each, in the last analysis, justice, all this arises from the need for hospitality, listening, compassion toward everybody and not only toward some, toward the most distant even, and not only those who are closest to me.

From this point of view, proximity (my “neighbour”) transforms from a concept of the spatial order to a concept of the ethical order. Proximity becomes the same as responsibility. My neighbour close or distant as s/he may be is the person I am responsible for, whomever s/he is. And justice, laws, the State arise for the sake of this irreducible concept of responsibility. This, according to Levinas, is the positive aspect of the constitution of laws, even if my responsibility is circumscribed and regulated. And in this beginning, in this motivation for the formation of laws and the State, there is also an implicit indication that justice and the laws that govern it are always, and always again, perfectible.

Contrary to Hobbes who posits that justice and the State arise from the original situation of *homo homini lupus*, instead for Levinas at the beginning of the State is charity, love for the other; justice and the just State are the way to charity in the human multiplicity. In Levinas, the State must place limitations on charity, but despite this it is at once anchored in love. That laws and justice of the State are perfectible means that the liberal State, the State in democracy can also better review and improve its laws and justice.

A just State must be established with just laws to guarantee freedom and avoid the danger of tyranny. Order based on the logic of closed identity, of differences indifferent to each other inevitably backfires in the form of fixed and inflexible law, it too tyrannical and violent. Law thus conceived is based on the self's rights as regulated by closed identity — in the extreme form, by commanding war, considered an inevitable means of defense, the realistic face of being, of the interests of the individual and community. The I is open to blackmail from the impersonal order to the point of accepting the *extrema ratio* of war, in the name of freedom, its own. The reasoning is that violence can only be suppressed through violence, which is mistaken. The being of things as realistically administered by the impersonal discourse of law — in the context of which war is presented as ineluctable violence and self-sacrifice — has its otherwise than being in its very foundation, in the face-to-face condition.

This condition is truly realistic: the face-to-face condition implies a relation of commandment without tyranny, which is not yet obedience to an impersonal law, but the indispensable condition for the institution of such a law. The opposition of a nude face, the opposition of disarmed eyes, with no protection, as from which self is constituted as responsibility, is not the opposition of a force, a relation of hostility. It is peace-loving opposition, where peace is not understood as suspension of war, violence withheld in order to be used more effectively. On the contrary, the violence perpetuated consists in eliminating this very opposition, outwitting it, ignoring the face, avoiding the gaze.

As a member of a group I am obliged to keep faith to this responsibility and to relate to every other indifferently, not only to a singularity, but to the other as a member of a group, the same affiliation. I am obliged to relate to the individual as a member of a given genre, assemblage, community, whom as such is interchangeable with any other individual member of the same genre, and in this sense indifferent to me. To know, judge, do justice, confront two individuals in order to identify the guilty one requires generalization through logic and the State, thereby equalizing singularities on the basis of a genre, an assemblage of some sort, insofar as they belong to the same State as citizens. The relation to the other is mediated by institutions and juridical procedures. In this context responsibility, that of each one of us for every other, is at once generalized and limited. The need for a State is connected to this type of generalization.

The action of the State is added to the work of interpersonal responsibility, responsibility as expected from the individual in his or her singularity — in a sense denying it. The work of interpersonal responsibility is that of the individual in his or her singularity. We are responsible in an absolute sense: like a hostage who must answer for something s/he did not do, for a past never his/her, never present to him/her (Levinas in Poirié 1987: 118).

With Levinas the Hobbesian concept of *homo homini lupus* is at last inverted: at the origin of the State is not fear *of* the other (as Hobbes recounts), but fear *for* the other (Levinas 1998; "Ideology and idealism," in Levinas 1989: 247; cf. Poirié 1987: 104-105 and 115-119). The function of the State is to limit and define the pre-political and pre-logical condition of absolute otherness which precedes institution of the State. On Levinas' account, the State, or State justice, does not found personal responsibility towards the other, but places boundaries on it while at once guaranteeing limited responsibility to members of the community, responsibility with alibis, through generalization of the law.

On the contrary, unlimited responsibility, unconditional, unqualified, absolute, moral responsibility is not inscribed in the law, is not written in the letter, does not converge with State justice. From this point of view State justice is imperfect with respect to human rights understood as the rights of the other as other, as foreigner. Preoccupation with human rights is not a State function, but rather a non-State institution in the State, the appeal to humanity yet to be accomplished in the State (Levinas in Poirié 1987: 119).

Fear of the other, the fear I as a subject experience of the other as an object, ensues from the constitution of identity. Whether individual or collective identity, the institution of identity requires separation from the other, limitation of the interests of identity on the basis of which is determined that which belongs to identity and which does not, that which regards identity and which does not—as much as the gaze of the other, however, regards me always (both in the sense of concerns me and looks at me). Identity means to determine and demarcate responsibility, defined and limited responsibility. As such responsibility has recourse to alibis which put the subject in a position to circumscribe fear *for* the other, for the other's well-being, for the other's happiness, by contrast to fear *of* the other which, instead, tends to increase.

Identity is delineated on the basis of difference, but difference and identity require indifference. Difference understood as identity relates to a given genre, class, community and requires indifference to the other, lack of interest in the other, absence of fear for the other. Difference and identity call for limited responsibility which begins and ends in a genre, class, an assemblage of some sort, with the function of guaranteeing identity. *From unindifference to the other to difference and relative indifference*: this is the trajectory through which identity is constituted and delineated.

Thus outlined identity progressively reduces that which regards me to that which regards identity's self-interest. Such reduction finds justification in limited responsibility sustained by alibis. Moreover, as anticipated, the more we forsake *fear for the other*, the more *fear of the other* increases to the point of exasperation. Here "fear of the other" signifies fear that the subject experiences of the other, the object. In this case "of the other" is understood as a subject genitive, the subject's fear of the other, where the other is the object of fear. But logic distinguishes between the *subject genitive* and the *object genitive*. If in the expression "fear of the other", "of the other" is understood as an object genitive, then it is the other, the object, who fears. Reference here is to fear as experienced by the other, by the object in the subject-object relation, the other's fear by contrast to the subject's fear, to my fear: subject and object. However, Levinas formulates a third case of the genitive as emerges in the expression "fear for the other", which abandons traditional binary logic and its dichotomies. "Of the other" in this third case is an "ethical genitive" and defines the third sense in which "fear of the other" can be disambiguated, that is, as "fear for the other". Fear for the other *implies to experience the other's fear and to fear for that other*. The distinction between subject and object no longer holds, nor reference to community identity: the relation among differences does not imply community identity, indifference among differences and identities. In the case of the *ethical genitive* the relation between parts is one of unindifference among differences, among singularities considered in their absolute otherness, a relation in which one cares for the other, one is important to the other.

Contrary to Hobbes's proposition, fear of the other is not a natural condition, but rather ensues from social organization, from the formation of States, and from current relations of each State to every other.

The essential characteristic of social relations today is that they take shape as relations among individuals ever more indifferent to each other, separate from each other. The relation to the other is suffered to the end of achieving one's own private self-interests. Exclusive preoccupation with one's own identity, one's own difference indifferent to the other, even sacrificing the other, increases fear of the other. Here community is the passive result of identity interests indifferent to each other. But the community so construed is a compact identity only for so long as its interests call for cohesion and unification.

In today's world the expression "fear of the other" has two main meanings. It either indicates that the other causes fear, or that the other is afraid; that I fear the other or that the other fears me. That which is ever more circumscribed, even rare, is fear of the other perceived as fear *for*

that other. But this is exactly what we need to recover: the feeling of fear *of the other*, where “of the other” is not a subject genitive (the other who fears), nor an object genitive (the other who causes fear), but a sort of ethical genitive, fear for the other, fear for that other’s life conditions, precariousness, difficulties. This case in logic does not need to be invented because, as Levinas says, it is the first case in the otherness relationship. If anything, it must be re-invented, re-activated. Fear *for* the other must be recovered at the very earliest.

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# THE MAN BECOMES ADAM

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## **Abstract**

The paper is focused on Genesis 1:1-3 where the primordial man אָדָם [adàm] is created and he was given the proper name Adam אָדָם [adàm].

In Hebrew *man* and *Adam* are the same word, spelled the same way – אָדָם [adàm]. Different translations of Genesis 1-3 use for the first time the proper name Adam in different places (Septuagint Gen 2:16; Vulgate Gen 2:19; La Sacra Bibbia Nouva Reveduta and La Nuova Diodati Gen 3:17; King's James Version Gen 2:20; The Estonian Bible Gen 2:22; Bulgarian and Russian Synodal (Orthodox) versions Gen 2:25; The German Luther Bible Gen 3:8; Some English Protestant versions Gen 3:17; Bulgarian Protestant and many English Protestant versions Gen 3:20-21). The paper decodes the phenomenon by studying the Hebrew original and several semiotic views on common and proper names (Lotman 2009, Toporov 1993, Losev 1929, Pierce 1992-1998). Through these opinions the important question “Who wrote the Bible?” is discussed. The analysis interfaces the new linguistic relativity theory (after 1990).

Four layers of symbolism are decoded: 1. The man became Adam; 2. The two men in Gen 1:27 (“Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness”) and in Gen 2:7 man אָדָם [adàm] is made by earth, ground אֲדָמָה [adamà]; 3. The two men in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 15:45-49); 4. Edom, Adam and cultural discourses in both Testaments.

## **1. Introduction**

This article investigates the reasons for significant differences of the first appearance of the proper name Adam in various translations of Genesis 1-3. To resolve the translation puzzle, data is adduced from Hebrew, whose written norm has no capital letters and the word [adàm] can denote the common name *man*, and the proper name *Adam*. Semiotic perspectives of Lotman (2009), Losev (1929), Toporov (1993), and Pierce (1992-1998) of the proper name are highlighted but they cannot account for the theological world-view encoded in Hebrew. This article is part of *Semiotics of Colours in the Bible* project, where colours are considered under two ideas - the colours in the Bible are treated as a text within the Bible text (Text within the Text, Lotman 1985 [1996]), and the first appearance of the proper name Adam is part of the extended text of the Cultural Unit Red in the Bible (Colour as cultural unit Almalech 2017 on Eco 1985 [1996];).

## 2. The proper name Adam

No other proper name in the Bible has such drastic differences about its first appearance in the Indo-European and Finno-Ugric translations. The proper noun אָדָם [adàm] (Ἀδάμ, Adam, Адам) appears for the first time in different places, in the different translations.

The problems and specifics:

- There are no capital letters in the Hebrew Alphabet. It is hard to decide whether it is a proper or a common noun.
- Genesis 1-3 is not just a fairy-tale for children. It is the description of creation of the world in every-day terms. Jewish Kabbalah seeks for centuries the hidden content behind the story of creation in Genesis 1-3.
- Genesis 1-3 can be treated as a mythic-poetical text.
- It seems that the first appearance of the proper name Adam is a matter of doctrine.
- The word אָדָם [adàm] means 1. man; person; 2. mankind; 3. the proper name Adam.
- In Hebrew, the definite article is received only by the common names and never by the proper names.
- If there is a preposition and conjunction written together to a name, the construction holds the category of definiteness in Hebrew.

## 3. Semiotic treatments of the proper name

A question becomes important: What is the difference between common and proper names? To answer that question I turn to semiotics rather than to linguistics because of the symbolic character of the Bible, especially of Genesis 1-3. I must emphasize that semiotic opinions do not inspire or influence the choice of translators for the first use of the proper name Adam, but serve as a scientific tool to explain the logic of translators to choose precisely a place of the first use of the proper name. I call the choice of translators a doctrine. The names of doctrines are given by me.

The first semiotic treatment of proper names is Yuri Lotman's (2009: 33-34):

Perhaps the sharpest manifestation of human nature is in the use of proper names and, linked to this, the isolation of individuality, the uniqueness of the individual personality as foundational values for "other" and "others"; "I" and "other" represent two sides of the unified act of self-consciousness and one is impossible without the other. (p. 31) [...] Here begins the game between proper names and common names, between "this" and "every". And precisely because the concept "this and only it" is a new concept, it first of all attracts the attention of the neophyte. There is no "I" without "others". But only in human consciousness do "I" and "all others, except me" hide within themselves something that is both unified and conflicting at one and the same time. One of the fundamental semiotic mechanisms inherent in humanity begins with the possibility of being "only itself"; to be a thing (proper name) and to simultaneously appear as the "representative" of a group, as one of many (common noun). This possibility of stepping into the role of another, of acting as a substitute for someone or something, indicates that you "are not what you are".

The second opinion is of Vladimir Toporov<sup>1</sup> (1993: 204) and it concerns cosmological texts: "The mythic-poetical nominalism puts/sets/lays the name before the referent for which it is a name". [translation is mine]. The Creation of the world is a cosmological text. Genesis 1-3 is also a construction of a mythic-poetical nominalism.

Another opinion on proper names is expressed by Aleksei Losev:

The name is a tool of communication mainly with the animate objects, and with persons. [...] The name supposes that I want to communicate with the object which I do understand; the name also necessarily sup-

1 Vladimir Toporov is one of the prominent members of Moscow side of Tartu-Moskow Semiotic School.

poses that the object hears that name, answers my call, sympathize with, correspond to it, and answer to it. Without this mutual understanding between the signifier and signified there is no naming/nominalization. The sense of the nominalization is that the signifier reacts consciously to that nominalization. Otherwise, the name ceases to be a name (Losev 1929: 19-20) [translation is mine].

The last semiotic opinion is by Charles Peirce and it will be presented after statistical data for appearance of word [adàm] in Hebrew.

#### 4. The facts on the first use of the proper name Adam in translations

##### Genesis 2:16

Old Greek Septuagint LXT, Modern Greek Vamvas VM, Current Ukrainian UKR.

For Genesis 2:16 the first appearance of Adam can be called “The Doctrine of Prohibition/Taboo” or “The Command”, because in this context God commands Adam not to eat from the fruits of the Tree of Knowledge and of the Tree of Life.

##### Genesis 2:19/20

The difference in the verses is due to the different tradition of numbering, and the content is the same.

Latin Vulgate VUL, 4-th century; English KJV, RWB, WEB, RSV, NIV, ESV, NAU, NET Bible, NAS, King James 2000 Bible; Romanian Bible (RO), Serbian SRB; French DRB; Dutch SVV; Portuguese ACF; BUL 2; Czech Bible Kralická, BKR. The proper name Adam is missing in Genesis 2:19 in modern Czech version (CEP).

In Genesis 2:19/20 the first appearance of Adam can be called “The Doctrine of the man giving names to the animate objects”, because the primordial man gives names to “every living creature”: “And out of the ground Jehovah God formed every beast of the field, and every bird of the heavens; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them: and whatsoever the man called every living creature, that was the name thereof “ (ASV Genesis 2:19)

This doctrine can be named also “The man has creative accomplishments as “God’s likeness” (Genesis 1:26).

This doctrine corresponds to Losev’s understanding for communicative essence of the name, and name as a relation between animated objects, as well as the process of mutual understanding between signifier and signified, also Losev includes feelings like sympathy in the communicative process.

##### Genesis 2:22

Estonian Bible (EST) is the single translation that uses the proper name Adam for the first time here. The doctrine may be called “God creates the primordial woman from the rib of the primordial man”.

##### Genesis 2:25

Russian (RST) and Bulgarian (BUL 2) Orthodox versions insert the proper name here for the first time.

In Genesis 2:25 the first appearance of Adam can be called “The Paradise unity of man and woman” because the just created primordial woman (she will receive her proper name, Eve, much later) and her husband did not consume the primordial sin.

Another name for this doctrine could be “Paradise unity God-man-his wife before the primordial sin”.

This is not a valid solution for all Orthodox translations; for example, the proper name is missing in this verse in Romanian Bible (RO). In other Orthodox Bibles (Ukrainian, Serbian) –

Gen 2:19 after the proper name is introduced, it appears systematically everywhere the Hebrew word [adàm] appears. This is a usual practice in most of the bibles.

#### Genesis 3:8

The German Luther Bible (LUO, LUT) use for the first time Adam at Genesis 3:8. The first appearance of Adam in Genesis 3:8 may be called “The unity of man and woman in the primordial sin” because the primordial man and woman felt shame after they ate the forbidden fruit. Not all German versions follow this solution. It may also be called “Martin Luther’s Doctrine”.

Actually, the primordial sin is breaking the God’s commandment and not the sexual union *per se*.

#### Genesis 3:17

In many English Protestant translations the proper name Adam appears in Genesis 3:17: ASV, NAU, RSV, NRS; German ELB. It is interesting to note that some of the modern Italian translations LND, NRV prefer the same place but not the place used in traditional Vulgate (Genesis 2:19). The same is in Portuguese ARA; French TOB. (“And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;” ASV)

The first appearance of Adam in Genesis 3:17 may be called “The Punishment Doctrine”.

#### Genesis 3:20/21

Bulgarian Protestant (BUL 1); Hungarian (HUN); French LSG, BFC; Spanish LBA, RVA.

The doctrine may be called “The logic of woman’s proper name appearance” because the proper name of the primordial woman Eve appeared for the first time in verse 20.

Modern Protestant versions accepted Genesis 3:17 or Genesis 3:20/21 as the most appropriate place to use the proper name Adam for the first time.

The first appearance of Adam in Genesis 3:17 or Genesis 3:21 in the modern Protestant and modern Italian versions may be called “The Punishment for the primordial sin makes Adam and Eve as human beings closer to usual persons, to us”. This corresponds Lotman’s opinion:

Perhaps the sharpest manifestation of human nature is in the use of proper names and, linked to this, the isolation of individuality, the uniqueness of the individual personality as foundational values for “other” and “others”; “I” and “other” represent two sides of the unified act of self-consciousness and one is impossible without the other (Lotman 2009: 31).

The primordial sin (to break the God’s commandment and not the sexual union *per se*) is closer to the notion of “I” but not to the notion of “the others”. *Ergo*, the first appearance of the proper names Adam and Eve here is a comment for the start of the humankind with the “two sides of the unified act of self-consciousness and one is impossible without the other”.

#### Genesis 4:25

Any of the previous doctrines for use of the proper name for the first time do not fit in Polish Bible (BTP). A proper name appears in Genesis 4:25. The first three chapters use the words człowiek [‘human’] and mężczyznę [‘man’, ‘male’, ‘masculine’].

The use of mężczyznę [‘man’, ‘masculine’] for the first time in Genesis 2: 19-20 is particularly relevant to the Vulgate. However, before that, in Genesis 1:27, word “mężczyznę” was also used to name the male half of humanity alongside the female.

Finally, here the doctrine is to avoid the theological and the common sense contradictions existing in the Hebrew use of the word אָדָם [adàm]. In the earlier Polish version (BGP) the proper name appears in Genesis 2:19.



### 5. Differences are provoked (governed) by features of the Hebrew text

Barrick and Busenitz (2004: 58) pointed out that the Hebrew spelling rule that “when the inseparable preposition is followed by the definite article, the ך is omitted, allowing the preposition to usurp the position and pointing of the article. The presence of the article is identifiable by the nonprepositional pointing of the preposition.” For the two instances of the name thus used (Genesis 3:17; 21), it is clear that the category of definiteness is implanted.

Hence, if there is a use of the word אָדָם [adàm] without the definite article הַ [h] and with “nonprepositional pointing of the preposition” – this should be a proper name. Let us note the fact that, if there is a definite article to the word [adàm] in Hebrew, it can be a common noun, it has not escaped the attention of at least two commentators.

In this one place, there is no article, and our version may be right in regarding it as a proper name. (Smith 1900: 22); we should undoubtedly here read “for the man” (lâ-âdâm) in accordance with the general usage in this section. The LXX introduces the proper name at Genesis 2:16, Lat. Vulg. at Genesis 2:19: both ignore the definite article here and in Genesis 2:21-23 (Ryle 1921).

Translators through the centuries were also familiar with this fact, but they had their individual approaches.

There are 22 uses of the word אָדָם [adàm] in Genesis 1-3:

Uses of the word אָדָם adàm in Genesis 1-3	Chapter and verse
1. אָדָם adàm	1. Genesis 1:26
2. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	2. Genesis 1:27
3. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	3. Genesis 2:7
4. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	4. Genesis 2:8
5. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	5. Genesis 2:15
6. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	6. Genesis 2:16
7. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	7. Genesis 2:18
8. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	8. Genesis 2:19
9. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	9. Genesis 2:20
10. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	10. Genesis 2:21
11. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	11. Genesis 2:22
12. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm + (man-אִישׁ [ish] + woman-אִשָּׁה [ishà])	12. Genesis 2:23
man-אִישׁ [ish]	Genesis 2:24
13. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	13. Genesis 2:25
14. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	14. Genesis 3:6
man-אִישׁ [ish]	Genesis 3:6
15. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	15. Genesis 3:8
16. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	16. Genesis 3:8
17. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	17. Genesis 3:12
18. אֲלֵךְ־לְךָ u-le-adàm lit. and to the man	18. Genesis 3:17
19. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm (Here is the first use of the proper name Eve)	19. Genesis 3:20
20. אֲלֵךְ־לְךָ [u-le-adàm] lit. and to the man	20. Genesis 3:21
21. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	21. Genesis 3:22
22. אָדָם־הַ ha-adàm	22. Genesis 3:24

The striking fact is that there is only one use of אָדָם [adàm] without a definite article - in Genesis 1:26. Hebrew spelling gives a possibility to speculate that God inspired the prophet because Adam in Hebrew should be in the moment when the *man* or the *mankind* had been in His intention, as an idea. (“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” RSV).

Genesis 1:26 represents a single possibility to have the proper name in Hebrew. The word אָדָם [adàm] should be understood as *humankind* but not as *man*. The materialisation of man in the next 21 cases does not involve a proper name.

The Hebrew single option for a proper name (in Genesis 1:26) has an excellent treatment according to the semiotic point view of Charles Peirce (1958, vol. 2: 329):

A proper name, when one meets with it for the first time, is existentially connected with some percept or other equivalent individual knowledge of the individual it names. It is *then*, and then only, a genuine Index. The next time one meets with it, one regards it as an Icon of that Index. The habitual acquaintance with it having been acquired, it becomes a Symbol whose Interpretant represents it as an Icon of an Index of the Individual named.

The first use of the noun אָדָם [adàm] prompts some interesting interpretations – it is in Genesis 1:26 and it is the only use of the word without definite article, i.e. without the category of definiteness. Consequently, we accept that here is the only one Hebrew possibility of the word Adam to be a proper name.

Verse 27 completely reaffirms the idea of Peirce because Adam is “in the image, and in the likeness of God”, i.e. Adam is a “genuine Index” of God.

## **6. Primordial man is a part of Cultural Unit Red Text within the Biblical text. Philosophical and theological aspects of cultural unit red.**

Some people claim the Jewish God is androgen, because they accept that “in our likeness” leads to “male and female”. It should be understood as an idea, a plan for mankind, but not to be treated “in our likeness” as a man and a woman. Actually, Hebrew words for “male and female” [zahàr ve nekevà] in 1:26-27 are two different words from man ([adàm]: man [ìsh]) and woman, wife ([ìshà] used further next in Genesis 2-3.

Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said, “Let us make mankind [adàm] in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male [zahàr] and female [nekevà] he created them (NIV).

In Platonic terms (Timeus, Parmenides), man [zahar] stands for the idea of *mankind*, not a single *man*. Many translations prefer to use *man* instead of *mankind*.

In Timaeus, the evolution of the world goes from perfect to imperfect, i.e. Adam in verses 26-27 is the perfect being. In the following verses, the idea of perfect Adam deteriorates, as he takes on a more material form and becomes increasingly imperfect. The materialisation began in Genesis 2:7 (“Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”) with materials that are some of Plato’s elements – earth/ground and breathing, i.e., air, and also two kinds of soul.

One of the souls is connected to the breathing, i.e. air, the other - to the souls of animals. The whole process correlates to Greek philosophy with terms such as “aer, pneuma, psyche, zoe, theion” being constantly employed, according to Peters 1967: 4.

In his analyses and presenting the Kabbalah, Scholem (1978 [1974]) uses word “Neoplatonic” more than 100 times. Along with the original Hebrew ideas and style, Neoplatonic influence in Kabbalah is undeniable. However, here we have the canonical Hebrew text of Genesis 1-3. The grammar facts for the noun אָדָם [adàm] imply presence of a Platonic type of Creation – from the perfect “Adam” to the imperfect material “man”.

In the Jewish tradition, the אָדָם [adàm] from Genesis 1:26-27 is called “man from heaven” and from Genesis 2:7 – “man of the earth”.

Paul’s text of 1 Corinthians 15:47-51 reflects a discussion between Alexandrian and Jerusalem schools on the issue who is the first and who is the second – the “man from heaven” or the “man of the earth”. Paul, presenting Jerusalem side, thinks that the “man of the earth” (Genesis 2:7) is first and after that comes the “man from heaven” (Genesis 1:26). It is strange that Paul writes to the Corinthians on this issue, because the whole dispute presupposes knowledge of Hebrew, namely that God formed man אָדָם [adàm] of dust from the *ground* אֲדָמָה [ad-amà] (Genesis 2:7), i.e. the man was formed from its feminine derivate in grammar terms.

One more extension of the cultural unit Red, which passes from the Old to the New Testament, is Edom אֶדוֹם [adòm] (meaning “red”): Edom is the second name given by God to Jacob’s twin brother. Edom was applied to Esau because of his selling his birthright for the *red* stew. (Genesis 25:25-26; 30 Esau asked Jacob to give him to eat “of this red pottage”). His descendants are called Edomites. Herod the Great was born in the land of Edom around 74 B.C. Red colour became symbol of Rome and the dynasty of Herod at Roman province of Judea.

If we speculate until the end, Lotman’s idea on proper names fits the theological opinion expressed in Genesis 1-3: the Bible is written by people, but under the dictation of the Holy Spirit, i.e. God is the author of the text. The Platonic essence of Genesis 1-3 reveals that when the “man from heaven” is at the closest position to God, to the author, it is identified with the “I”. (“I” and “other” represent two sides of the unified act of self-consciousness and one is impossible without the other ( Lotman 2009: 31)). Thus, the heavenly man is Adam אָדָם [adàm] because he is at the closest space to the author of the text. The process of materialisation removes the creation from the idea of Adam as heavenly man and he becomes the “others” – the common name אָדָם [adàm] with definite article.

The idea of Pierce for a proper name as genuine Index when one meets with it for the first time is just one point of view. As we saw, there are also other possibilities. Another perspective concerns “the *inner form* of the words”. The terms world-view and inner form are usually traced back to Humboldt’s (date) philosophy of language, considering that the inner form is not equal to the worldview but an important element of the overall world-view of every language. For different implications of the term inner form see Leopold 1929.

## 7. Conclusions

My research has led me to the following conclusions about the drastic differences in the first appearance of the proper name “Adam” the Indo-European and Finno-Ugric translations of the Bible, differences that occur due to complex cultural reasons.

In the Hebrew original of Massoretic text, there is only one candidate for proper name – the first use of the word [adàm] in Genesis 1:26. This verse narrates about the intention of God to create the *mankind* [adàm].

The Hebrew spelling and grammar do not allow us to treat all subsequent uses of the word [adam] in Genesis 1-3 as a proper name because they have a definite article in the Hebrew language the word אָדָם [adàm] includes the definite article and as a result in the translations it is mistaken as a proper name.

All translations ignore the definite article and insert the proper name according some personal logic/doctrine.

None of the translations introduces for the first time the proper noun Adam in a way adequate to the original Hebrew spelling.

The translations of the Old Testament must deal not only with inter-linguistic asymmetry and dissymmetry, but also with cultural asymmetries and dissymmetries. Perhaps the hardest issue is to accommodate the monotheistic theology to the polytheism of Hellenic culture. The translators of the first ever (the Septuagint, third century B.C.) translation had their corresponding Hellenic ideological circle – Neo-Platonism. Thus, their decision to translate the only candidate for proper name, that is Adam as *mankind* ἄνθρωπος (Genesis 1:26), as well as to ignore the Hebrew original and to introduce the proper name in Genesis 2:16, is indicative of the deep and difficult processes of cultural and theological accommodation.

The linguistic inner form of the name reveals the tip of an iceberg of misinterpretations. For a proper interpretation, prospective translators should also consider the connection between the *red* colour אָדָם [adòm], *blood* דָּם [dam], and *ground* אֲדָמָה [adamà] (the feminine non-suppletive form of *man* [adam]), the material the first man was formed by in Genesis 2:7. The inner form is a reflex of a logical feature, which posits as a semantic basis for any word. The inner form is implanted into the word-derivation processes and etymology.

Usually inner forms present the Relativity but not the Universality of inner forms in different languages. Thus, the feminine derivate of אָדָם [adàm] is *earth, ground* אֲדָמָה [adamà], typical to Hebrew. Another word, deriving from the same root is *red* אָדָם [adòm].

The redness of the first man gives different perspectives for interpretation, and presents the Hebrew world-view and corresponds to Plato's Timeus. Actually, the Hebrew world-view always has been a major difficulty for translators. In any case the cultural unit Red in Hebrew (Biblical and Modern) should include the problem with proper and common names אָדָם [adàm] and their connection with *red* אָדָם [adòm], *blood* דָּם [dam], and *earth, ground* אֲדָמָה [adamà].

Another rank list and interpretations in Jewish heritage is formed by the different words/terms for *man* in Hebrew – [adàm], [ish], [enòsh], [gèver].

Semiotic interpretations concerning the proper name cast a new and original light on the specifics of research and the theological aspects of the Hebrew original and the interpretations of different translators.

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## Bible Versions

### Cyrillic

BUL 1 Bulgarian Protestant Bible 1940, 1995, 2005

BUL 2 Bulgarian Orthodox Version 1925, 1991

RST Russian Synodal Text of the Bible

SRB Serbian Orthodox Bible 1847

UKR Ukrainian Orthodox Version

### Czech

BKR Bible Kralicka 1613

CEP Cesky Ekumenicky preklad 1985

### Dutch

SVV Statenvertaling 1637

### Finno-Ugrian

FIN Raamattu, 1933 käännös

HUN Károli 1993

EST Estonian Bible 2000

### French

BFC French Bible en français courant 1997

DRB French Version Darby 1885

LSG French Louis Segond 1910

TOB French Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible 1988

### German

LUO –Luther Bibel 1912



LUT – Revidierte Lutherbibel 1984

ELB – Revidierte Elberfelder 1993

#### Greek

LXT – Septuaginta Rahlfs'

VM – Vamvas Modern Greek Bible

#### English

ASV American Standard Version 1901

DBY The Darby Bible 1884/1890

ESV The English Standard Version 2001

KJV King James 1611/1769

King James 2000 Bible

NAB The New American Bible 1970/2011

NAS New American Standard Bible 1977

NAU New American Standard Bible 1995

NIB New International Version UK 1983

NIV New International Version 1984 (US)

NKJ New King James Version 1982

NRS New Revised Standard Version 1989

RSV Revised Standard Version 1952/1971

RWB Revised Webster 1833/1995

WEB The Webster Bible 1833

#### Hebrew

WTT Version 4.4 2005

#### Italian

IEP San Paolo Edizione 1995

LND La Nuova Diodati 1991

NRV La Sacra Biblia Nuova Riveduta 1994

#### Latin

VUL Latin Vulgate

#### Polish

BGP Biblia Gdanska 1632

BTP Polish Biblia Tysiaclecia. Wydanie 4. 1965/84

#### Portuguese

ACF Portuguese Corrigida Fiel, 1753/1995

ARA Portuguese Almeida Revista e Atualizada 1993

#### Romanian

RO Cornilescu Bible 1921

#### Spanish

LBA La Biblia de Las Americas 1986

RVA Reina-Valera Actualizada 1989

# MULTI-LEVEL INTERPRETATION OF INDIRECT DISCOURSE NAMES

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Searching for the possible in the unlikely or the improbable  
(Trifonas 2015: 845)

## **Abstract**

This paper evidences the continuity of reference interpretation, which a reader faces when dealing with indirect discourse names in written text. Prior oculographic experiments have shown significant diversity in the readers' interpretation of textual stimuli containing indirect names with major differences concerning referent identification and reading time. One of the possible factors, which may have caused this instability, is the degree of the indirect name entrenchment, which in most experiments was neglected. Another factor is that the inability to recognize the referent does not necessarily mean that the reader did not have his idea of a sentence or text construal.

We hypothesized that "responsive understanding" (Petrilli 2016: 285) of non-entrenched indirect nominal constructions presupposes multi-level reference interpretation. To check the hypothesis an oculographic experiment was conducted to explore the eye movements and referent recognition of native speakers' reading texts containing non-entrenched indirect names (the ones whose meaning in the text differed from the entrenched metaphoric and metonymic meanings given in the dictionary or in the linguistic corpus) versus direct names.

## **1. The problem of indirect discourse referents interpretation**

The problem of reference interpretation and reference ambiguity has received considerable attention in various spheres, including philosophy of language, linguistic semantics, discourse research, and cognitive semiotics. In terms of discourse indirect names the reference ambiguity is mostly treated through the criteria of heuristic decision-making procedure (Kahnemann, Tversky 1979; Jaszczolt 2005) determined by various salience factors (Giora 2003). The reader's decision about the direct or indirect name status (and the name reference) is taken on the basis of syntactic and construction semantics salience (Langacker 2000), discourse event roles salience (Chafe 1994; Iriskhanova 2014), embodiment models salience (Barsalou 1999), primary

metaphoric and metonymic conceptual models salience (Gibbs, Matlock 2008), salience of analogical conceptual models (Gentner 2001), etc.

These criteria play a significant role in indirect names interpretation but either taken in isolation or viewed integrally, they cannot in all circumstances explain and predetermine the reader's line of reference interpretation. They serve to model the researcher's mode of inference when the researcher sets the criteria of interpretation and tests them identifying their interpretive value (Pragglejaz Group 2007). This might be the reason why various experiments (including oculographic experiments) contrasting the reading time and referent identification index in sentences with indirect and direct names show different results ranging from significant changes in interpretation to absence of such changes (Glucksberg et al. 1982; Wolff and Gentner 2000; Coulson and Van Petten 2002; Kazmerzki et al. 2003; Gibbs and Matlock 2008). In oculographic experiments these are the parameters of fixations number, fixations duration, and the referent identification index that serve to mark the cognitive effort in interpretation. When testing one factor (for instance, reference ambiguity in focal syntactic positions) other possible salience factors are often neglected.

Besides there are some other factors, which are far more difficult to test, for example, the factors of the reader's individuality, of Logos, of previous or recent experience that in the first instance guide the reference interpretation of discourse indirect names. Developing her theories of the Other and Otherness and Responsive Understanding within the new scientific semiotic paradigm but following the general paths of interpretive semiotics of Victoria Welby and Charles S. Peirce, Susan Petrilli writes:

Meanings evolve dynamically in open interpretive processes. The greater the degree of otherness in the relationship between interpretant sign and interpreted sign, therefore of dialogism, the more interpretation develops in terms of active dialogic response, creative reformulation, inventiveness, and critique rather than mere repetition, literal translation, synonymic substitution, and identification <...> The self converges with the chain of sign-interpretant relations in which it recognizes itself, to the point that experience of the self of another person is not a more complex problem than recognition of certain sign-interpretant relations as 'mine', those through which 'I' become aware of myself (Petrilli 2016: 855–856).

These cognitive semiotic ideas clearly testify in favor of a different, a reader or an interpreter's view on sign interpretation and reference ambiguity problem solution.

If we view the following excerpt:

[Wife:] "I think it might be possible that we are at this moment sitting in the presence of...of Franz Liszt himself! <...> This must be some sort of reincarnation". [Husband:] "You mean this lousy cat?" (Dahl 1995: 144).

We notice that there is a perspective shift which allows potential variants of referent identification as (a) cat, (b) Franz Liszt, (c) half-man, half-beast. Due to personal or occasional factors, a reader may construe the discourse event as: (1) husband, (2) wife, or (3) internal observer, and consequently identify the referent as (a), (b), or (c). Thus, both names of this *lousy cat* and *Franz Liszt* may get the status of indirect names, and the choice does not depend only on syntactic or discourse salience. What mostly matters is the perspective that a reader adopts. Then in case the perspective line chosen were that of the husband, the name Franz Liszt would be viewed as indirect; were it the perspective line of the wife, the name this lousy cat would turn out to be indirect. We may here conclude that indirectness of a discourse name or nominal construction (here it is the construction *lousy cat* or *Franz Liszt* depending on the perspective construed by the reader) presupposes a great deal of variation.

The key factor, which serves as a borderline, is the perspective adopted during the process of balancing the inferred focal elements of the referents construed while reading the text. The balance itself is guided by a variety of interpretation factors several of which we know from theoretical assumptions like personal relevance (Wadensjö 1998; Roy 2000), reading as problem-solution task (Gile 1995) or momentarily decision-taking (Janzen, Shaffer 2008), and some we can easily presuppose following cognitive semiotic guidelines (Nöth 1985; Manetti 2010). These may include previous successful experience factor (Welby 1893, 1896; Peirce 1940), irrational factors (Morris 1948), and inner dialogism factors (Bakhtin 1979 (1986); Barthes 1988).

At the same time, it seems obvious that most commonly though a reader will construe the discourse event more or less the same. In the text fragment given above in all probability it will be the perspective of a husband who is skeptical about his wife's fantasies. In this case the name *Franz Liszt* will be interpreted as indirect.

How does it happen that from different more and less likely and unlikely options a reader is able to choose a possible route to interpret the text with indirect names (even non-entrenched or unconventional ones like in the text fragment above)? What is more, even provided that the readers' interpretations were different and the name status inferred were different, do the reading schemes turn out to vary and reflect the itinerary of cognitive choice? These are the questions to be answered by means of conducting experimental research on how a reader interprets a text with indirect non-entrenched discourse names.

## 2. Methodology and experiment procedure

The central question is how the reading scheme of a text with indirect non-entrenched names differs from that of a text with direct names. I hypothesized that there might be different reading schemes depending on the factors of interpretation. The methodological idea was to use two similar stimulus texts, one with direct names, the other with indirect, where the salience factors are balanced. It was also important to apply different salience factors to alleviate the effect of one particular factor.

To prepare the reading stimulus we made it equal for the chances of direct and indirect nominal combinations referents in both texts to be identified. As I have mentioned above, there are some obvious factors that will facilitate the process of reference identification irrespective of the discourse name status (whether direct or indirect), so we have to balance them in both texts. For instance, the factor of salience (syntactic, graphic, stylistic, phonetic, etc.) affects referent identification simply because the referent name gets into focal (or marked) position. There are also psychological salience factors that might facilitate the identifying process during the oculographic perception (Kliegl 2006; Rayner 1998; Staub 2015, etc.). Some of them are the length of the nominal construction and its position preceding the punctuation mark, which, in most cases, will provide the presence of a fixation (not a saccade). In our experiment, we compiled two texts for Russian native speakers where the length and the text position of the direct and indirect nominals was similar. By direct nominal phrases we meant any kind of word combinations with definite nominal reference though not necessarily expressed by names, which is explained by the necessity to counterbalance the characterizing effect of indirect names.

We checked that all indirect names were non-entrenched by means of corpus analysis (National Corpus of the Russian Language) where none of the indirect names ever occurred to signify the type of the referent implied in the text. Thus, we alleviated psychological, syntactic, and primary cognitive models salience. At the same time, we allowed different word frequency index of indirect names realizing that frequency index would influence the referent identification index.



The *EYETRIBE* eye-tracker running at 30 Hz and specially designed program *EyeTrackProc* were used for the experiment. The *EyeTrackProc* software helps receive the reading scheme in fixations, saccades and blinks and calculate the fixations duration.

The results can be presented in the form of a reading scheme graph (Fig. 1) and the fixations of exact position on the reading XYZ trajectory in Excel formats (Fig. 2). What counts is the overall reading time, fixations number, fixations position respective of the text fragments involving indirect and direct nominals, fixation duration. The reading XYZ trajectory results allow to follow the visual perception for both left and right eyes, but in our experiment, we countered on tracking the reading trajectory for one eye only (the left eye) as we did not test the psychological aspects of visual perception regimes.

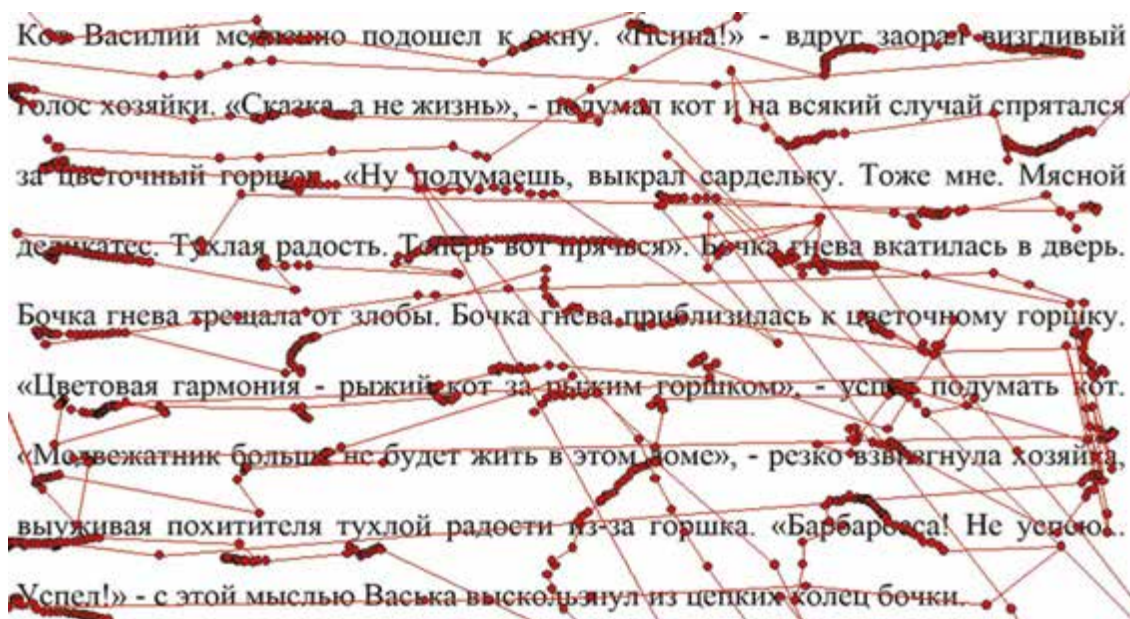


Figure 1. Reading scheme graph.

55	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	541.7888	285.2054	-285.205	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	606.8504	y	265.8797	pcenter
56	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	546.6028	282.9629	-282.963	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	599.7852	y	274.6451	pcenter
57	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	640.4359	269.9488	-269.949	fx	false	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	639.551	y	277.8386	pcenter
58	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	656.6225	274.9428	-274.943	fx	false	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	654.4831	y	279.821	pcenter
59	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	661.6802	278.6637	-278.664	fx	false	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	664.0493	y	282.8799	pcenter
60	"category"	heartbeat	statuscode	200																		
61	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	665.471	279.5943	-279.594	fx	false	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	630.3947	y	287.4239	pcenter
62	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	668.3718	280.2105	-280.211	fx	false	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	675.1809	y	288.1664	pcenter
63	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	671.0952	280.8246	-280.825	fx	false	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	679.2165	y	288.302	pcenter
64	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	673.5146	281.5146	-281.515	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	683.2787	y	288.0249	pcenter
65	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	675.8666	281.9799	-281.979	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	687.2448	y	288.7967	pcenter
66	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	677.4805	282.1693	-282.169	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	688.4095	y	289.4095	pcenter
67	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	679.2513	282.2456	-282.246	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	691.7987	y	284.0013	pcenter
68	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	682.1369	282.3278	-282.328	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	705.1932	y	280.9394	pcenter
69	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	685.7121	282.1942	-282.194	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	716.5904	y	280.7918	pcenter
70	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	689.7594	282.3035	-282.304	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	728.404	y	278.3812	pcenter
71	"category"	heartbeat	statuscode	200																		
72	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	694.1654	282.1793	-282.179	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	738.4661	y	277.8047	pcenter
73	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	698.8915	281.8237	-281.824	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	747.1017	y	277.7471	pcenter
74	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	707.7405	281.159	-281.159	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	756.3794	y	278.8712	pcenter
75	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	714.8308	280.382	-280.382	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	762.8877	y	279.0809	pcenter
76	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	723.3578	278.1605	-278.161	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	851.1871	y	291.1441	pcenter
77	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	732.0582	278.1773	-278.177	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	835.8484	y	290.1566	pcenter
78	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	739.9424	277.3648	-277.365	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	837.8031	y	284.7448	pcenter
79	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	747.5837	277.1112	-277.111	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	837.8184	y	287.5519	pcenter
80	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	754.5641	276.3336	-276.334	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	839.8975	y	287.2404	pcenter
81	"category"	heartbeat	statuscode	200																		
82	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	760.7971	274.8358	-274.836	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	842.1955	y	283.5507	pcenter
83	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	767.0343	274.0603	-274.06	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	842.4139	y	279.7516	pcenter
84	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	843.4935	284.5639	-284.564	fx	false	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	843.4935	y	284.5639	pcenter
85	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	840.2291	272.0867	-272.087	fx	false	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	845.9573	y	284.5651	pcenter
86	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	841.0908	272.2094	-272.209	fx	false	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	848.5764	y	283.982	pcenter
87	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	842.4681	272.7914	-272.791	fx	false	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	850.9529	y	282.055	pcenter
88	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	843.2552	272.8483	-272.848	fx	false	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	849.8569	y	280.716	pcenter
89	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	845.5254	272.3695	-272.37	fx	false	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	849.5058	y	279.2258	pcenter
90	"category"	tracker	request	get	statuscode	200	values	"frame"	"avg"	"x"	844.2241	270.8315	-270.832	fx	true	lefteye	"avg"	"x"	856.3006	y	277.9653	pcenter

Figure 2. Reading XYZ trajectory results in Excel format (for the left eye only, fragment).

The participants of the experiment were 24 native speakers of Russian aged 19-21, students, who were placed into two groups (10 and 14) with the first group reading first the text with direct names (Text 1), then the text with indirect names (Text 2), and the second group reading Text 2 first, then Text 1. Both stimulus texts with highlighted areas of interest (in the stimulus



texts these areas were certainly not highlighted) are given in Figures 3 and 4. As you can see, the highlighted nominals occupy the same positions within two contrasting texts, they have practically the same length and punctuation marks in pre- and postposition, which helps alleviate the visual perception differences.

Кот Василий медленно подошел к окну. «Обжора!» - вдруг заорал визгливый голос хозяйки. «Гяжела моя жизнь», - подумал кот и на всякий случай спрятался за цветочный горшок, «Ну подумаешь, выкрал сардельку. Тоже мне. Обычная сарделька. Не особо вкусная. Теперь вот прячусь». Хозяйка ворвалась в дверь. Женщина вся дрожала от злости. Она приблизилась к цветочному горшку. «Интересное сочетание - рыжий кот за рыжим горшком», - успел подумать кот. «Этот кот больше не будет жить в моем доме», - резко взвизгнула хозяйка, выуживая похитителя вкусной сардельки из-за горшка. «Нападают! Не успею... Успел!» - с этой мыслью Васька выскользнул из цепких рук хозяйки.

Figure 3. Text 1 with direct names and nominal phrases.

Кот Василий медленно подошел к окну. «Псина!» - вдруг заорал визгливый голос хозяйки. «Сказка, а не жизнь», - подумал кот и на всякий случай спрятался за цветочный горшок, «Ну подумаешь, выкрал сардельку. Тоже мне. Мясной деликатес. Гухлая радость. Теперь вот прячусь». Бочка гнева вкатилась в дверь. Бочка гнева трещала от злости. Бочка гнева приблизилась к цветочному горшку. «Цветовая гармония - рыжий кот за рыжим горшком», - успел подумать кот. «Медвежатник больше не будет жить в этом доме», - резко взвизгнула хозяйка, выуживая похитителя тухлой радости из-за горшка. «Барбаросса! Не успею... Успел!» - с этой мыслью Васька выскользнул из цепких колец бочки.

Figure 4. Text 2 with indirect names and nominal phrases.

The text is of a narrative type, the word-by-word marking and translation of Text 1 is given below.

Line 1

Кот Василий медленно подошел к окну. «Обжора!» – вдруг заорал визгливый  
[He-cat] [Vasily] [slowly] [came] [to] [window] [glutton] [suddenly] [shouted] [shriek]

Male Cat Vasily slowly came to the window. “A glutton cat!” – there came out a sudden shriek

Line 2

голос хозяйки. «Тяжела моя жизнь», – подумал кот и на всякий случай спрятался  
[voice] [missis] [difficult] [my] [life] [thought] [he-cat] [and] [on] [any] [case] [hid]  
voice of Missis. “Life is a difficult thing” – the Cat thought and to be on the safe side he hid

Line 3

за цветочный горшок, «Ну, подумаешь, выкрал сардельку. Тоже мне. Обычная  
[behind] [flower] [pot] [well] [thought] [sneaked out] [sausage][well] [me] [usual]  
behind a flower pot, “I guess it’s because I sneaked out a sausage. What the hell! A usual

Line 4

сарделька. Не особо вкусная. Теперь вот прячься». Хозяйка ворвалась в дверь.  
[sausage] [not] [very] [tasty] [now] [well] [hide] [missis] [broke] [into] [door]  
sausage. Nothing special. But now I have to hide my head”. Missis broke into the door.

Line 5

Женщина вся дрожала от злости. Она приблизилась к цветочному горшку.  
[woman] [all] [convulsed] [with] [anger] [she] [approached] [to] [flower] [pot]  
She was convulsed with anger. She approached the flower pot.

Line 6

«Интересное сочетание – рыжий кот за рыжим горшком», – успел подумать кот.  
[interesting] [combination] [red] [he-cat] [behind] [red] [pot] [had time] [to think] [he-cat]  
“Looks interesting – a red cat behind a red flower pot”, the Cat thought.

Line 7

«Этот кот больше не будет жить в моем доме», резко взвизгнула хозяйка,  
[this] [cat] [never] [no] [will] [live] [in] [my] [house] [suddenly] [screamed] [missis]  
“This cat won’t live under my roof”, Missis let out a screech

Line 8

выуживая похитителя вкусной сардельки из-за горшка. «Нападают! Не успею...  
[fishing out] [thief] [tasty] [sausage] [from behind] [pot] [Assault] [don’t] [have time]  
when fishing out the thief of the tasty sausage from behind the pot. “Assault! No time to bundle out

Line 9

Успел!» – с этой мыслью Васька выскользнул из цепких рук хозяйки.  
[made it] [with] [this] [idea] [Vaska] [slipped out] [from] [clingly] [hands] [missis]  
I’ve made it!” feeling happy Vasily slipped out of Missis’ hands.

In Text 2 with indirect names and nominal combinations the substitutions were made for the direct combinations of a *Glutton cat* (line 1) to ‘Псина’ [*Bitch*], *Life is a difficult thing* (line 2) to ‘Сказка, а не жизнь’ [*Life is a fairy tale*], *sausage* (line 4) to ‘деликатес’ [*delicacy*], *Nothing special* (line 4) to ‘Тухлая радость’ [*Rotten happiness*], *Missis* (line 4) to ‘Бочка гнева’ [*The Barrel of anger*], *This cat* (line 7) to ‘Медвежатник’ [*Robber*], *Assault* (line 8) to ‘Барбаросса’ [*Barbarossa*]. In four cases, metaphoric and metonymic models were selected for indirect reference, in two cases the transfer was based on disanalogy. When selecting the lexemes attention was given to the choice of non-entrenched indirect lexemes in naming the types of discourse referents. In the National Corpus of the Russian Language in the Basic Corpus we examined 1) the word frequency of the indirect lexemes in the Nominative Case and used the ones with different frequency index (FI) to balance the possible lexical frequency effects (FI of the lexemes chosen is 72–46690); 2) the reference of these lexemes basing on the first 100 text fragments to escape possible entrenchment effects.

We have also applied some slight changes in the choice of two predicates that are used in postposition to these noun phrases to escape the collocation misuse.

Thus, in preparing a stimulus text with indirect names and nominal phrases interwoven we

alleviated the effects of syntactic, lexical, and graphic factors, also the factors of visual perception. The only obvious factors left are the individual factors of the past experience, occasional factors, factors of relevance which it is extremely difficult to test separately from linguistic and psychological salience factors.

### 3. The experiment results and data analysis

The participants were asked to read the text attentively and get ready to answer some of the questions on the text contents offered by the interlocutor after the participant had finished reading.

The questions proposed concerned the reference interpretation of the indirect names and nominal phrases. They were offered in the following format about each of the indirect names used: What does 'псина' [*bitch*] mean? What does 'псина' [*bitch*] refer to in the text? No questions were later posed to the participants of Test Group 1 as they previously recognized the referents of the indirect names and nominal phrases. Only the participants of Test Group 2 were asked about the reference identification after their Text 2 reading.

In Test Group 1 the oculographic results of one participant (Participant 9) were inconsistent (the results of the calibration procedure were unsatisfactory after two consequent trials). In Test Group 2, two participants (Participants 23 and 24) demonstrated the reading schemes that lacked stable fixations and for that reason were not subject to further cognitive linguistic analysis.

The first parameter that I test is the reading time (RT) of Text 1 and Text 2 in the Test Group 1, and Text 2 and Text 1 in the Test Group 2. The results (in seconds) are presented in two tables, with the average reading time given below.

Test Group 1 Participants	Text 1 (direct names)	Text 2 (indirect names)
1	29,04 s	25,53 s
2	41,04 s	36,63 s
3	31,74 s	30,12 s
4	24,39 s	27,84 s
5	34,98 s	31,32 s
6	36,99 s	38,82 s
7	32,43 s	30,63 s
8	23,34 s	23,37 s
9	-	-
10	31,8 s	33,12 s
<b>Average RT</b>	<b>31,75 s</b>	<b>30,82 s</b>

**Table 1.** Reading time and average reading time in Test Group 1

In general, the second presentation of the text where seven direct names were substituted with indirect ones required 1,03 less time. Five participants' results demonstrated the decrease in reading time whereas there was an increase in the reading time results of three participants. One participant had approximately the same reading time for both texts. The results were somewhat misleading because we had expected a more significant reading time increase. At the same time, it was obvious that "top-down" strategy (Norman and Bobrow 1975; Rayner 1998) of reading (we suppose that the participants practically immediately recognized that they were facing the same narrative plot) prevailed which affected the decrease of the reading time for Text 2.

The increase of the reading time with some participants may be the result of a different reading strategy adopted, the one named a “bottom-up” strategy which presupposes that the initial access to word meaning is not totally dependent on contextual information with the lexicon being an autonomous processing module (Tatenhouse et al. 1979; Seidenberg et al. 1984; Kliegl et al. 2006).

Test Group 2 Participants	Text 2 (indirect names)	Text 1 (direct names)
11	42,09 s	36,66 s
12	34,32 s	30,18 s
13	42,39 s	37,62 s
14	35,13 s	29,88 s
15	43,35 s	39,48 s
16	44,88 s	33,6 s
17	31,08 s	31,68 s
18	42,12 s	30,06 s
19	34,62 s	31,11 s
20	37,11 s	32,79 s
21	41,28 s	32,7 s
22	37,23 s	32,7 s
23	-	-
24	-	-
<b>Average RT</b>	<b>38,8 s</b>	<b>33,2 s</b>

Table 2. Reading time and average reading time in Test Group 1

As compared with the results in Table 1, the exponential 1,17 decrease of Text 1 average reading time results seems indicative of the growing status of “top-down” strategy applied by the participants. It is worth specifying that this is true of all the participants who took part in the experiment. The graphs below demonstrate the difference in reading time (in seconds) and reading strategies of participants 1 to 22.

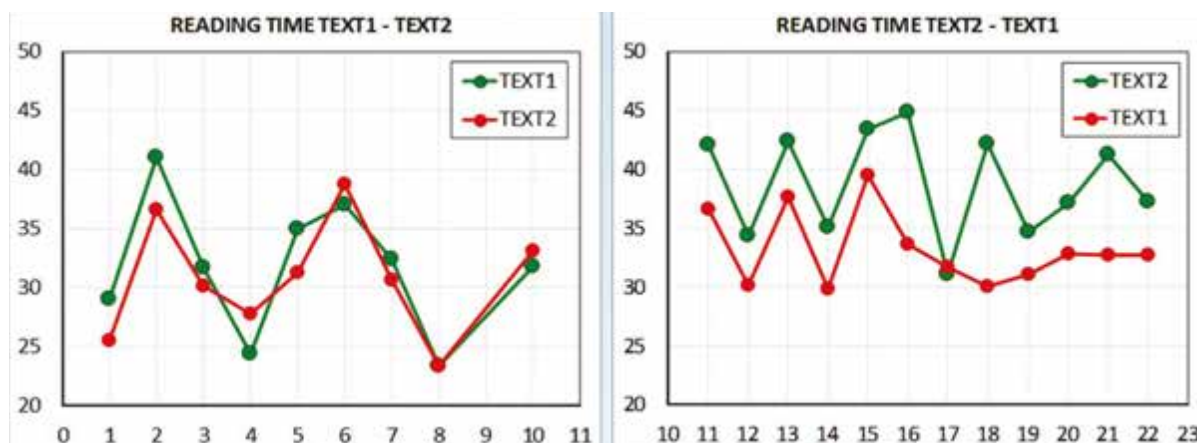


Figure 5. Comparative reading time results of the Test Groups.

These graphs give a visually exponential proof of the increase in reading time and consequently in cognitive effort spent on interpreting the text with non-entrenched indirect names.

Nevertheless, the question still existed whether longer reading meant better reference interpretation. I expected that there would be steady correspondences between the reading time spent on reading the fragments involving indirect names and the reference interpretation index. Consequently, I analyzed the results of the interlocutor's protocols on participants' reference interpretation. It was noticeable that indirect names with different lexical and syntactic salience factor (frequency index, syntactic focus) or the text fragments in postposition to these names required different reading time. But what was really striking was the fact that for the indirect names in less salient positions (those in Lines 4c, 7, 8) the index of reference correct interpretation was low (0,66, 0,66, and 0,33 respectively) while the fixation duration didn't decrease steadily.

A conclusion was made that apart from general referent interpretation which results in the referent identification there is some other way of path of referent interpretation, which helps the reading process continue.

First, I examined the reading schemes of those participants who were more successful in referent interpretation but whose indirect names fixations were not prolonged. The explanation to that was an expected one – to identify the referent the prolonged fixations in post-nominal groups were applied. This implied that prolonged reading of other text fragments helped to reconstrue the narrative. Thus, in all cases indirect names identification required prolonged overall reading time.

When I examined the reading scheme of the participants who did not give the right answers on referent interpretation I noticed that their reading trajectories did not involve those of reverse saccades (with repeated fixations on the indirect names) and there were not any significant fixations duration increase in post-nominal positions. The reading process could flow without exact referent identification, which economized the time. The only explanation I can give is that it was enough for the reader to interpret the event roles in the narrative (which is most obviously enough not to terminate the reading process), it economized cognitive effort and saved time.

All in all, there seem to be three distinct possibilities of discourse indirect names interpretation: referent identification by means of prolonged nominal fixations which is time-consuming, referent identification by means of prolonged post-nominal fixations which is also time-consuming, referent event-role identification which is more economizing, and failure to recognize either the referent or its event role which takes the shortest reading time just to cope with linguistic structures.

The indirect discourse referent interpretation is then a multi-level process that is subject to multiple individual factors.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The oculographic experiment testing the hypothesis of multi-level interpretation of indirect discourse non-entrenched names and nominal phrases showed that there is a formidable imbalance between the reading time (including the overall reading time of the text with non-entrenched indirect names and the reader's separate fixations duration), the discourse names status (indirect and direct) and the fact of referent identification. Although reading textual fragments containing non-entrenched indirect names did not always result in prolonged fixations duration, the general reading time spent on texts with indirect names compared to those with direct ones was significantly greater. One more observation, which seemed of importance, was the stable correspondence between fixations duration and levels of referent interpretation. The experiment data suggested three definite options of multi-level reference interpretation (as a



mental space, an event-role, or a linguistic semantics role) which affect the fixations duration. This is the way a reader adapts to the indirectness in the text and “responds” to the challenges the author of the text imposes.

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# RELATIVE TENSES, LINGUISTIC RELATIVISM AND MEDIA LANGUAGE

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## **Abstract**

Linguistics describes relative tenses as grammatical temporal expressions, in which a situation time is related to a contextually-given reference time; additionally, they are based on the conceptual opposition of anteriority/simultaneity/posteriority. Relative time reference is inherent to both non-finite verbs as well as tense-aspect interaction.

The aim of this paper is to detect correlations between the grammatical code of Russian gerunds and cultural practices in comparison to similar Lithuanian forms. To achieve this aim, the study gives a brief review on functional features of these forms in the use of different communicational contexts from historical and contemporary perspectives. In the examples, the study identifies how the convergence of spoken and written practices, which was inspired by media and literacy cultural processes, plays the crucial role in the evolution and functioning of these forms.

## **1. Introduction**

Over the past century, two great discussions in the field of humanities have been identified, both based on the question of whether human thought is determined by a cultural environment.

One of these discussions arose in linguistics, starting from the Humboldtian tradition and ethnographic research, which encouraged the linguistic relativity hypothesis. Followers of the strong version of this hypothesis adhere to an opinion that linguistic categories limit and determine cognitive categories. Alternatively, supporters of the universalist approach substantiate universal ground for linguistic categories. The deep and sometimes very passionate discussion

among these two approaches gave science inspiring theories (e.g. the universal grammar theory, the theory of linguistic universals, the prototype theory, the conceptual metaphor theory etc.) and initiated remarkable debates (e.g. the colour naming debate, the debate on grammar of time in Hopi language etc.).

Although today the discussion is still vivid, eventually, it softened the strong positions and let the linguists come to a common attitude towards certain issues. One of the important conclusions drawn by linguists in this discussion is that it is not linguistic formal categories or conceptual categories that are universal, but rather relationships among particular situation types (Croft 2010).

Another discussion in the theory of communication gained impulse from Toronto School, which postulated that communication types impact the sociocultural and mental structures, and force historical change. The exponents of this school applied diachronic analysis of how the history of civilization is influenced by different communication media and technology (e.g., parchment, paper, alphabet, printing press, electronic media etc.). One of the most comprehensively analysed contrasts was drawn between orality and literacy (Havelock 1963, McLuhan 1962, Ong 2002).

The criticism of the Toronto School communication theory was based on its interpretation as a technological determinism. Nevertheless, linguistic investigations on the issue of spoken and written language (Biber 1986, Chafe 1982, Halliday & Ruqaiya 1976) impel researchers to reconsider traditional approaches in language teaching as well as discourse and intercultural communication perspectives. In this regard, scholars conceive orality and literacy as “epiphenomenal poles on a continuum” (Tannen 1982b), where orality and literacy distinguish many features, but in particular situations the spoken language can possess a number of features of the written language while the written language can have the features of orality. Speakers can apply different communicative strategies and these strategies vary by history and culture. As Tannen (1982a:18) summarises:

The difference between features of language which distinguish discourse types reflects not only — and not mainly — spoken vs. written mode, but rather genre and related register, growing out of communicative goals and content.

It is evident that humans express meanings which are relevant and that the meanings of the highest cultural and cognitive salience are structured in grammar (Bybee 1985:13–14). Therefore, the analysis of grammatical categories can be a worthwhile approach in cultural studies.

The object of this study is the relative tenses in Russian and Lithuanian.

The distinction of tenses to the absolute and relative ones appeared in linguistics in the 16th century. Linguistics describe absolute tenses as grammatical temporal expressions related to the time of an utterance. Relative tenses, in contrary, are the tenses in which a situation time is related to a contextually-given reference time. Roman Jakobson (1971) in his classification of grammatical categories indicated opposition between absolute and relative tenses. He adapted the term of Otto Jespersen ‘*shifter*’ for a linguistic code, where the general meaning can be defined only with a reference to the message itself. The tense has such a reference, while the aspect has not, so the tense is a shifter, while the aspect is a non-shifter. According to Jakobson (1971:134), relative tense is one of the grammatical phenomena of a broader category of taxis, which presupposes a narrated event with reference to another narrated event, but without a reference to the message. Such usage of a temporal expression can also be called secondary deixis (Aresian 1986). Gerund (rus. *деенричастие*) is the grammatical category, which expresses semantics of taxis in Russian. The closest categories in Lithuanian are adverbial participles (lit. *pusdalyvis*, semi-participle) and gerund (lit. *padalyvis*).

The aim of this paper is to detect correlations between the grammatical code of the Russian gerund and cultural practices in comparison to similar Lithuanian forms. Therefore, this study aims to give a brief review on functional features of these forms in the contexts of different communicational contexts from historical and contemporary perspectives.

## 2. Evolution of gerund in Russian

Linguists identified the roots of gerund evolution from the earliest surviving documents of Old Russian. Old Russian had two types of active participles: nominal and pronominal, each of them having forms of gender, number, case and verbal features of aspect, transitivity and tense. The Russian gerund has evolved from the nominative form of the nominal active participle.

The evolution of the gerund began with irregularities in agreement between subject and nominal participle in phrases, where the agent of the participle has a secondary role in the main clause. Such usage was registered in the oldest Russian texts of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Zalizniak 2004:184). The examples of disagreement with the nominative subject are sporadic in this period, but it allowed linguists to assume that the process of the loss of agreement in a spoken language had already begun (Zhyvov 2012:180).

Both forms of nominal and pronominal participles functioned in parallel in historical textual resources of the 12-15<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, it is important to note that the amount of agreement errors in particular types of texts differed. In such classical texts as psalter, gospel, epistle there are almost no errors in agreement, which apparently occurred by rewriting any inaccuracy. From this point, the texts of chronicles are more interesting, because a chronicler is free to implement participles from both the written and spoken language. As Zhyvov (2012:182) points out, if the chronicler orientates toward exemplary texts, there the “agreemental intention” comes out even when the spoken norm differs. Conversely, if the chronicler implements his natural lingual skills he uses unadjusted participles. This leads to the gradual establishment of a written norm.

Birch-bark letters of Novorod in the 14-15<sup>th</sup> centuries shows such a high frequency of non-agreed participles that the principle of agreement in spoken language is considered to be lost by this period (Zalizniak 2004:185).

During the 12-15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the functional opposition between the forms of nominal and pronominal participle forms evolved. Pronominal forms tended to express attributive functions, while nominal forms gradually lost the agreement between subject and participle, and began to express predicative meaning. At the same period, the category of tense began to form the opposition in expressing temporal relation with main verbal predicate. This temporal meaning of participle gave the base to form other adverbial meanings: causal, conditional and intentional (Abdulkhakova 2007:42–43).

The forms of pronominal participle are found in sources of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, but they are considered to be stylistically marked.

From the 15<sup>th</sup> until the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries a variety of gerund forms existed with perfective suffixes: *-a*, *-в*, *-виши*, *-ши* and zero; and imperfective: *-а*, *-ючи/-ащи*, *-в*, *-виши*, *-ши*, *-е*. At the same time, a tendency of fixation of certain forms to an aspect of gerund grew: the suffixes *-а(-я)* began to be more associated with imperfective verbs stems and *-в*, *-виши* with perfective (Abdulkhakova, 2007:36–40). Word forms, which do not correspond to this principle were decreasing during the last century with few exceptions (Dobrushina 2009). Linguists mark the gradual decrease of past imperfective forms from the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Kovtunova 1964: 376)<sup>1</sup>. In contem-

1 Analysis of data in the Russian national corpus showed, that the frequency of these forms was already lower from the 18<sup>th</sup> century (table 2). Furthermore, according to the data of corpus there is a slight tendency of common gerund frequency decrease.



porary language, past imperfective forms are rare and function mostly as stylistically colloquial (Dobrushina 2009:18–19).

The fact that forms of past imperfective became uncommon lead to a narrowing of gerund semantics to a so called “single time period” (Bondarko, 1987:237), which means that events expressed by the main verb and the gerund cannot be detached in time, and the sentence from the example below (1) are unusual in contemporary Russian:

1. *Встречав ее в ранней молодости, он снова увидел ее через двадцать лет* (R. Jakobson).

Over the centuries, the norm of syntax of the Russian gerund changed according to a principle of same-subjectness, and the sentence below (2) found in fiction of the 18<sup>th</sup> century with passive forms fall out of modern norm:

2. *Подъезжая к Белеву, сделался мне прелютейший обморок* (D. Fonvizin).

### 3. Evolution of semi-participle and gerund in the grammatical system of Lithuanian

The closest functional equivalent of a Russian imperfective gerund form in Lithuanian is a semi-participle form.

The earliest surviving written texts in Lithuanian date from only the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, but still there is enough evidence that this special gerund form also gradually eliminates the active participle in the secondary predicate function, although the final differentiation between the forms is quite late in texts and it is not relevant in some dialects (Ambrazas 2006:361–362).

In comparison to the Russian gerund, this semi-participle retained its agreement forms: *sakydamas* (male singular), *sakydama* (female singular), *sakydami* (male plural), *sakydamos* (female plural).

As with the Russian imperfective gerund, these forms express secondary action made by the same agent as the main action. The action expressed by the semi-participle at least partly takes place simultaneously to the main action expressed by the finite verb in the main clause:

3. *Sėdėdamas prie stalo, svečias gėrė arbatą.*

In accordance with relative time meaning, the semi-participle constitutes an opposition to a nominative form of appositive past participle, which express an action prior to the main action:

4. *Sėdęs prie stalo, svečias paragavo arbatos.*

Meanwhile, in accordance with the relation to an agent of the main action, there is an oppositional category of gerund (*padalyvis*). This form expresses the action made by an agent which is different from the main agent. The action expressed by the past gerund is prior to the main action expressed by the finite verb in the main clause (5), the action expressed by the present gerund is simultaneous to the main action (6), and the action expressed by the future gerund is posterior to the main action (7):

5. *Svečiui atėjus, šeimininkai išvirė arbatos.*
6. *Šeimininkai pamatė ateinant per kiemą svečių.*
7. *Šeimininkai laukia ateisiant ypatingą svečių.*

In contrast to the semi-participle, these forms are the functional equivalent of the Russian gerund in impersonal sentences.

Lithuanian gerund forms evolved from old dative forms of active participles (Ambrazas 2006:433–435). In attributive constructions, these forms were pushed out by newer forms, meanwhile, in absolute constructions with the subject in the dative position, the old forms shaped a particular type of non-finite verb form.

#### 4. Functioning in modern Russian and Lithuanian: copus-based analysis

Summarizing, the main features of contemporary gerund are:

1. the function of secondary predicate;
2. the adverbial meaning of prototypically temporal relation (Russian gerund – priority/simultaneity, Lithuanian semi-participle – simultaneity, Lithuanian gerund priority/simultaneity/posteriority);
3. semantic ties to the subject expressed by the verb in the first predicate (Russian gerund and Lithuanian semi-participle – same-subjectness, Lithuanian gerund – different-subjectness;
4. semantic ties between the actions, expressed by the verb in the first predicate and the verb in the gerund form, in so called ‘single time period’.

Functioning of the gerund in contemporary Russian is different in functional styles.

Quantitative analysis of gerund forms in the Russian National Corpus shows that the highest frequency of the gerund is in fiction and the lowest in spoken language, while frequency in subcorpora of journalism, science and internet communication (posts and messages from forums, blogs and messengers) is in medium range (table 1).

	Russian gerund	Lithuanian semi-participle	Lithuanian gerund
Fiction	0.83374%	0.22756%	0.10597%
Journalism	0.47046%	0.22132%	0.38235%
Science and Study	0.31582%	0.31840%	0.45939%
Internet communication	0.24689%	0.29584%	0.49582%
Spoken language	0.13789%	0.06110%	0.25141%

**Table 1.** Frequency of Russian and Lithuanian non-finite forms in subcorpora.

The comparison of this data with the frequency of semi-participle and gerund frequency in Lithuanian corpora (annotated Contemporary Lithuanian Corpus of Vytautas Magnus University for fiction, journalism, science and spoken registers, and collected data from internet for corresponding corpus) was performed. The analysis showed that the differences in frequency of corresponding verb forms in written registers are not relevant, but the frequency in spoken language is generally lower than in fiction language.

Taking a retrospective view of the spread of frequency in different registers of Russian, the proportion between registers is more or less constant from at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

	1700–1750	1751–1800	1801–1850	1851–1900	1901–1950	1951–2015
Fiction	1.43538%	1.58921%	1.21529%	1.18174%	1.38857%	1.19407%
Poetry	1.14352%	1.24079%	0.96920%	0.96549%	1.12976%	1.02575%
Science and Study	1.78000%	1.06095%	1.32987%	0.87873%	0.68127%	0.51036%
Official texts	1.03609%	0.95398%	0.92104%	0.70710%	0.72492%	0.23800%
Common corpus	1.45833%	1.29211%	1.16419%	1.04821%	1.03884%	0.85700%

**Table 2.** Frequency of Russian gerund in subcorpora by periods.

The most significant change took place in science literature, from 1.78% to 0.51%. During the last three centuries, the science register became to impersonal, formal, informative style, in which the gerund expressed mostly a pure temporal (8) or cause and effect (9) relationship, but does not have an expressive manner of action function as in fiction (10) (11):

8. **Отвинтив** болты, можно вынуть заготовку.

9. **Меняя** состав полупроводников, можем создавать светодиоды.

10. По морю, во всю ширину, **вставая и падая, поблескивая** в темноте гребнями пены, летел новый шквал (В. Г. Короленко).

11. Наконец **наговорившись**, а ещё более **намолчавшись** вдоволь и **выкуривши** сигарку в весьма покойных креслах с откидными спинками, он наконец как будто вдруг вспомнил и сказал секретарю, остановившемуся у дверей с бумагами для доклада: «Да, ведь там стоит, кажется, чиновник; скажите ему, что он может войти» (Н. В. Гоголь).

In Lithuanian science and education register, the semi-participle (13) (14) gerund (12) will be the equivalents of the Russian gerund in (8), (9) and deverbatives in (15):

12. **Atsukus** varžtą, galima išimti ruošinį.

13. **Keisdami** puslaidininkių sudėtį, galime kurti šviesos diodus.

14. **Spręsdamas** užduotis testuojamasis turi pažymėti vienintelį atsakymo variantą.

15. **При выполнении** заданий тестируемый должен отметить единственный вариант ответа.

This may explain why the frequency of these Lithuanian non-finite verb forms is higher in the science corpus in comparison to the Russian gerund. It is worth pointing out that in genres of reasoning, register phrases with the Russian gerund (*возвращаясь к ...*, *переходя к...*, *принимая во внимание...*) and Lithuanian semi-participle (*apibendrinami...*, *baigdami* ...) and gerund (*grįžtant prie...*, *imant ...*, *kalbant apie ...*) play a role of conjunctive markers.

The frequency of some discourse markers in the Russian spoken language is high and they are often used as filler words (*точнее говоря*, *образно выражаясь*, *пользуясь словами* etc.). An important condition for such processes is the shortness of gerund forms and disengagement of agreement.

The loss of agreement also creates conditions for derivation of prepositions from Russian gerunds (*благодаря*, *включая*, *исключая*, *начиная с*, *спустя*, *несмотря на*, *невзирая на*, *судя по*, *смотря по*), derivation of adverbs (*лежа*, *сидя*, *стоя* etc.) and derivation of conjunction (*несмотря на то, что*; *судя по тому, как*; *благодаря тому, что*).

In comparison, the Lithuanian semi-participle obey the agreement, and does not resist such processes. However, there are examples of filler in spoken Lithuanian (*taip sakant*, *trumpai tariant*) and derivative conjunction (*nelyginant*) made from gerund. Although, in both spoken and written discourse, Lithuanian speakers are disposed to make errors in choosing the form of semi-participle or gerund, when they apply the same-subjectness and different-subjectness principles. Similarly, disregard of the same-subjectness principle of the Russian gerund particular occurs in narration of traveling, both in contemporary spoken Russian (16) and in classical fiction (17):

16. После моста, **проехав** пост ДПС, метров через 800 будет правый поворот (example from Onipenko & Bikkulova 2012).

17. **Проехав** немного, справа монастырь навис под горою и прилеплен к горе (А. Griboyedov).

The deviations in gerund usage are also relevant to the distinction between spoken and writ-

ten modes. For example, in Russian spoken dialects, the gerund functions as a predicate with meaning of resultative perfect:

18. *Судомойкой переваляли / а я замуж была вышедши* (example from Onipenko & Bikkulova 2012).

This example shows an inner language bias to fill the gap in the modern Russian language when literal norms do not have such active compound past tense forms. Unfortunately, Lithuanian linguists (Petronienė 2008) notice the opposite phenomenon, when the usage of some unique verb forms (*buvęs beišeinąs*) descend in a modern language because of the influence of languages that do not have such forms.

### 5. Grammatical processes in the context of medium

Both diachronic and synchronic data show that there is a contrast in the usage of Russian and Lithuanian non-finite verbs in spoken/written, science/fiction registers. This contrast is caused by a number of differences:

1. Primary and canonical language situation is a spoken language. In such situations, the context plays a critical part in the communicational exchange of meanings. Therefore, in an immediate spontaneous communicational situation there is a higher concentration of deictic expressions. Tannen (1982:1–2) summarizes this:

In oral tradition, it is not assumed that the expressions contain meaning in themselves, in a way that can be analysed. Rather words are a convenient tool to signal already shared social meaning.

Therefore, it is paralinguistic features (intonations, prosody, facial expression, gesture) that establish cohesion in spoken discourse. Meanwhile, medium interrupts canonical situations, it breaks the ties of shared direct attention to objects between addresser and addressee, and it decontextualizes the text. In such a decontextualized situation, as written text is, the cohesion is lexicalized, the relationships between propositions are explicit and therefore its syntactic structures are more complex. Finite verbs serve these purposes, therefore, they are more often in written texts.

2. Another difference is the time that a writer has for thought expression in comparison to spontaneous speech. A writer has the possibility to choose words and then adjust the forms, express the relations and produce a sentence as a solid structure. However, spontaneous speech is not often composed of complete sentences, while the speaker is adjusting grammatical forms, they risk losing the listener's attention. From this point of view, shorter grammatical forms have an advantage. This was one of the causes of Russian gerund evolution in spoken language.

3. Another important difference is that the growth of literacy causes a much larger proportion of the population to be proficient in written register, which may not only bring more sophisticated syntax and lexicon to a spoken language, but can also enrich written language by the phenomena created in spoken register.

In Russian history there were two remarkable periods of this kind. One was the Novgorod Republic (12-18<sup>th</sup> centuries) with birch barks culture and evidence from spoken register. Secondly, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century during the educational reforms and typographic reform, which simplified and fastened the procedure of typographic composition, bringing it closer to Western literal tradition. This was followed by the intense development of literary language, in which the most intensive periods of concurrent forms interfused and coexisted in the same language spheres.

Meanwhile, the history of literary in Lithuanian is not as long. Despite the fact that the first printed books begin to be published in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the first poetical and prose works

were only being printed in the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century, dissemination of Lithuanian literature was complicated by a 40-year ban of printing in the Latin alphabet and forced russification. During these years, the language was mostly used in peasant families and its usage in administrative and educational fields, along with intense development of corresponding registers only began after restoration of independence post World War I.

4. Additionally, both written language and printed media tend to conserve lingual code, and traditional grammar tends to codificate. For this reason, written language sometimes still uses the forms that might already be eliminated from spoken language.

## 6. Conclusions

The differences of gerund functions and frequency in functional styles exist, because the most important function of a gerund in written narration is the expression of not so much the event or action, as the event or action together with a temporal relation. In the diachronic evolution of the Russian gerund, this was bounded to the loss of an attributive function as well as the ability to express autonomous adjectival predicate and parallel acquisition of an adverbial function. This process began in the spoken language because of economy, whereby the form began to serve the aim of compression of meaning. However, the compression of meaning was also important for written forms of language, with the requirement to express more sophisticated utterances with complex relations between predicates. Although in this new function it demands a cognitive resource to sustain complex thought and manage grammatical adjusting. For this reason, the Russian gerund as well as the Lithuanian semi-participle and gerund, are not so frequent in a spontaneous, interactive spoken situation.

However, the media and literacy cultural processes not only formed the demand for such sophisticated utterances, but also the historical background for evolution of different functional styles and genres, which gave a medium for different spoken and written practices to converge.

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# SEMIOTIC AND SEMANTIC DYNAMICS OF THE LITERARY TEXT

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## **Abstract**

The paper investigates the possibility and the sense of differentiating the semiotic and semantic dynamics of a literary text. The arguments treat historical, theoretical and methodological considerations, bringing into focus those interrelated text-generating operations in the literary discourse, which do not simply link the manifestation forms of semantic and semiotic transformations, but also separate them according to the role they play in the overall formation of the literary work, taken as a hierarchical intersemiotic system. In this context, the following aspects of literary semiosis are examined: the linguistic sign vs the discursive sign; the relationship between the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic discursive operations; simultaneity and developmental processes; text-level shifts. The paper at the same time aims to harmonise significant theoretical postulations within the domains of linguistics and philosophy of language (E. Benveniste, V. N. Volosinov/M. M. Bakhtin), structuralist discourse poetics (R. Jakobson, L. Doležal), general narratology, poetology and literary semiotics (W. Schmid, J. Faryno, J. Lotman). Empirical text analysis is presented in the form of a brief case study, turning to Lermontov's novel, *A Hero of our Time*.

## **1. The relevance of the differentiation between the semiotic and the semantic**

Let us begin with a simple question. What sense might there be to make a distinction between semantic and semiotic dynamics in literary texts when any kind of meaning-generation is necessarily realised within a semiotic framework? Semiosis cannot work without the emergence of semantics; semantics cannot exist without being semiotically formulated. Then what is the real issue?

### **1.1. Historical perspective**

Let us take the question from a historical point of view, going back first to the very well known statement from Benveniste (1981: 19–20).

Language combines two distinct modes of meaning, which we designate on the one hand as the *semiotic* mode, and on the other, the *semantic* mode. Semiotics designates the mode of signification proper to the linguistic *sign* that establishes it as a unit. [...] With the semantic, we enter into the specific mode of meaning which is generated by *discourse*. The problems raised here are a function of language as [a] producer of messages. [...] Semantic order becomes identified with the world of enunciation and with the universe of discourse.

The distinction is demonstrated by Benveniste (1981: 20) in his famous statement on “the difference in criteria of validity required by each. Semiotics (the sign) must be *recognized*, semantics (the discourse) must be *understood*” where understanding is always linked to the meaning of a new enunciation and not just to the discerning of the identity between the previous and the present, which would be recognition.

Language in this way is conceived with its meaning articulated in two dimensions. It is important to emphasize that in this sense the semiotic and the semantic both belong to the realm of meaning formulation, which is to say that these two dimensions are indeed interpreted within the framework of semantics. The capacity of language in its double articulation of meaning, the *semiotic* and the *semantic*, has significant consequences: “It is the prerogative of language to comprise simultaneously the meaning of signs and the meaning of enunciation. Therein originates its major strength, that of creating a second level of enunciation, where it becomes possible to retain meaningful remarks about meaning” (Benveniste 1981: 20) as constructed in other sign systems (this metalinguistic faculty is the origin of the interpretative relationship through which language embraces all other systems).

## 1.2. Meaning in terms of the linguistic sign and its discursive function

What are the characteristics of the meaning of the sign in the discursive operation as opposed to the linguistic sign?

Semantics linked to understanding (vs recognition) involves the faculty of the mind, lying in its capacity of discovering new enunciation (vs the discerning of the identity between the previous and the present). Semantic novelty/creation belonging to comprehension in this way is related to the problem of reception.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, semantic novelty emerging in the act of understanding must be interpreted from the point of view of meaning-generation within the framework of the part–whole relationship in the discursive operation: “the message is not reduced to a series of separately identifiable units; it is not the sum of many signs that produces meaning; on the contrary, it is meaning (*l'intenté*), globally conceived, that is actualized and divided into specific signs, the *words*” (Benveniste 1981: 20).

Interpreting further the aspect of novelty (semantic innovation) in new enunciations we remind Volosinov (Bakhtin) clarifying that

the constituent factor for the linguistic form, as for the sign, is not at all its self-identity as signal but its specific variability; and the constituent factor for understanding the linguistic form is not recognition of “the same thing,” but understanding in the proper sense of the word, i.e., orientation in the particular, given

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Volosinov (Bakhtin, cf. Volosinov 2000, *Bakhtin pod maskoj*) relating understanding to the act of giving response, in the context of the first formulation of the distinction between the signal (entailing recognition) and the sign (entailing understanding): “We shall see later that precisely this kind of understanding in the proper sense, an understanding of process, lies at the basis of response, i.e. at the basis of verbal interaction. No sharp dividing line can be drawn between understanding and response. Any act of understanding is a response, i.e., it translates what is being understood into a new context from which a response can be made (Volosinov 1973: 69). On Bakhtin’s role in the first formulation of Benveniste’s later developed ideas, see Ivanov 1975: 192, Ivanov 1999: 3. In detail, cf. Kroó 2016: esp. 160–176.

context and in the particular, given situation–orientation the dynamic process of becoming and not “orientation” in some inert static state (Volosinov 1973: 69).

*Understanding* in terms of the reception of meaning different from “the same thing”, i.e. meaning engendered in “the dynamic process of becoming”, is opposed to the “static”, in another translation (Ivanov 1975: 196), “immobile” state. The mode of “existence”, at the same time, is identified as *context* ensuring “orientation in formation” (Ivanov 1975: 196). The innovative semantic order within the enunciation is engendered in the universe of discourse, i.e. in the discourse context.

## 2. Discursivity as context and dynamics in the literary text

### 2.1. Discursive context

Putting the Volosinovian (Bakhtinian) and Benvenistian definitions to the issue of the opposition of two contexts, we have to underline their diverging features. With Benveniste (1981: 19) we can state that the conceptualisation of both types of context relies on their function of supplying, for the sign, special conditions to “assert its own meaning still more clearly in the midst of a constellation or among an ensemble of signs.” The semiotic (static) mode of recognisability of a sign in a given context is provided with those other signs of the same language, in relation to which that particular sign has distinctive features, i.e. which make it recognisable as an individual sign, having individual semiotic identity: “Taken in itself, the sign is pure identity itself, totally foreign to all other signs [...] It exists when it is recognized as [a] signifier by all members of a linguistic community [...], and when it calls forth for each individual roughly the same associations and oppositions. Such is the province and the criterion of semiotics” (Benveniste 1981: 19). The manifestation of the *semantic* mode of the sign is established by the dynamic discursive context, within which a particular sign is used and becomes a constructive element of an understandable enunciation/message.

### 2.2. Aspects of discursive dynamics

In literary texts, signs appear in their multiple discursive operation. In this case, meaning is the understanding of the system of discursive operations implying processual development in the “dynamic processes of becoming” (Volosinov 1973: 69), representing at the same time a syntagmatic construction of the “message” (a set of messages) – this can be called *syntagmatic semantic dynamics*. As compared to the sign’s self-identity outside the discourse context, discursive semantics cannot be interpreted in any way other than in terms of transformations – this can be defined as *transformational semantic dynamics* involving complex processes of resemantisation, developing into a semantic system. We should add that semantic development represents, at the same time, semiotic innovation revealing itself in the multiplication of sign relations within the discursive framework. The conditions for the permanent semantic and semiotic reformulations (resemantisations and resemiotisations) to create systematicity in the literary text are provided by paradigmatic relations under constant change – this can be called the *paradigmatic semantic dynamics* of the literary text. Paradigmatic relations ensure various shifts between text-levels, in this way segmenting the overall discourse. In these processes of creating smaller discursive contexts (or subdiscursive units with sub-contexts), the memory of the meaning of the signs outside the given sub-context is active. This kind of paradigmatic semantics works in a similar way to that which Saussure (1959: 123) called “associations” when considering the relationship between the element of the discourse and that beyond it. However, regarding the literary text, it is important to differentiate functionally two kinds of paradigmatic operations: associations with

non-discursive signs (meanings taken from the general language system interpreted as the static context by Volosinov [Bakhtin]) and Benveniste); and meaning paradigms arising from equivalences, i.e. the paradigmatic patterns outside or within a given syntagmatic chain within the discourse, also ensuring level shifts. In the literary text, the way discursive meaning differs from non-discursive meaning (taken from general language) also has significance, which in itself can become the source of a systematic meaning-formation through the creation of metaphor-chains, metaphoric sequences, etc. Paradigmatic semantic dynamics, in this way, is largely responsible for the formulation of an intersemiotic system, in which one element has its function in at least two systems. This is also true for the initial condition of literary meaning-generation, namely that the reader has associations coming from the realm of non-discursive (general linguistic) semantics and is able to interpret the literary meaning of a particular discursive (sub)context at the same time (cf. Ricœur's [1981: 293] point when he speaks of "cleft"/"split reference" in fiction in the light of "the suspension of the referential claim of ordinary language").

*Intersemiotic dynamics*, consequently, also emerges from the discursive meaning-formation process. The syntagmatic chains (the basic discursive operation, "semantic" mode of the signs) through paradigmatic dynamics (associations, equivalences) position the given signs in a new semiotic mode when removing them from the given discursive (sub)context through their links with text-external meaning or, and first of all, intratextual paradigm components. All kinds of paradigmatic formulations – the transpositions of signs into other discursive contexts – can be seen as resemiotisations. Regarding the "type of operation" (Benveniste 1981: 11), paradigmatic dynamics is based on the recognition of equivalences (similarities and differences) on the background of an affirmative or negative meaning concordance (sense simultaneity in a paradigm), which, however, can be interpreted only in the light of a transformational process of the evolution of the given paradigm. In the structure of parallelisms and equivalences, the semantic difference becomes sharpened, but for this, two semiotic systems are necessary. Here, too, the resemantisation process is inseparable from a resemiotisation, as the elements of a paradigm are usually linked to various discursive (sub)contexts or text-levels shaping semiotic micro-systems.

### 3. Resemantisation and resemiotisation

Arriving at the phenomenon of intersemiotic dynamics, it is important to evoke Roman Jakobson ([1958–1960] 1985: 71) on poetic function in his famous definition, which states: "The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination". This projection principle covers resemiotisation from a reverse point of view, saying that there is the regular transposition of the selection linked to the paradigmatic, based on equivalence (with the feature of non-linearity and non-temporality, cf. Wolf Schmid [2014: 14]), onto the syntagmatic axis of linear development, the axis of combination. When taking the emergence of poetic meaning from the perspective of resemiotisation, we arrive at an easier understanding of the similarity of Jakobson's two different definitions of poetic function. The second centers on the main characteristic feature of poetic language lying in its "set (Einstellung) toward the message, as such", which also means "focus[ing] on the message for its own sake" (Jakobson 1985: 69<sup>2</sup>). Here we have to recall Jerzy Faryno's reconceptualisation of Jakobson's definitions, where we again meet the interpretation of resemiotisation.

This idea emerges from Faryno's treatment of the problem of autoreferentiality. Starting from Jakobson's idea of the message pointing at itself, Faryno states that the message in fact should appear in a double function: "in the position of the message as such and in the position of its

2 See also the definition of poeiticity in the sense of "poetic function of determinative significance". Jakobson [1933–34] 1985: 378.



own referent, i.e. the referent of itself”, where on both levels – those of its referential meaning (as Faryno says: the designated “world”) and the language means (its sign system) –, it must undergo a significant transformation. This defines a new sign–object relationship in the literary text. The object “as a sign of itself [...] being in the position of the sign, must lose its objectiveness, while its name (the word which introduces this object into the text) must lose its referential meaning and take up an ancillary position (i.e. remain in the innerlanguage meaning only)” (Faryno 1989: 293). However, we can also say that the object with its name in its first position, through its referentiality “constitutes some sort of world within the text, a world that could be localised outside the given text, in non-linguistic reality. The second position not only keeps this world within the frame of the text, but also shifts it [in]to the rank of [...] language, transforms it into the text about itself.” (Faryno 1989: 296). *Permanent semiotic dynamics, a systematic change of the sign–object relationship* consists of the reconstruction of signs at both levels, within the system of the signifier (language) and the signified (reference). In this process the extratextual object becomes an intratextual sign (language) which assumes a new reference through the mediation of the *semantic* operation of self-referentiality (this implies *semiotic* shifts when the sign turns into a referent), and also through internal linguistic referentialisation in those equivalencing processes which were at the focus of Jakobson’s attention (this chain of ideas in more detail cf. Kroó 2017: 128–129).

Semantic development in the literary text evolves through permanent resemiotisations when the status of the extratextual object (world, referent) changes into intratextual signs, which in further acts of repetition become sign objects of later signs in the process of the evolution of self-referentiality. This harmonises well also with Doležel’s interpretation of Frege’s *Bedeutung* and *Sinn*. Poetic discourse has no referents but its meaning is constituted as *Sinn* (Doležel 1982: 287). Doležel gives a significant corollary to Frege’s theory on “the postulation of two distinct domains of general semantics: a) a semantics of referential language where the concepts of truth-conditions and reference relations will be essential; b) a semantics of sense language (a semantics of ‘representations’) concerned with the regularities and patterns of sense organisation. Literary semantics can be seen as sense-language semantics and its prime task is the examination of the patterns of sense organisation, which are the carriers of ‘images’ and ‘feelings’” (Doležel 1982: 287). Even Mukařovský emphasizes – and Doležel puts this into his interpretation – that “the very distinction of ‘real’ and ‘fictional’ events in literature is relevant only insofar as it becomes ‘an important component of the structure of the poetic work’” (Doležel 1982: 289; Doležel’s interpretation as above and in more detail, cf. Kroó 2017: 127–128).

#### 4. Resemiotisation and intersemiosis

When asking what guarantees the so-called “structure” of the poetic word ensuring “the regularities and patterns of sense organisation” (i.e. semantic development), we can state that it is the structure of semiotisation and resemiotisation, from where Benveniste began thinking. Where he really began was the thematically unlabelled phenomenon of resemiotising the sign in the discursive syntagmatic context. Taking the literary sign in discourse, we enter into a double system, conceiving cleft reference at the point of intersection of the text-external paradigmatic (in Saussure: association) and the syntagmatic levels. These are two separate semiotic contexts. The same double system of semiotisation holds true for Jakobson’s projection principle when reading together the two parts of his definition for poetic language. Faryno’s interpretation of the double system of creating message alongside the evolution of self-referentiality, represented by a new type of semiotisation (with the constant development of the object–sign relationship), again speaks of the dynamic dialogue of two semiotic systems. Wolf Schmid (2010: 2013) in his

narratology also offers the model of two entwining systems of semiotic operations in the parallel movements of diegesis and exegesis. All of the instances when two systems work in parallel, speak about a semiotic duplication accompanying meaning development – let them belong to the link between the signs of the abstract system and the signs in discursive operations; or the principle of the paradigmatic vs the syntagmatic; or message with “external” referent vs message with self-reference; or let us indicate the type of semiotic operation as simultaneity (Benveniste), parallelism / equivalence (Jakobson, Wolf Schmid) or dialogue (Bakhtin); and let us even call the type of semantic operation, which ensures the linking of the two systems, associations (Saussure), projections or interactions. This terminological diversity in indicating the duplication, and then in a set of links, the multiplication of the systems, nevertheless conspicuously outlines the point, the solid fact, of the intersemiosis in the literary text. It is characterised by semantic evolution mediated through constant resemiotisations. All these forms of resemiotisation are responsible for the semiotic dynamics of the literary text. And, of course, we must not forget what Jurij Lotman puts at center stage when speaking about constructional contexts he interprets also text-layers as interacting semiotic systems – cf. the Lotmanian metaphor of the game and also the idea of the “bonds-relations *between system-types*” as “established between the various levels of the text. A text is divided into subtexts (the phonological level, the grammatical level, and so on) each of which can be viewed as an independently organized text [...]” (Lotman 1977: 53).

From the semantic point of view the most valuable (i.e. functional) intersemiotic components prove to be those which acquire their meanings *at the intersection of the greatest variety of systems*, thus ensuring for the textual system as a whole a higher degree of poetic semantic creation: “Any ‘individual’ fact [...] in an artistic text [...] arises as the intersection of at least two systems and takes on special meaning within the context of each one. The greater the number of regular features intersecting at a structural point, the greater the number of meanings this element will acquire, the more individual and extrasystemic it will seem” (Lotman 1977: 72). This feature of the identity of the text is closely related to the system of semantic hierarchy it represents.

### 5. Lermontov: *A Hero of our Time*

In the final part of this paper I would like to illustrate very briefly a sequence of resemiotisations within the text of Lermontov’s novel *A Hero of our Time*. The focus of this very short illustrative close reading lies on the semiotic dynamics of the semantic development in the field of self-referentiality. This phenomenon is intimately linked to that which Wolf Schmid (2010: 211) characterises as a discourse story: the “totality of explicit evaluations, comments, generalizations, reflections and auto-thematizations on the part of the narrator”, as opposed to diegesis (storyworld). This discourse story, the exegesis, offers “the story of the narrative act, in the process of which the presentation of the narrative is produced” (Schmid 2010: 211). I would suggest that we treat the discourse story as a constantly developing metatext conveying information, partly explicit, partly implicit, on the emergence of the novel itself. In other words, this is the self-reflexive syntagmatic sequence of the novel, identifiable as a separate semiotic system, as Lotman (1977: 53) uses the term, a separate “subtext”, which leads the reader to grasp the semantics of the birth of the novel and to evaluate its characteristic features. To gain an insight into this, as an illustration, it is not necessary to remember the whole Lermontovian text, just the following peculiarities.

The novel tells the protagonist’s life-story taken out of chronological sequence, in five parts, i.e. chapters, seemingly independent short stories, though linked. They present various phases of Pechorin’s, the protagonist’s life, and embody various points of view and narrations. In this way the beginning and the end of the novel do not coincide with the beginning and the end of the

life-story; the reader does not even know where Pechorin's life really begins and does not see his death in Persia. All of the stories told in the five chapters with the intrinsic system of equivalences semantising human death and the journey to it, and also the interruptions of certain life-periods with the ensuing end of the relevant text parts narrating about them and then interrupted by a following text, consequently, project the problematics of the beginning and end of life to that of the text. From the first lines of the novel, we enter a double system with the mastertrope variants of the motifs of the *beginning* and *end*. These motif equivalences concern biography as the life of the hero and biography as the novelistic text about his life; and also treat the opportunities of free will or intention as human choice, or carry the meaning of the denial of personal control, and offer instead events ruled and played out by *fatum/fate*. In this semantic light, conspicuous parallels emerge, linking semantically *life* and *text*, *story* and *metastory*. Moreover, in the same way as life periods are always interrupted, turning chronology upside down, narration itself is broken, from time to time, by the thematisation of the discourse story. The thematic formulation is transparent because a two-chapter unit is inserted in the novel within the framework of Pechorin's journal, i.e. personal narration appears; it is completed and characterised by segments of the discourse story, in the sense meant by Wolf Schmid, through the thematisation of the act of writing and reading. This journal of the protagonist also has a foreword written afterwards, in the same way as the foreword is attached to the entire novel retrospectively. The equivalences generate a complete system of resemiotisation. The story represented by the plot (storyword), with its motif paradigms, is projected onto the thematisation of plot narration, i.e. the discourse story of narrating on Pechorin's fate. However, this mutual projection, one onto the other, of the text of the plot and the metatext of plot narration is complicated by the diversity of the narration in the novel, including the protagonist's Ich-Erzählung diary narration. In this way, the overall third-person narration and the protagonist's creation are also involved in a certain parallel, and finally the two forwards call for being read side by side. What happens in the field of semantic and semiotic operations is as follows:

- I.  
Plot  
Semantic paradigm (1):  
death / beginning–end / interruption : free will vs fatum / predestination
- II.  
Metatext of 3rd-person plot narration  
Semantic paradigm (2) in equivalence with (1)
- III.  
Metatext of Ich-Erzählung in equivalence with I. and II.  
Semantic paradigm (3) in equivalence with (1) and (2)

Here we have to take into account three factors:

1. Equivalences as parallelisms offer simultaneity in semantic projection.
2. However, the semantic paradigms put in equivalence are developing gradually, i.e. syntagmatically, according to the Jakobsonian principle of projecting the equivalence from the axis of internal motif selection to that of combination.
3. As a result of the syntagmatic evolution, i.e. the discursive “continuity” of the semantic patterns establishing parallelism, whole dynamic semiotic subsystems are projected onto one another, i.e. semantisation at one level is resemiotised at another. All this is conceived as a semiotic-semantic hierarchy within which the reader moves from the plot to the narrative metatext and from there to the metatext of the narrative metatext itself, up to the point when it

becomes clear that we have to see both – plot narration in the third person and personal narration in Pechorin's diary – only as sequential phases of the discourse story. This then points to the syntagmatic evolution of the entire discourse of the whole novel, including all of the elements of the plot, and the metatexts of both kinds of narration. Concerning the question of dynamics, it is crucial and evident that semantisation (paradigm/pattern construction) is conceived in the literary text within the framework of various forms of semiotisation, but also the relationship between the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic is worth analysing. When entire semantic paradigms, which have developed into complex systems, are conceived in parallel as equivalent semiotic systems, then the syntagmatic principle functionalising the semantic paradigms in discursive contexts is projected back to the paradigmatic axis. For this reason, we can see text layers as syntagmatically developing semantic paradigms representing independent semiotic systems. Further, in their intersemiotic relationship, they create a semiotic hierarchy in the literary text.

## 6. Conclusion

That which has been presented from a theoretical perspective and from empirical analysis, throws light upon the inevitability of the differentiation between the *semiotic* and the *semantic* conceptualised in a broader sense than defined in Volosinov's (Bakhtin's) and Benveniste's theories. From the point of view of the methodology of literary semiotic analysis, this kind of differentiation serves for functionalising the syntagmatic and paradigmatic semantic developments, interpreting them from the perspective of the evolution of complex semantic processes in the interaction of various interrelated semiotic subsystems in the literary text. Overall, it is impossible to construct literary theory on intersemiosis without conceptualising the difference between the semiotic and semantic dominant aspects within the dynamics of the multiple processes of resemantisation and resemiotisation, which take place in a literary text, resulting in a complex intersemiotic system.

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# SIGNS OF THE OTHER. READING EMMANUEL LEVINAS<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract**

Today more than ever before we must answer to the other not only for the self, but also for the very other. The problem of otherness and identity are pivotal categories in Western Reason and central issues in all of Emmanuel Levinas's works. On rereading writings by Levinas starting from *Totalité et infini* (1961), this paper focusses on an issue central to life and culture in today's world: the self's need for justification in front of the other.

## **1. Critique of the reason of identity**

The problem of otherness and the critique of identity are central to Western Reason, as well as in the writings by Emmanuel Levinas (1905-1995). As a development on my monographs, *Subjectivité et alterité dans la philosophie de Emmanuel Lévinas* (1996) and *Emmanuel Levinas, Globalisation, and Preventive Peace* (2009), this paper investigates the problem of self justification in the face of the other. The possibility of justification subtends the constitution of identity in terms of the individual, class, nation, and community. All Western culture is a justification of identity, of the self in the face of the other. The reason of identity is the reason of self and not of the other. But at a certain point the self must answer to the other not only for the self's sake, but also for the other's.

*Totality and Infinity* (1961) offers an excellent perspective on Levinas's research, its sense and purpose, as much as on his method of investigation and writing style. As observed by Jacques Derrida (1967, Eng. trans. 1978: 312), Levinas's discourse forbids prosaic disembodiment into conceptual frameworks, being the first violence of all commentary, and as such deserves a study in itself. Derrida's comments on *Totality and Infinity* may well be extended to all Levinas's works:

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<sup>1</sup> English translation from Italian by Susan Petrilli.

Further *Totality and Infinity* the thematic development is neither purely descriptive nor purely deductive. It proceeds with the infinite insistence of waves on a beach: return and repetition, always, of the same wave against the same shore, in which, however, as each return recapitulates itself, it also infinitely renews and enriches itself (Derrida 1967, Eng. trans. 1978: 312).

The predictive nature of Levinas's book considered in relation to today's reality derives from his profound understanding of the essential features of western reason and the logic of identity subtending it, which global communication today evidences ever more.

Levinas opens his Preface to *Totality and Infinity* ([1961] 1991: 21-30) with reflections on what he considers as the face of the real, namely the question of war:

The state of war rescinds ad interim, the moral imperatives, even better, renders them derisory. On the contrary, war extols politics, the art of foreseeing and winning it by every means, as the very exercise of reason. The trial by force is the test of the real (1961, Eng. trans. 1991: 21).

The face of being that shows in war is the face of Western reason. War evidences the connection between politics and ontology and together the subordination of individuals and identities to totality, that is, to an ontological order from which there is no escape. The concept of totality dominates Western philosophy and is confirmed by war which reduces individuals to bearing forces that command them unbeknown to themselves. Their sense is derived only from totality; their uniqueness is sacrificed to objective sense, which exists only in this totality.

But war also reveals the connection between ontology and history. The totality of being is revealed in objective history, for only the future may show objective sense. In such an order there is no sense beyond the totality and beyond history. Individual and collective identities depend on the judgement of history. In the logic of war, the realistic logic of being, ontology, politics and history, peace is only the peace of war, the end of war, a truce in preparation for war.

## 2. The I-other relation, a movement without return

The Preface to *Totality and Infinity* starts with the question of whether rational knowledge is aware of the possibility of permanent war. Given the irrefutable evidence of the totality and the opposition of peace to war, "evidence of war has been maintained in an essentially hypocritical civilisation, that is, attached both to the True and to the Good, henceforth antagonistic" (Levinas 1961, Eng. trans. 1991: 24). The only pathway to morality that is not naïve or hypocritical and to peace that is not based on war is to refer to a situation that can no longer be stated in terms of the "totality":

[...] We can proceed from the experience of totality back to a situation where totality breaks up, a situation that conditions the totality itself. Such a situation is the gleam of exteriority or of transcendence in the face of the Other [*visage d'autrui*]. The rigorously developed concept of this transcendence is expressed by the term infinity (Levinas 1961, Eng. trans. 1991: 24-25).

*Totality and Infinity* presents itself as a defence of subjectivity, but not in terms of a purely egoistic protestation against totality, nor of anguish in the face of death, of isolated "being-for-death" (Heidegger 1962). Instead, the defence of subjectivity is founded in the relation to the other.

The relation of the individual, of the "same" (*Même*) to the other (*Autrui*) reveals the possibility of breaching the totality, in Levinas's words, the "possibility of infinity" in a relation where the absolute other transcends the totality. The absolute other is "*autrui*" (Levinas 1961, Eng. trans.:

39). “*Autruï*” in French is a personal pronoun for the other, the other person, the other man. The other always overflows with respect to the totality, reason, identity, consciousness, thought. A real and proper “*infinition*” is produced in this overflow of objectifying thought. The other is that which the totality of being and of thought can neither embrace nor encompass. Infinity, that is, the breach of the totality, identity, of the order of discourse, which is produced in the relationship of the same with the other, “delivers subjectivity from the judgement of history to declare it ready for judgement at every moment and [...] called to participate in this judgement, impossible without it” (Levinas 1961, Eng. trans. 1991: 25).

The relation with infinity, which is experience of irreducibility of the other to the same, to the totality — therefore, experience in the fullest sense of the word, if experience means precisely a relation with the absolutely other — is also the breach of the harsh law of war (Levinas 1961, Eng. trans. 1991: 25-26).

The relationship with the absolutely other, that is, with what is irreducible to the Same, to Reason, to Identity, — the relation of the same to the other, in which is produced the experience of infinity — is not only beyond the totality, but is also the very basis of the totality.

Subjectivity contains the experience of infinity. It results essentially as welcoming the other, as hospitality. Identity is fundamentally a relation of otherness. All knowing presupposes the experience of infinity, which is experience of *non-adequation* in the fullest sense of the word. The relation with the relative *other* is based on the relation with an *absolute other*.

Identity contains more than it is possible to contain, because it is founded on otherness: there is in the finite the idea of the infinite, as Descartes calls it. According to Levinas who refers to Descartes, “infinite” means both *non-finite*, beyond the finite, and *in-finite*, inside the finite.

According to Levinas the relation of otherness is neither reducible to *being-with*, Heidegger’s *Mitsein*, nor to Sartre’s *being-for*. Otherness is located inside the subject, identity, the I, which is itself a dialogue, a relation between the same and the other.

The other cannot be separated from the I, the same, the *Même*. As *étranger*, as the absolute other, the other cannot be included within the totality, the same. The other is necessary to the constitution of the I and its world, to the constitution of identity, but at the same time it is transcendent. Otherness is not outside the sphere of the I, however it is not assimilated by the I. quite on the contrary, it gives rise to a constitutive impediment to the integrity and closure of the I as identity, as totality, as the same. The relation with the other is intended as a relation of excess, surplus, as the overcoming of objectifying thought, as release from the relation between subject and object. The same other relation transcends the realm of knowledge, the concept, abstract thought; but knowledge and concept are possible thanks to the same other relation. Instead, the I/other relation, as proposed by Levinas, has an ethical foundation. The “ethical” relationship between terms is neither a synthesis of the understanding, nor a relationship between subject and object (“Langage et proximité”, in Levinas 1967, Eng. trans. In Levinas 1987: 109-125, specific reference here is to page 116, note), but a relation of exposition to the other, a relation of non-indifference to the other.

A movement toward the other without return to the self, to identity, connotes the *specifically human* present in any human enterprise, in “all human work [*œuvre*], commercial and diplomatic” (Levinas 1948, Eng. trans. 1987: 2) what ever this may be. As Levinas says, beyond perfect adaptation to its own goal, human enterprise “bears witness to an accord with some destiny extrinsic to the course of things, which situates it outside the world, like the forever bygone past of ruins, like the elusive strangeness of the exotic” (Levinas 1948, Eng. trans. 1987: 2).

In “La Signification et le sens”, a chapter in *L’humanisme de l’autre homme* (Levinas 1972, Eng. trans. in Levinas 1987: 75-107), the expression *œuvre* designates a movement toward the other which excludes the possibility of return to self. As designating the specifically human, the concept of *œuvre* indicates a type of humanism that inverts the traditional itinerary of dominant philosophy, that of Ulysses who ventures into the world only to return to his native island.

Identity and *étrangeté*, otherness: these are the two faces of the real which realism does not take into consideration. In “La réalité et son ombre” (1948, Eng. trans. in Levinas 1987: 1-13), Levinas says:

Being is not only itself, it escapes itself. Here is a person who is what he is; but he does not make us forget, does not absorb, cover over entirely the objects he holds and the way he holds them, his gestures, limbs, gaze, thought, skin, which escape from under the identity of his substance, which like a torn sack is unable to contain them. Thus a person bears on his face, alongside of its being with which he coincides, its own caricature, its picturesqueness. The picturesque is always to some extent a caricature. Here is a familiar everyday thing, perfectly adapted to the hand which is accustomed to it, but its qualities, color, form, and position at the same time remain as it were behind its being, like the “old garments” of a soul which had withdrawn from that thing, like a “still life” (1948, Eng. trans. 1987: 6).

### 3. Origin of human signification and a “bad consciousness”

Taking his distance from the traditional concept of dialogue as exchange of rejoinders among predefined subjects, Levinas thematizes dialogism as a fundamental condition of human consciousness, a sort of a priori. This is what Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) calls *substantial dialogue* distinct from *formal dialogue*, substantial dialogue is the structure of the I (see Bachtin e il suo circolo 2014: 24, 1087, 1355-1387, 1417, 1699).

Language as contact, proximity, being one-for-the-other, witness, involvement, intercorporeity, exposition to the other, intersubjectivity, complicity antecedent to accord and to disaccord is already dialogue. The dialogic relation is connected with responsibility:

Responsibility for another is not an accident that happens to a subject, but precedes essence in it, has not awaited freedom, in which a commitment to another would have been made. [...] The word I means here I am, answering for everything and for everyone. [...] Responsibility for the others has not been a return to oneself, but an exasperated contracting, which the limits of identity cannot retain. [Responsibility for another] is a responsibility of the ego for what the ego has not wished, that is, for others (Levinas 1974, Eng. trans. 2000: 114; see also Levinas 1993, Eng. trans. 2000: 183).

Responsibility is involvement, exposition, proximity of one-for-the-other. Unlimited responsibility testifies to our obligation to the otherness relationship, to dialogism. The I in itself is already dialogue, an I/other relationship. Otherness is present at the very heart of identity, structural to identity, a basic condition for the realisation of identity.

To speak not only means to speak with the words of others, but to keep account of the other in a relation of inevitable involvement and implication, such that to speak is always to answer, also in the sense of to answer for, in the first place, to answer for oneself, to justify oneself. The I speaks and in so doing answers to the other. As Levinas says in “Nonintentional Consciousness” (“La conscience non intentionnelle”, in Levinas 1991, Eng. trans. 1998: 122-132), the first case in which I is declined is not the nominative but the *accusative* (Levinas 1991, Eng. trans. 1998: 129). The other interrogates the I. The question of being is inseparable from the question of the I which must first answer for itself, for the place it occupies in the world, and for the relation to others.

This means that *first philosophy* is *ethics*. The main question is not *why being instead of not being*, as in Heidegger; but rather *why my being here in this place, in this situation, while another is excluded?* The origin of human signification is not “intentional consciousness” as in Edmund Husserl; but *consciousness that is not intentional*, as Levinas says — that is to say consciousness understood in an ethical sense and not in a cognitive sense. More exactly, it is “bad consciousness”, a “dirty conscience”, which attempts to justify itself, appease itself, reconciling itself in an illusory “good consciousness”, a “clean conscience”.

The real problem for Westerners is not so much the rejection of violence as the struggle against violence through violence (Levinas 1974, Eng. trans. 2000: 177). “Preventive war” is not a struggle against the institution of violence but is itself violence. On the contrary, what is required is *preventive peace*. War against war, war against terrorism, perpetuates violence. Elaborating on Levinas’s reflections “just” and “necessary” wars, “humanitarian” and “preventive” wars are waged with a clean conscience, a hypocritical conscience, opening the way to “infinite war” (see Ponzio 2009).

The way to preventive peace is bad consciousness, a dirty conscience, patience that does not ask patience from others and is based on a difference between oneself and others, on an *inequality* opposed to oppression. Preventive peace is in *non-indifference*, non-indifference to the other, non-indifference as responsibility for the other, “the very difference between me and the other” (Levinas 1974, Eng. trans. 2000: 178). I am answerable to the other, responsible for all others, for the guilt of another. The condition of hostage is an authentic figure of responsibility for the other.

Peace otherwise than the peace of war is otherwise than being, peace beyond essence. There is no peace without the beyond of being at home, “the being at home with oneself, of which European history itself has been the conquest and jealous defence” (Levinas 1974, Eng. trans. 2000: 178).

Non-indifference toward the other, responsibility without alibis in the face of the other, is openness toward the other than being. This openness is not the initiative of an intentional subject, an effect of one’s will: openness is outside subject, outside theme, unabsorbed in the “object”, without seeing, knowing, understanding, grasping, operating and possessing. Openness is “disinterestedness” (*disinterestedness*), outside the *essence* (*essence*) — the process or event of being — outside *conatus essendi* (Levinas 1974, Eng. trans. 2000: 178).

Openness signifies the outside without cover, without shelter, non-protection, homelessness, non-world, non-inhabitation, without security (see Ponzio 2013: 11-13). But the significations of openness are not only privative: openness signifies the other side of identity, of inwardness, the demythization of the I, the situation before its closure in the abstract notions of freedom and non freedom, where one is not nailed to the I. There is in openness “a complex of significations deeper and broader than freedom”, where “inwardness frees itself from itself, and is exposed to all the winds” (Levinas 1974, Eng. trans. 2000: 180). There is exposure without deliberation, which would already be closure in identity, in its illusory barricades.

Non-indifference is a passivity which penetrates identity even in the retreats of its inwardness and obsesses it before all thematization, before gaining a foothold in being. The restlessness of passivity — a passivity more passive than the passivity of matter — in the exposure to the other, is responsibility for that other, restlessness in exposure to another exposure, a face, the face of the other, the openness of its nudity.

Exposure to the other is the asymmetric face-to-face relation (Levinas 1974, Eng. trans. 2000: 189-193), exposition of one’s own nudity, out of role, without a position, function, power, defence. Otherness in the face-to-face exposition is not the relative otherness of roles, positions, functions, power, but absolute otherness. Exposure of the other to another in the face-to-face relation occurs before identity, subjectivity, freedom, language, being, as their condition.



Preventive peace, liberation from the world of war, this opening, this *beyond*, is in proximity to the other. Proximity is responsibility for the other. Proximity means my absolute non delegable responsibility for the other, responsibility for the other without alibis.

Non-indifference to the other — and ever more in the globalized world to my neighbour — is opening of self without a world, without a place, not walled in being, not nailed to being, “*u-topia*” (Levinas 1974, Eng. trans. 2000: 182). U-topia is beyond being, otherwise than being, disinterestedness (*dis-inter-essement*), the excluded middle besides being and not being. Exposed to the proximity of the other, the I of each individual is virtually a chosen one, called to leave the identity of the ego and its extensions into the unity of community, people, agglomerations of peoples, to respond with responsibility: *me, here I am*, that is, *here I am for others*. Responsibility for the other cannot begin in one’s commitment, in one’s decision. The unlimited responsibility in which I find myself comes from the non-present par excellence, the non-original, the anarchical, prior to or beyond essence.

#### 4. The third, the comparison between incomparables, and the problem of justice

Responsibility for the other is the original relation with the other. It is unlimited responsibility. This responsibility, according to Levinas, is the “secret of sociality” (“Diachrony and representation”, in Levinas 1991, Eng. trans. 1998: 169). From the start, encounter with the other is responsibility for him, for one’s “neighbour”, which is the name for the man, whomever he is, for whom one is responsible. Love, as non-indifference, charity, is original, and it is original peace (see “Philosophy, Justice, and Love”, in Levinas 1991, Eng. trans. 1998: 103-121).

Peace is not identified with the end of struggles that cease for lack of combatants, by the defeat of some and the victory of others, with cemeteries or future universal empires. Peace must be my peace, in a relation that starts from an I and goes to the other, in desire and goodness, where the I both maintains itself and exists without egoism (Levinas 1961, Eng. trans. 1991: 306).

Original peace is what Levinas calls an “asymmetry of intersubjectivity”, an exceptional, extraordinary situation of the I. Levinas recalls Dostoevsky on this subject. In *Brothers Karamazov* one of the characters says: “we are all guilty for everything and everybody, and me more than anybody else”.

Original peace is the absolute anteriority of the face of the other. The face of the other, encounter with the other, requires the I as the one responsible for the other. This responsibility is inalienable. It is responsibility of the I as a singularity, different from the responsibility of the individual belonging to a group, a class, an identity of some sort. Unlimited and inalienable responsibility for others is the very possibility of the uniqueness, singularity, of the one and only, beyond the particularity of the individual in some sort of identity group. In the relation to the face, to what is exposed, bare and destitute, responsibility is an election, an individuation without the group, a principle of individuation. As Levinas says: “on the famous problem: ‘Is man individuated by matter, or individuated by form?’ I support individuation by responsibility for the other” (“Philosophy, Justice, and Love”, in Levinas 1991, Eng. trans. 1998: 108). I am responsible for every man, my neighbour, and nobody can substitute me. In this sense I am chosen. I am responsible for the other, although the other is not responsible for me. As says Dostoevsky, I am responsible for the other more than anybody else. The relationship with the other is not symmetrical (Levinas 1976, Eng. trans. 1996: 17-39).

According to Levinas’s analysis, “at the outset I hardly care what the other is with respect to me, that is his own business; for me, he is above all the one I am responsible for” (Levinas 1976, Eng. trans. 1996: 105). The other, my neighbour, is the first comer. From the outset, encounter with the face of the other is my responsibility for him. The other, my neighbour, is also a foreigner. I am responsible for the other even when he commits a crime, even when

he bothers me, even when he persecutes me. But I do not live in a world in which there is but one single “first comer”; there is always another other, a third, who is also my other, my neighbour.

The third is also a neighbour and falls within the sphere of the I’s responsibility. Otherness, starting from this third, is a multiplicity. Proximity is a human multiplicity. The I must know which one of the two others comes first. The I, responsible for the other and for the third, is responsible for their interactions. The I is responsible for the other even when one commits crimes, even when others commit crimes. The I is responsible for the persecution of one’s neighbours. They have a right to defence. If self-defence is a problem for the I, this is because one threatens one’s neighbour. For the I the question of the other is a demand for justice. There is a need for justice (see Levinas, “Diachrony and Representation”, in Levinas 1991, Eng. trans. 1998: 166-167). There is the obligation to compare unique and incomparable others. This is the moment of knowledge. Justice emerges from responsibility for the other. Responsibility for the other precedes justice. Justice is born from non-indifference, love, charity. Justice calls for judgement and requires a comparison between what in principle is incomparable, unique. Comparison, equity, objectivity appear with justice. Justice requires perception of the individual as a member of some group identity.

The I, insofar as one is responsible for the other and the third, cannot remain indifferent to their interactions, and in charity for one, cannot withdraw its love from the other. The self, the I, cannot limit itself to the incomparable uniqueness of each one, expressed in the face of each. Behind unique singularities, one must perceive the individuals of an identity group, one must compare them, judge them, and condemn them. There is a subtle ambiguity of the individual and the unique, the personal and the absolute, the mask and the face. This is the hour of inevitable justice — demanded by charity itself.

The hour of justice, of comparison between incomparables classified into groups is the hour of institutions empowered to judge, of states within which institutions which are consolidated, of Universal Law which is always *dura lex*, and of citizens who are always equal before the law (Levinas, “The Other, Utopia, and Justice”, in Levinas 1991, Eng. trans. 1998: 229). Justice requires judges, institutions, laws and, consequently, the state. A world of citizens, identities, individuals, persons, masks calls for belonging to an identity group, to a community and not only for the face-to-face relationship, the unique-to-unique relationship. “If there were no order of justice, there would be no limit to my responsibility” (Levinas, “Philosophy, Justice, and Love”, in Levinas 1991, Eng. trans. 1998: 105). However, the state emerges from the limitation of non-indifference and charity and not, as in Hobbes’s vision, from the limitation of violence and fear of others (*homo homini lupus*).

According to Levinas, the problem of justice presents itself in terms of justice and defence of the other, my neighbour, and not in terms of the threat that concerns me (see Poirié 1987: 104-105, 115-119). Justice and the state are not based on fear of the other, the other that bothers and persecutes me, but rather on fear for the other, fear that my neighbours should be persecuted, because I am responsible for the other more than anybody else, even when that other commits crimes, or suffers crimes and persecutions.

On the basis of justice, the asymmetry of intersubjectivity tends to become symmetry, equality, exchange, equal rights. Consequently, to treat all mankind justly also means to retreat from justice. Certainly my unlimited responsibility, my responsibility for all, can and must also manifest itself by limiting itself. The I is also a third in the relation of the other to another and calls for justice. In the name of unlimited responsibility, the I is called to look after oneself, to care for oneself. But unlimited and asymmetric responsibility which justifies this concern for justice, for oneself can be forgotten. In this forgetting, says Levinas, consciousness is pure egoism (see Levinas 1974, Eng. trans. 2000: 128). Egoistic interests “take

dramatic form in egoisms struggling with one another, each against all, in the multiplicity of allergic egoisms which are at war with one another and are thus together” (Levinas 1974, Eng. trans. 2000: 4).

War is the “deed or the drama” of egoistic interest. Nobody has patience, is patient with the other, there is no time for the other. Nobody can wait for one’s hour. The extreme synchronism, without time for the other, without patience, without otherness is War. In the “inevitable” determination of war there is “extreme contemporaneousness or immanence” (Levinas 1974, Eng. trans. 2000: 4).

To the extent that the face of the other relates the I to the third party, the irreducible relation of the face-to-face relation assumes the form of the We and moves into a state, into institutions, laws which are the source of universality. But politics left to itself deforms the I and the other, because it judges the latter according to universal rules. Politics bears a tyranny (see Levinas 1961, Eng. trans. 1991: 300). Justice founded on non-indifference, charity and love for the other becomes indifference and cruelty. Only the responsibility of I as uniqueness, singularity, the face-to-face relation constitute the reference to which justice, politics and the work of the state must be reconducted, where they find their originary sense.

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# MUSICAL ARTS

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**FROM THE SESSION  
“TO LISTEN, TO PLAY,  
TO DANCE”**

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# MODERNITY AND ANCIEN RÉGIME IN THE TOPICAL WORLD OF BEETHOVEN'S MUSIC

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## **Abstract**

Ludwig van Beethoven's life and work are located at a historical crossroads of European history. The Congress of Vienna (1814-1815) signals this resistance to leave Ancien Régime structures in favour of an egalitarian, liberal new society about which many artists like Beethoven have been dreaming ever since. The same ambivalence can be traced in Beethoven's dependence on aristocratic sponsorship, on the one hand, and his liberal views on politics and aesthetics, on the other.

This paper analyses the musical traces of modernity and pre-modernity in Beethoven's works. His use of musical topoi reflects a self-conscious strategy with a socio-political bias. Oftentimes, a pre-modern topos transforms itself into a modern one along one movement or throughout the whole work. The best examples of this procedure are the transformation of minuets in minor into waltzes in major, or of marches in minor into contredanses in major, in what amounts to an emblematic narrative archetype.

Before him, Haydn and Mozart had shown this critical path with a wide use of irony and parody when referring to topoi symbolising the Ancien Régime: martial references, *stile antico*, *opera seria* or Versaillesque dances. As modern topoi can be counted those that were associated with comedy, irony and parody, egalitarian dances, and new forms of spirituality, such as the profane hymn.

## **Introduction**

In Beethoven's music, topics symbolizing the Ancien Régime and topics with modern correlates oppose each other in an emblematic way, i.e. this opposition can be seen as characteristic of his style. Beethoven depended always on aristocratic friends and sponsors, but on the other hand, he stood ideologically close to progressive tendencies, from his youth on. A first thing this paper proposes: some ways to describe that biographical contradiction in musical terms.

I am using the terms Modernity and Ancien Régime as an operative opposition in the history of Western culture that refers to the abandoning of old feudal structures, ruled by a theocratic,

hierarchic mentality, in favour of an egalitarian society where the individual can display his or her potential in freedom.<sup>1</sup>

Just as many artists of his time, Beethoven can be credited with an ambivalent relationship to aristocracy. He depended on them, and in many aspects felt like one of his aristocratic friends. Jan SWAFFORD calls this *Self-made nobility, like Napoleon*.<sup>2</sup> This would be a new aristocracy, based not on birth, but on spiritual reasons. On the other side of history, since his early years in Bonn Beethoven felt close to the *Illuminati* and to the Enlightened vanguard of intellectuals and artists who were convinced that a new better world, also in political and social matters, was worth fighting for.

This paper intends to show the narrative process by which, in Beethoven's work, references to pre-modernity are *transformed* into references to modernity. For a start, our main methodological tool, topic theory, is briefly referred to. Topic theory allows to present next a list of musical symbols for both Ancien Régime and Modernity. Then, some examples of that narrative process are proposed. The music seems to enact the transformation of the old world into the new one. The presentation closes with a brief discussion about the historical precedents

### 1. Topic theory. Musical symbols of modernity and ancient régime

Topic theory allows to pin down Beethoven's ambivalence regarding modernity into his musical output. Musical topics can be defined as references to other styles or genres, or simply to any "cultural units" imported from one original medium to another one, in a growing process of abstraction and stylization<sup>3</sup>. The use of topics tends to be idiosyncratic to every composer. Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven, for instance, share a parodic reference to the military, but this topic has a wider range in Mozart's work, whereas Haydn prefers to focus on parodying the *opera seria*. Just by using musical topics, W. Dean SUTCLIFFE argues, composers are already questioning hierarchies, usually with an ironic if not parodic view.<sup>4</sup>

In my analyses, I have come to find a series of musical symbols of both Modernity and Ancien Régime in Beethoven's music that I would like to share. This list is generically valid for the Classical Viennese style.

ANCIEN RÉGIME	ANCIEN RÉGIME
Opera <i>seria</i> , Tragedy	Opera <i>buffa</i> , Comedy.
Nature Imitation	Irony, Parody. Music about music
Restraint	Immoderate realism
Menuet, Sarabande	Waltz, Contredanse
Vocal + Theatre	Vocal + Chamber
Gregorian Chant, Hymn	Pantheism, alternative Spirituality. Erotic Love, Pastoral, exoticism
Polyphony, Counterpoint	Motivic Work, Autonomy.
Military. Collective Authority	Parody of the Military
Necessity, Destiny	Arbitrariness, Will. Artistic work as a shelter

**Table 1.** Musical symbols of Ancient Régime vs. Modernity

1 The philosophical debate about what the project of 'modernity' would mean today is very lively. One of the most critical voices within this open discussion is that of Rémi BRAGUE, e.g. in *Modérément moderne* (2014). I thank Prof. Antoni Bosch-Veciana for this indication.

2 SWAFFORD 2014: p. 724. A revealing anecdote shows Beethoven once trying to use his last name *van* Beethoven in court, as if it were *von* Beethoven, which in German would have amounted to nobility – to no avail.

3 Our definition of 'Musical Topic' is based on RATNER 1980: p. 9; GRABÓCZ 2009: pp. 22-23; MIRKA 2014: p. 2.

4 SUTCLIFFE 2014: p. 118.

The opposition between the aristocratic opera *seria* and comedy or opera *buffa* deserves the first place on this list. Comic opera, Charles Rosen stated already 50 years ago, is the last mask of Classical music, its basic tone<sup>5</sup>. Comedy relates to real people, not to gods, heroes or allegories. That makes it the favourite genre of Modernity. References to the opera *seria*, starting with Haydn's music, are mostly parodic.<sup>6</sup>

Second, 18<sup>th</sup>-century art tends to abandon the classic precept of imitating nature in favour of a critical, self-conscious view on the creative act. This distance opens the gates to irony and parody. The new instrumental style of the 18<sup>th</sup> century can be heard as music about music, in a self-reflective act of an autonomous individual. This becomes especially evident in the Development sections of sonata form and in the motivic-thematic work that is an emblem of the classical style.

Modernity tends to leave behind the classic restraint and measure, and abandon itself to immoderate expression. Late Beethoven often seems to disregard listeners and their expectations, e.g. in the *Hammerklavier* sonata, or with the *Missa solemnis*. The composer as individual, not his audience, is placed on the centre of attention. This lack of measure is also a model for Mahler's or Strauss's or Schönberg's immoderateness, regarding proportions, but also in their expressionism.

Regarding dance genres, the usual references to the Ancien Régime are the Versaillesque minuet and sarabande, in opposition to several kinds of waltzes and to the contredanse. Both latter dances were the first to be enjoyed in the new-built public dance saloons. They favoured an intermingling of the classes, especially the contredanse, where every man dances in turn with every woman in the row<sup>7</sup>. Beethoven's second symphony (1800-1802) e.g. presents a significant combination – a *trope*, in Robert Hatten's terminology – of minuet and comedy: in its 2d movement *Larghetto*.<sup>8</sup> The parody is revealed only over the course of the movement, as the *buffo* references make themselves increasingly present. To grasp the narrative effect of the procedure, compare the initial main theme (Example 1a) with the Epilogue mm. 82ff. (1b)



Example 1a. Beethoven, Symphony n. 2 op. 36/II, begin

Another modern genre to be found in new instrumental music is the lyric chamber piece. In slow movements of sonatas there is often a reference to some non-theatrical singing that implies an intimate domestic space, that of the new bourgeoisie. Such moments are accompanied and marked by broken chords that remind of the lyre or the lute, which are associated, even etymologically, to the short distances of lyricism. An example of that is Beethoven's *Adagio* second movement in A-flat of the Sonata for piano and violin op. 30 n. 2 (Example 2).

5 ROSEN [1971] 1997: p. 43.

6 Interestingly, irony can be found already at the very centre of the opera *seria* production, at mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, in the subgenre of the so-called *metamelodrammi*, satirical representations of an opera *seria*. This culminates in *L'opera seria* (Vienna 1769) by Ranieri de' Calzabigi and Florian Leopold Gassmann. Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor* KV 486 (1786) can be seen as a late replica of this trend and as a rich source for an ironic use of *seria* topics. Cf. HIRSCHMANN 2017.

7 Cf. ZBIKOWSKI 2012.

8 For the term *trope*, cf. HATTEN 2004: pp. 15-16, HATTEN 1994: pp. 161-196.





Example 1b. Beethoven, Symphony n. 2 op. 36/II, mm. 82-86.

Musical score for piano, Example 2, showing two staves. The tempo is marked 'Adagio cantabile'. The top staff has dynamic markings 'p', 'cresc.', 'sf', and 'p'. The bottom staff has 'p' markings. The music is in 3/4 time and features a melodic line in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand.

Example 2. Beethoven, sonata for violin and piano op. 30 n. 2 II, begin. .

Chamber vocal music: this is a modern genre. From here to a 'Profane Hymn' there is only a short step. In fact, what we know today as 'National Anthems' is a derivation of the revolutionary songs from Haydn's and Beethoven's days: a combination of sacred with martial musical references, with a patriotic intention.<sup>9</sup>

Two different authorities are questioned throughout modern times: religion and the military. On religious matters, a growing critical awareness becomes the rule among artists and intellectuals of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Haydn and Mozart were among the first to gather in freemason lodges. Beethoven's pantheistic views are well known<sup>10</sup>. The enlightened search for an alternative spiritual life, one beyond or beside religion, can be traced both in their lives and in their music, including sacred genres. That brings our list back to the precedent item, i.e. to the spontaneous lyricism as opposed both to operatic grandiosity and to sacred chant.

In this modern context, Erotic Love has the priority over religion. Both the amorous genre and the pantheistic have a reflection in a frequent and passionate use of the Pastoral semantic field. Variants of the Pastoral are the 'Folkloric' and the 'Exotic' topic, in accordance to Herder's ideas about folklore.<sup>11</sup> In Mozart's masses, e.g., imitative counterpoint rubs shoulders with references to folksy tunes and rhythms.<sup>12</sup>

9 About the musical aspect of the French Revolution and its influence on Beethoven, cf. BUCH 1999. Jan SWAFFORD (2014: pp. 204f.) also documents the French violinist Rodolphe Kreutzer introducing to Beethoven many songs and marches by revolutionary composers such as F. J. Gossec, N. Méhul and Kreutzer himself.

10 Beethoven was very fond of the book *Betrachtungen über die Werke Gottes im Reiche der Natur und der Vorsehung auf alle Tage des Jahres* (Halle 1772-1776), by Christoph Christian Sturm, a lutheran pastor with enlightened, pantheistic views about nature. Cf. SWAFFORD 2014: pp. 508-511.

11 Raymond MONELLE (2006: pp. 238-251) calls the folkloric references at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the "New Pastorals", as the historical successors of traditional pastoral topics such as the siciliana.

12 Cf. Walter SENN's *Preface* to the 1st volume of the Masses, *Neue Mozart Ausgabe*, 1977.

Regarding textures, the *style antico* counterpoint has been replaced by its modern translation, the famous motivic work emblematic of Viennese classicism. In both cases, the procedure is highly demanding and executed with utmost consequence. Imitative counterpoint, however, shows the mark of Gregorian chant and polyphony. It is often parodied in Haydn's instrumental music, whereas in Mozart and Beethoven's late work it tends to adopt the gravity of its aesthetic authority, as if disengaged from the topic's sacred origin. On the other hand, motivic work can be regarded as the modern replica of the *style antico*: a symbol of individual autonomy in so far as the work holds by itself, by making reference only to its own material.

As for the military, Mozart shows the way to a multi-layered, sophisticated parody, as in the *Jupiter* symphony, where the juxtaposition of some *forte* drum-rolls on strings and winds with lyrical laments in *piano*, in two consecutive sets, reduces both incompatible elements to the parody of themselves, if only because of their immediate closeness.



Example 3. W.A. Mozart, Symphony K 551, I, begin.

This is related to the last point of this open, provisional list: the ancient ideas about Destiny and Necessity are progressively substituted by Arbitrariness and Individual Will, which are likewise represented musically at best with the motivic cross-linking that is one of the trademarks of the music by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven or Brahms. Motivic-thematic work is a musical reflection of Kant's idea about autonomy: to follow your own rules.

This does not mean that the "ancient" topics are not present in modern music. They are, but in opposition to the contemporary topics. Their conflicting relationship confers to both groups of references quite different symbolic, affective values. Let us see some examples of this interaction.

## 2. Topical transformation, topical narrativity

In Beethoven's work, an interesting relationship can be observed between topics that represent the old world and those that symbolize modernity. It is not a static, but a *narrative* relationship, in the sense of a *transformation*. In the C minor Trio op. 1 n. 3, for example, the main theme starts as a 'Menuet' and mutates as a 'Ländler'. Cf. example 4a.

Adding to the 'Menuet' topic an allusion to opera *seria* can be heard a 'Menacing unison', one of the indexes of the *Ombra* topic<sup>13</sup>. This archaic initial motif questions itself immediately –with the rhetoric figure of the '*Interrogatio*' in *pianissimo*–, suggesting that another turn of things might be possible (Example 4a). And indeed, the recapitulation of this first theme brings a transformation of the initial, Ancien Régime topics into references to the contemporary soundscape, i.e. waltz and comedy. See Example 4b:

13 Elaine Sisman calls this the 'Stentorian Unison'. Cf. SISMÁN 2014: pp. 107f. For the '*Ombra*' topic, cf. McCLELLAND 2012 and 2014.

**Allegro con brio**

Example 4a. Beethoven, Trio op. 1/3/I: begin.

Example 4b. Beethoven, Trio op. 1/3/I: mm. 224-229.

The minuet, symbolising the obsolete world of absolutist monarchy, is replaced by the rural Alpine waltz. Within this opposition, the latter represents ‘the people’, to put it in Herder’s terms. The symbolic value of this transformation is strongly enhanced by Beethoven using one and the same musical material for both references, aristocratic and popular. The mutation is underlined by a change from the minor to the major mode, which shows the affective aspect of the procedure. Moreover, the *tutti* texture has been replaced by an individual manifestation on the cello.

A similar transformation in narrative terms can be heard in Beethoven’s concerto in C minor op. 37 (1800). The sombre march that starts its first movement (Example 5a) is transfigured into a contredanse in the finale (Example 5b).

**Allegro**

Example 5a. Beethoven, Concerto op. 37 in C minor I: begin.



Example 5b. Beethoven, Concerto op. 37 in C minor III: begin.

Motivically, the finale motif could be seen as a retrograde inversion of the initial march theme. The affirmative triadic and tonic formula turns into a questioning, dissonant motif in the dominant: cf. Example 5c.



Example 5c. Beethoven, Concerto op. 37 in C minor: Urlinie of main motifs from I and III.

Again, in the finale's conclusion (*Presto*) the minor mode yields eventually to major, as to reveal the liberating, exhilarating side of the narrative's result. In this case, the old contredanse theme takes the cloak of the other modern genre we are considering here, the *Deutsch* rural waltz. Note the unequivocal comedian replies on woodwinds.

In fact, the final parodic contredanse has been announced already in the coda of the first movement (Example 5d), with its rhythmic genre marker, an eighth rest followed by three equal eighths:

Example 5d. Beethoven, Concerto op. 37 in C minor I: mm. 492-496.

Now the contredanse has a particular symbolic value within Beethoven's expressive palette. It is the reference he chose for the triumphal finale of his Third Symphony (1804), by re-using the theme from his own *Prometheus* music (1801). Therefore, he might associate with this egalitarian, modern dance the qualities of that mythological titan and benefactor of mankind.<sup>14</sup>

14 The *Eroica Variations* op. 35 (1802) are in between both works. Cf. SWAFFORD 2014: pp. 331-368.

Mozart's *Jupiter* symphony offers another example of that narrative pattern. In the first movement, the Ancien Régime version of the theme, *forte tutti*, leaves the stage to a mock version of the same theme, *piano*, on woodwind soloists (Example 6). Notice the 'Laughter' on m. 25ff., which is arguably the hermeneutic clue of the passage<sup>15</sup>. Of course, the theme itself had already some suspiciously incongruous elements in it, so as the imitation of drums on strings, or the immediate juxtaposition of the 'Martial' and the 'Lyrical' topics, with which they disavow each other. Compare Examples 3 and 6:

The image shows a musical score for Example 6, which is a woodwind solo from Mozart's Symphony K 551 I, measures 24-27. The score is written for four staves: Fl. + Ob. (Flute and Oboe), F. Horns (French Horns), Bsn. (Bassoon), and Vls. (Violins). The music is in common time (C) and marked with a piano (p) dynamic. The Fl. + Ob. part features a melodic line with a 'Laughter' motif (a series of eighth notes) starting in measure 25. The F. Horns part has a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The Bsn. part has a melodic line with a 'Laughter' motif. The Vls. part has a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes with triplets in measures 24 and 25.

Example 6. W.A. Mozart, Symphony K 551 I: mm. 24-27.

In the finale of the same symphony, we assist to the transformation of a *style antico* theme into a contredanse, without ever giving up the masterful contrapuntal work for which this movement is famous. In spite of its lyrical accompaniment, the presentation of the main theme suggests the learned style. It will eventually hold its promise in the final *fugato*, but right in m. 5 it is ironically disavowed with a reference to the contredanse: cf. Example 7.

The image shows a musical score for Example 7, which is the beginning of the finale of Mozart's Symphony K 551 IV. The score is written for three staves: Violin I, Violin II, and Cello/Double Bass. The music is in common time (C) and marked with a piano (p) dynamic. The tempo is marked 'Molto allegro'. The Violin I part features a melodic line with a 'Laughter' motif (a series of eighth notes) starting in measure 5. The Violin II part has a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The Cello/Double Bass part has a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes.

Example 7. W.A. Mozart, Symphony K 551 IV: begin.

The political value of such transformations surely did not escape Mozart's contemporaries. Interestingly, it was a trick he had used already in his early youth, in the *Credo* of his *Missa brevis* K 192. And with nearly the same notes: see Example 8.

Notice the emblematic contredanse rhythm, right on the 2d half of m. 2 and onto the words 'in unum Deum'. The contrast with the previous motet texture and character must have been shocking for young Mozart's contemporaries. It reminds of his many explorations on the *Credo* section of the Mass, as if the dogmatic assertion of faith would be an issue to him from early youth on. It also explains why 19<sup>th</sup>-century sacred musical praxis, even in Austria, preferred not to recur to Mozart's masses. They felt not 'sacred' enough. Topical analysis reveals a fundament to that feel-

15 The 'Laughter' topic has been described in GRIMALT 2014.



ing: it is not only the references to profane genres, but above all the narrative relationship they establish with the sacred topics – as in Example 8, where classic polyphony becomes contredanse.

Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* (1819-1823) offers a similar example of a narrative transformation from sacred to profane. Its final *Agnus Dei* does not provide any definitive, reassuring answers to the previous anguished questioning cries. In a quite perplexing conclusion, the chorus keeps calling out for *Pa! – Cem!* in a furious, painful way. The music refuses any answering to those calls or any sort of triumphal closing and withdraws into *pianissimo*, after uttering some disquieting giggles: who is laughing there, about what? Jan SWAFFORD argues convincingly that Beethoven delivers the reply to such existential questions outside of the religious frame, in the concert hall, through his Ninth symphony.<sup>16</sup> That would amount to a new secularising gesture, typical of modernity.

Vls.

*f* Cre - do, cre - do in u-num De-um.

*f* Cre - do, cre - do in u-num De-um.

*f* Cre - do, cre - do in u-num De-um.

*f* Cre - do, cre - do in u-num De-um.

B.C.

4 3 6 6 6 5 6 4 5 3

Example 8. W.A. Mozart, *Missa brevis* K 192, Credo: begin.

### 3. Historical background to the critical use of musical topics

The critical, narrative use of musical topics is of course not Beethoven's invention. Once more, Beethoven has observed accurately his contemporaries' –mostly Haydn's– style and resources,

<sup>16</sup> SWAFFORD 2014: p. 825. Reinhold BRINKMANN (1997) sees in Brahms's 4th symphony the 'Taking Back' (*Zurücknahme*) of Beethoven's Ninth: the nihilistic denial of its modern hopes. On the other hand, Gustav Klimt's Beethoven's Fries for the building of the Secession would amount to a new affirmation of the Ninth's optimistic values. Cf. SWAFFORD 1997.

and adapted them to his own writing. In the first of the second set of Haydn's Londoner symphonies, e.g., Hob. 99 (1793), the third movement is still called a *Menuet* but could be properly called a *Scherzo*. The basic trope is a mocking combination of the martial topic and the *Deutsch waltz*. See Example 9: the comedian aspect of the trope is made explicit right at the start, with a typically *buffo* dialogue *piano/forte*. The second phrase adds to the game an ironic reference to the topic of imitative counterpoint, starting with a comic *sforzato* on the third part of m. 8.



Example 9. J. Haydn, Symphony Hob. 99 III, begin.

The political aspect in Beethoven's *Fidelio* is quite obvious, but there are less overt precedents in his immediate predecessors. In Mozart's *Don Giovanni* K 527, for example (1787), the character who lives the most clearly in the past, Donna Elvira, issues a presentation aria directly from opera *seria*. Her musical clothing is that of a Handel role. The parody of the previous generation's tragic opera symbolizing a past that needs to be overcome is maybe even clearer in Fiordiligi, the character in *Così fan tutte* K588 (1790) who sings in exaggeratedly pathetic style, just minutes before being seduced, and who resists change "Like a rock standing impervious / To winds and tempest". Musically, Fiordiligi's vocal acrobatics are an index of her inability to see the transformation coming upon her, or maybe they signal the fear of the imminent and inevitable character of that transformation. Whether consciously or not, Mozart sets here an ironical metaphor of the changes that the Ancien Régime aristocrats had coming, at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Fiordiligi's warning "Do not let a barbarian hope / Make you so rash again" sounds like the futile words of some nobleman to all liberals, freemasons and revolutionaries of his time. In other words, both her resistance to change and her prompt surrender seem to portrait the relationship the upper classes had with modernity at Mozart's time.

Come scoglio immoto resta	Like a rock standing impervious
Contro i venti e la tempesta,	To winds and tempest,
Così ognor quest'alma è forte	So stands my heart ever strong
Nella fede e nell'amor.	In faith and love.
Con noi nacque quella face	Between us we have kindled
Che ci piace, e ci consola,	A flame which warms, and consoles us,
E potrà la morte sola	And death alone could
Far che cangi affetto il cor.	Change my heart's devotion.
Rispettate, anime ingrante,	Respect this example
Quest'esempio di costanza;	Of constancy, you ungrateful creatures,
E una barbara speranza	And do not let a barbarian hope
Non vi renda audaci ancor!	Make you so rash again! <sup>17</sup>

Stylistically, both Haydn and Mozart are following Ch. W. Gluck's example, the works of which integrate two contrary strands of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The so-called *Querelle des buffons* of the 1750s in Paris shows the partisans of the Italian opera *buffa*, following Jean-Jacques Rousseau

17 Fiordiligi's aria from the 2d scene in the first act of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* K588 (1790).

and the *Encyclopédistes*, defending comedy and its musical emblem, melody. The Enlightened saw in these –and in folk dances– a symbol of social, philosophical and political progress. At the other extreme, the supporters of the monarchy were following Jean-Philippe Rameau and his model of *tragédie lyrique*, where counterpoint and sophisticated harmony and instrumentation represented the reactionary exclusivity of the Ancien Régime.

In 1760s Paris, Gluck's synthesis of modern Italianate comedy with aristocratic French *tragédie* can be understood as the crystallizing of both sides efforts to approach each other. In the clash of the world of yesterday and that of today, some artists such as Haydn, Beethoven or Goya saw a rich dichotomy, full of expressive possibilities.<sup>18</sup>

The outbreak of instrumental music made it possible and safe to deal with political subjects in the context of post-revolutionary Restoration. Even if the new sonatas and symphonies were largely based on the imitation of theatrical situations, the absence of any text invited composers to allude to sensitive matters in a characteristically indirect way.

The Spanish painter Francisco de Goya, at about the same time as Beethoven, was transcending the goals of his Enlightened fellows and start a journey into his own inner world, including ghosts, witchcraft, and many other nightmare appearances. Just as Beethoven, maybe his deafness was instrumental to this need to manifest a reality that was beyond what the senses can perceive.<sup>19</sup>

The English poet William Wordsworth, in his Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* (2d ed. 1802) he signed together with Samuel Coleridge, made explicit a similar program as the one Goya and Beethoven were following. Wordsworth vindicates socially marginal people as subjects of the new poetry, and addresses his work to the new social classes. The bourgeois readers were expected to understand a plain poetic language in spite of not having enjoyed the privilege of a higher education. Around the same time, the late Goya is thematising marginal social classes as well, and Beethoven has been integrating rustic or exotic material into his chamber and symphonic music in a process that starts with early 18th century's use of 'primitive' topics and culminates in what Schönberg would term Mahler's "vulgar" thematic material.

Wordsworth's ideals, just as Beethoven and Goya's, are of social and political nature, and he wants to submit his art to these purposes: *the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed, by men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished success.*<sup>20</sup> Stylistically, his poetic texts present an ambiguity very close to Beethoven's style, between the need to make himself immediately present, without recurring to artificial ancient traditions, but on the other hand defending metric regularity as a way to temper the passions of both poet and reader, as well as all too crude or pathetic images.<sup>21</sup>

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18 One of the models in this is the work of Niccolò Piccinni, a champion of the Neapolitan opera who adapted himself to the Parisian taste, in the second half of the 18th century. Cf. ALLROGGEN 2002.

19 Cf. TODOROV 2011.

20 WORDSWORTH & COLERIDGE [1802] 2013: Foreword to the 2d edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, p. 100.

21 Ibidem, p. 110.

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# MUSIC AS MIRROR: A TRANSDISCIPLINARY THEORY OF PSYCHOANALYSIS, MUSICAL SEMIOTICS AND RHETORIC

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## **Abstract**

This paper aims to provide a semiotic and a psychoanalytic theory for musical composition. When we look forward to the application of Peircean categories to the compositional process, we find two processes. The first one is based on the idea that composers create their pieces based on their embodied emotional experiences. The second one involves the application of musical notation in a coherent form. The presence of thirdness requires the acquisition of symbols, which connects the creation of propositions after the symbolic phallus has been acquired and the Oedipus Complex dissolved. In order to create musical propositions, we should look for the interaction between rhetoric and the three kinds of arguments (hypotheses, inductions and deductions) in order to explain how musical phraseology assumes an argument-like form. Therefore, we might be able to say that music is a mirror of the argumentative process operated by the composer in the poietic process. However, the boundaries of “structural homologies”, as Umberto Eco uses the term, should be respected. In this case, what are the differences between verbal and musical propositions, and what are the questions that arise from this transdisciplinary theory? This paper was awarded a grant from the Fundação de Apoio à Pesquisa (Foundation for Research) at Brasília, DF.

## **1. Introduction**

This paper aims to provide a semiotic and a psychoanalytic theory for musical composition. This transdisciplinary approach stems from a tradition in psychoanalytic music research that explains the process of musical composition (Välimäki 2005: 31). Nevertheless, my aim is to provide a general theory, instead of one that focuses on a particular composer. Moreover, this theory stems from Peircean tradition of semiotics, which was already applied in music by



many scholars – for an early review see Martinez (1997: 20-39). More recent debate on Peircean Semiotics and music can be found in the works from Kruse (2007) and Ojala (2009).

First of all, it is necessary to consider how Peircean categories can explain the compositional process. In order to do that, I will consider music as a symbol, the way both Peirce and Kristeva (2000)<sup>1</sup> use the term. I will use Peircean specific terminology regarding the symbol, which many Peircean scholars are already familiar with: The Rhematic Symbol, the Dicent Symbol and the Argument. The first symbol is defined after the notion of *termini*, the extremes of a proposition. The second one is the equivalent of a logical proposition and it is composite. Its components are subject, copula and predicate. The last symbol is more dynamic in its nature. It describes the logical thought that culminates with a scientific conclusion after a series of experiments made after predictions and discoveries (CP 2.96).

The mirror this paper aims to describe is the one found between the compositional process and the musical score. We will conclude that the relationship between musical score and the compositional process is not a plain one, but rather a mirror-like, like Anish Kapoor's (n.d.) *cloud gate*, placed in Chicago, Illinois. Then, I elected theoretical limitations to the analogy of Peirce's classes when we apply them to music, which creates the metaphor for mirror-like in the relationship between musical compositional process and the musical phraseological structure.

## 2. Music as symbol

When we look forward to the application of Peircean categories to compositional process, we may find two mechanisms. The first one is based on the idea that composers create their pieces after their embodied emotional experiences or lived experience (Langer 1957). Therefore, the best application of Peircean trichotomies in this case is that of the semiotic function implied in the transition from Firstness (qualities, feelings) to Secondness (embodied qualities). This function I shall call as *incorporation*.

The second process is the application of musical notation in a coherent form. In this situation, the composer is supposed to apply conventional musical signs such as topics extracted from dances (scherzos, menuets, etc.) or rhetorical devices. The category of Thirdness is necessary for the mediation between Firstness and Secondness. It works as methods of composition for everyone that intends to create music.

However, when defining music as sound created and produced by humans [for music created by nonhuman animals see the works of Martinelli (2009)] it is important to notice that sounds are a primary tool in human communication. They are used between mother and baby prior to the development of verbal language (Castarède 2002). Nevertheless, one question must be made: is there a difference between sounds used between mother and baby and the ones in musical compositions? Its answer points both to ontogenetic differences and convergences between musical and verbal language. According to Kristeva (2000: 774), for a child to enter the *symbolic* dimension, it is necessary to step into the phallic stage, when the boy and the girl appropriate themselves of the symbolic phallus. This is required in order to enter into the Oedipus Complex triangle and also to create propositions (which is a requirement to use the psychological technique called "free association"). The symbolic phallus is going to suffer intervention from the father (Kristeva 2000: 774). Second to this intervention, children become able to build up logical sentences. After symbolic castration, we may learn how to compose and to apply laws of compositions, which explains why symbols (sings of thirdness) are important in poetic process.

<sup>1</sup> Kristeva considers as real symbols the ones that appear upon to the acquisition of language, which is made of linguistic signs (2000: 774). Although Kristeva mentions Peirce along her paper, her theoretical definition of symbols is based on Hanna Segal's theory.

Therefore, although the production of sounds arises before we acquire language, the proper user of musical composition techniques emerge in the same way of verbal language: by means of instruction. Henceforth, we consider that music is created in symbolic process, whereas the sound used in the communication between mother and baby does not involve symbolization, because its occurrence is prior to symbolic castration.

Even though musical and verbal propositions share the same castration roots, they have differences. Bernstein (1973: 77) explains that musical phrases are structurally closer to verses of a poem. Therefore, a proposition in its strict sense could not be equaled to a musical phrase. Bernstein (1973: 255) also explains that a poetic text is worked through in an artistic language, which is a different language than that of a prose.

In the field of musical composition, Schoenberg (1967: 8-10) states that one should create motives, themes and phrases. The latter's ending suggests a kind of punctuation (for instance, a comma) – which suggests one similarity with verbal phrases. Musical phrases, though, are built after motives. Motives feature “intervals and rhythms, combined to produce a memorable shape or contour” (Schoenberg, 1967: 8). This combination of elements is important for another comparison between verbal and musical phraseology. I invite the reader to accompany me in measures 100-105 from Mozart's Clarinet Concerto in A-Major (Figure 1)



Example 1. Measures 100-105 from Mozart's Clarinet Concerto in A-Major (Clarinet Solo).

Marcellus, an American clarinetist who was deeply involved with the Cleveland Orchestra, provides an interpretation of this passage which merges short one-measure phrases into a larger one “by not slighting the rhythmic value of the last eighth note in each of the first three bars and by making a gradual diminuendo throughout the succession” (Etheridge 1983: 62). In Marcellus' interpretation, the three short phrases become terms from a larger proposition, thanks to a combination of phrases (Etheridge 1983: 62). It is worth noticing that the *combination* of features that Schoenberg pointed out is here noticed not on the compositional level, but rather in its interpretation. One could notice that this combinatory device which turns phrases into terms of a larger proposition was also described by Ockham:

Est autem sciendum quod hoc nomen ‘terminus’ tripliciter accipitur. Uno modo uocatur terminus omne illud quod potest esse copula uel extremum propositionis categoricae, subiectum delictet uel praedicatum, uel etiam determinatio extremi uel uerbi. *Et isto modo etiam una propositio potest esse terminus, sicut potest esse pars propositionis* (Ockham 1323: 5, emphasis mine). [You have to know that the name ‘term’ is taken in three senses. In one sense, everything is called a term that can be the copula or an extreme of a categorical proposition (...), or also a determination of an extreme or of the verb (...). *In this sense, even a proposition can be a term, just as it can be a part of a proposition.*]<sup>2</sup>

2 Translation according to Spade's (1995: 7) version.

Among these similarities and differences, I formulate a second question: can the symbolic dimension of musical pieces derived from psychoanalytical analysis support a Peircean notion of symbols in music? Assuming this is possible, two musical signification processes arise.

### 2.1. Musical signification

The first case of musical signification that stems from the notion of symbol in music is the one in which musical signs such as phrases, periods and themes, relate themselves by the association of musical ideas in relation to a motive. In this sense, a motivic material is explained by the musical development of the play in its phrases. We may observe that the motif is a part of the subject (Randel [1986] 2003: 500) of which the musical phrase or even the period are its predicates. This case suggests another question: In this semiotic approach, what is the kind of information that phrases and sentences may convey about the motif if music is widely considered as asemantic? Differently from verbal sentences, musical phrases convey mathematical information about their motifs. This specific kind of data arises from variation and repetition of the motives in the development of musical pieces. Some of the technical devices of composition used for variation are inversion, reversion and transposition (Réti 1976).

Furthermore, when we assume the relationship presented as true, we would still need to identify the index that points to the subject. If not, we would be using an incomplete definition of symbol as Peirce defined it, for the Dicent Symbol is composite and “necessarily involves a Rhematic Symbol (...) to express its information *and a Rhematic Indexical Legisign to indicate the subject of that information*” (CP 2.262, emphasis mine). In music theory we find that motive variation should afford a degree of coherence and similarity (Schoenberg 1976: 8-81). Can this characteristic afford the presence of indexicality and support a theory of musical Dicent Symbols (phrases, sentences) in a relationship with their motives? If so, we have a different index, one that is less a pronoun, and rather a characteristic of musical form which is of resemblance between motives.

The second musical signification case is found in compositions such as symphonic poems and operas, mainly programmatic ones. They represent the case of music that represents non-musical. In these cases, musical signs stand in the place of their objects (*aliquid stat pro aliquo*) in the form of associations of musical ideas.

### 2.2. Musical Composition and Arguments

Both musical significations approaches create two further questions. The first one is concerned with the creation of such musical symbols. Peirce's classification of signs brings three symbols: Terms, Propositions and Arguments. The latter, is a symbol that generates conclusions in specific logical situations such as abductions, deductions and inductions (CP 2.267-270). If we were to consider these signs in musical semiotics and cross it with compositional process under the influence of rhetoric we may observe how musical compositions are made of Dicent Symbols grouped in argument-like form. Therefore, I will compare rhetorical methods of musical composition with Peirce's kinds of arguments (abductions, deductions and inductions).

Abduction (or Retroduction), the first stage of inquiry, is a method of discovery and innovation (CP 6.469). It calls our attention to the introduction of new elements in music. Creative process requires abduction in the introduction of new themes. In Rhetoric, the term *inventio* suggests that the composer is supposed to find the argument in favor of a cause (Bartel 1997: 77-80). In this regard, abduction and *inventio* have one more aspect in common. In abduction, we are supposed to choose one among many hypotheses according to the economic principle. This principle stands for a higher probability to lead to the truth (Paavola 2004: 259-260). It

means that not any hypothesis fits abduction and a small dose of prediction should be made in accordance with the expectation that such a hypothesis will lead to the truth. In *inventio*, the composer is also bounded by a criterion of expectation in his choices. According to Bartel (1997: 80), “a rationally conceived and perceived composition would portray and arouse the desire affections”. Therefore, the choices made by the composer in *inventio* should be made according to the expectation of arousing certain feelings. This task is further developed in the next processes.

The second stage of inquiry, deduction, is the one in which takes place the examination of the hypothesis and experiential consequences which would follow from its truth. It is followed by a Demonstration (CP 6. 470-471). It may call our attention to two rhetorical devices. Firstly, since deduction involves predictions of consequences, we should include the *praecepta* in this stage. For Peirce the precepts describes to the Interpreter what is to be done, by him or others or both, in order to obtain an Index of an individual (whether a unit or a single set of units) of which the proposition is represented as meant to be true, but also assigning a designation to that individual, or, if it is a set, to each single unit of the set. (CP 2.330)

The relevance of precepts in musical rhetoric is stated by Dressler:

Huius artis utilitas est, ubi ad naturam et artis cognitionem frequens exercitatio accesserit, ut de cantus qualitate, an sit urbanus, an vulgaris, verus an falsus iudicare possimus, et falsum corrigere et novum componere. [The usefulness of this art is when frequent practice will lead to the nature and recognition of the art, so that we are able to judge about the quality of a song, whether it is refined or commonplace, true or false, and to correct what is false and compose something new] (Dressler 1563 in Wong 2009: 58).

Precepts, therefore, involves the creation a true proposition that affords the affective quality that it is supposed to represent. They were used to obtain an Index of an individual affect, a musical form that was materially affected and would materially affect the listener with a specific feeling.

Deduction is also found in relation to aspects of *dispositio*. Among other elements, there is *propositione*, a proposed argument or point to be made. This device compels the composer to create a musical development for the subject and has the function of presenting the content and the purpose of the musical piece (Bartel 1997: 80-82). A *propositione* works in such a way as if it were a demonstration of the affective statement portrayed by the musical Dicent Symbol created in the argumentative process.

In *dispositio*, we also have the *exordium* which arouses the audience’s attention. *Dispositio* also includes *narratio*, which advances both nature and intention of a composition. Sometimes, the *narratio* was included in the *propositione* (Bartel 1997: 80-82). The statement proposing that the *exordium*, *narration* and *propositione* must be related to the development of a musical idea (chosen in abduction and *inventio*) suggests that they are in an indexical relationship with the main affective theme – otherwise, the main musical idea would not be recognized by the listener.

However, deduction’s indexical aspect is found in the relation between the fact stated in the premiss and the conclusion of an argument. In the musical sense, the listener should be compelled to conclude that the *exordium*, *narration* and *propositione* of a piece are related to the musical idea and the affect it was supposedly related. This statement should not be confused with another part of the *dispositio*, called *peroratio*, which is the conclusion of the piece. *Peroratio* could be presented as a repetition of the *exordium*, a ritornello or an elaborated pedal point (Bartel 1997: 80-82). Then, the content of *peroratio* may have the same function of the three previous elements. If the affect stated by initial idea fits the function of “a fact stated in the premiss” and, if a listener is compelled by *dispositio* devices to conclude that the musical material is related to that affect, then, a degree of similarity is maintained between deductive logic and musical form.



In the third stage of inquiry (called induction of probation) one is supposed to apply conclusions resulting from experiments done after the predictions created in the second stage of inquiry (CP 6.472-473). Induction verifies “how far those consequents accord with Experience, and of judging accordingly whether the hypothesis is sensibly correct, or requires some inessential modification, or must be entirely rejected” (CP 6.472). In musical composition, the same principle is found when the composer is comparing his embodied feelings and the feelings aroused by compositional devices. Nevertheless, in German Baroque a composer was supposed to follow “methodical expressive processes and its specific and calculated expressive devices” (Bartel 1997: 89). It was only with the advent of *Empfindsamkeit* of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century that a more subjective and individualistic method of expressing affections took place (Bartel 1997: 86). Therefore, when the function I called *incorporation* was present in musical composition, the mathematical precepts for musical composition were left aside

Moreover, although the comparative analysis of the incorporated feeling and the effect aroused by the composition did not take place in the German Baroque, the latter activity was already present. I call attention now to two devices from *dispositio* which did not appear in relation to deductive logic. They are called *confirmatio* and *confutatio*. They will confirm or deny the development of the musical piece. In the former, the composer created “varied and artful repetitions to reinforce the *propositio*” (Bartel 1997: 81). In the latter, the composer “makes use of suspensions, chromaticism, or contrasting passages which, when properly resolved, strengthen the original theme” (Bartel 1997: 81). What happens with these two devices? The *confirmatio* is supposed to strengthen the argument (confirming it) and *confutatio* suggests a different point of view, as if it were testing the musical proposition. Both strengthened the conclusion that the musical piece is related to a musical affect pursued by the initial idea.

Moreover, we also find mechanisms of musical *elocutio* in relation to inductive logic. More specifically, it is in *aptum* and *decorum* that we find a mechanism of inductive logic. *Aptum* between subject, text, music and occasion was to be observed (Plett 2004: 377). *Decorum* was observed in relation to stylistic choices that fit with the subject, audience and genre of speech (Luko 2007: 83).

The convenience of musical form is vital, and therefore suitability should be verified by the composer. Otherwise, music would not *mirror* “the order of the created universe through its own numerical order” (Luther in Bartel 1997: 18) and, as a consequence, would not “positively affect individuals by audibly ‘putting them in touch’ with the greater order of Creation” (Luther in Bartel 1997: 18). Being in service of *religare* was a great duty for a composer, and every precaution should be made. This is why formal rules should be noticed by a diligent composer.

### 2.3. Truthfulness in music

One last point should be made. It touches the truthfulness of a musical composition. Both Dressler and Peirce highlighted the relevance of truth, each one in their specific field of work. But one might think, since music is art, is there truth in it? The first idea that comes to one’s mind is that the idea of truth is logically incongruent with a ‘work of art’. However, many ideas on truth arise when it comes to music. (Jabłoński 2006: 436).

A work of art is true, provided that, firstly, that there is an agreement between the composer’s intention and the musical material concretization (Jabłoński 2006: 438-439). There may be also the recipient’s conviction on the composer’s intentions - This is however a rare case (Jabłoński 2006: 439). An example is found in Kajanus’, Schnéevoigt’s and Krohn’s interpretation of Sibelius’ *Second symphony* as related to Finnish Independence scenario, even though the composer would not agree with that meaning (Tawaststjerna 1976: 244)



Jabłoński (2006: 439) also stresses truth in the agreement between the conceiving and/or experiencing the work of art. In this case, the truth may appear as in the expression “A truly great work of musical art”. It explains why Beethoven’s *Fifth symphony* is performed more often than other plays: because it is recognized as truly being a work of art (Jabłoński 2006: 439). Jabłoński (2006: 439) also mentions axiological preferences, meaning that a composer is known to reflect in his music a sense of nationality. This is true of Villa-Lobos reflecting Brazilian identity, specially the composer’s second compositional phase (Ferraz 2012). While this sense of nationality is reflected in a sublime aesthetic experience, it is perceived as true because “the performance accords with the conception of the piece” (Jabłoński 2006: 439).

Truth may also appear if the listener has musical/musicological competence. If this ability is present, the recipient recognizes the structural organization of a musical composition. Here, a true work of art is “the one whose sense has been revealed” (Jabłoński 2006: 439) by someone with musicological competence.

There is also an idea of truth regarding the modalities of necessity and freedom:

1. A performance follows the composer’s performative norms, meaning the score creates a sense of necessity that the musical piece must be performed in a given way (Jabłoński 2006: 439);
2. The freedom of performative interpretation in cases when the subjective activity of the performer is fostered: the more freedom is given and taken, more truthful the work is (Jabłoński 2006: 439-440).

Two other statements of true in music stem from Jabłoński’s (2006: 440) reading on structuralist semiotics. In this case, *langue* and *parole* bring truth in the context of linguistic articulation within “discourse about music” that emerges from “musical discourse”. Moreover, Jabłoński (2006: 440) stresses the importance of categories such as stability/non-stability, conventionality/non-conventionality of semantic interpretation rules where we find the debate between normative *versus* idiolectic understanding over the aesthetic penum which defines the individuality of a given aesthetic object in relation to other objects).

### 3. Conclusion

In the present paper, I offered a possible application of Peircean classes of signs to musical phraseology and thus created a metaphor for musical composition process and its materialization. I noticed that the argumentative process can be related to rhetoric processes of musical compositions – although there is not a direct and exclusive relation between abduction/deduction/induction and *inventio/dispositio/elocutio*. However, I observed that a musical work of art assumes an artistic argument-like form, which involves a series of musical propositions. Still, I noticed that musical propositions are not like verbal sentences used in scientific texts. The divergences and convergences between musical and verbal language led me to conclude that, although both kinds of language stem from symbolic castration, they develop themselves on different paths. The reason for there being many similarities is due to the fact that they share the same roots of human characteristics. The reasons for the differences are related to the different lessons we take on music and verbal language through our lives. It is worth noticing, however, that for German Baroque theoreticians, similarities between verbal and musical language was due not to my psychoanalytic point of view, but because of another common root: the affects (Bartel 1997).

Due to the differences observed, I elected a series of questions regarding the limitations of Peircean symbolic signs in music. In my first question, I used psychoanalysis explore how language is acquired and why music also involves a symbol in Peircean terms. Furthermore, I explored the quality of the information conveyed by music, since this is a characteristic of the

Dicent Sign. I noticed that the mathematical configuration of a musical piece is what offers the information the Dicent Symbol conveys. However, the information derived from a musical piece is not only mathematical, but also emotional. For a composer from the Baroque, it was germane that a specific affect would be aroused in the listener. The emergence of enlightenment created, however, a cultural atmosphere which allowed personal expressions of affections (Bartel 1997).

I also noticed that the index that points to subject in a proposition is found in musical form. I observed that music is coherent in itself and this quality allows it to be referent to a given musical subject. My final question, which was further answered by Jabłoński, touches the problem of truth in music, which is a condition for this debate since propositions are either true or false. However, this matter is yet to be explored in music after Peircean conceptual framework.

In sum, I pointed out some of the theoretical problems that arise when we use Peircean terminology in musical phraseology, instead of considering just the structural homology as a limit. Although this application of Peircean semiotics was applied mainly to German Baroque music theory, there is no reason to apply for other musical styles or genres. A first step to overcome this limitation would be an application of my view on styles and genres that were directly influenced by German Baroque.

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# RHETORIC IN LITHUANIAN HOMILETICS: MUSICAL ASPECTS

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## **Abstract**

Rhetoric in antiquity relates to philosophy, psychology, law, philology, ethics, pedagogy and music. In the 20th century with the emergence of many new sciences and their directions (communication, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, hermeneutics, semiotics), the concept of a New Rhetoric was formed, which reveals various aspects of interactions with these modern sciences. This allows applying new research methods for various types of rhetorical texts. One type of these specific rhetorical texts is homilies which are characterized by extremely complex multi-layered semantics as well as exceptional requirements for presentation and with a lot of possibilities for different aspects of research.

After reviewing the global scientific literature which researches rhetoric and homiletics, a very large number of studies can be found, where interaction between modern homiletics and classical rhetoric are discussed from the various historical and theoretical aspects, also stylistics of sermons, poetics and specifics of structure in different epochs, different cultures and in texts by different authors. Also, the aspects of the musicality of homilies are studied, which explores the expression of rhythm, musical-rhetorical affections of baroque, and other epochs, problems of recitation, chanting sermons, as well as the possibilities of application of general rhetorical regularities, adaptations, analysis of the features of expression in cultural epochs and in different confessions.

In Lithuania after it regained independence some of these aspects are researched by scholars. Many of these studies keep their focus on the history of homiletics (Kristina Mačiulytė, Jolanta Gelumbeckaitė, Roma Bončkutė), although attention is drawn to one or the other aspect of rhetoric; e.g., addressee, laughter, metaphors, stylistics, originality, etc. (Viktorija Vaitkevičiūtė, Jūratė Pajėdienė, Aurelija Mykolaitytė, Regina Koženiauskiė, Irena Buckley), but the fundamentals of rhetoric of sermons, in particular in terms of composition and its musicality as the basis for creation of persuasion, are still insufficiently discussed. Yet no studies have been found, which analyze the musicality of sermons in terms of the concept of intermediality, explore them from the angles of transmediality, also look at characteristics of verbal and word music, ana-

logues of musical forms and technique as the development of thematic materials and as the base of a deep persuasion.

One of the goals of this article would be to discuss some fundamentals of the persuasion in sermon—the traditional compositional principles of rhetoric linking them with analogues of musical forms, as the most expressive of textual architectonics and its processuality—the internal form, etc. Research uses one sermon of a prominent Lithuanian preacher Capuchin friar Father Stanislovas<sup>1</sup>. Analysis will be based on the comparative methodology, the theory of intermediality (Werner Wolf), functional analysis (Viktor Bobrovsky), rhetoric principles of homilies (Wilfried Engemann), systematics of musical forms (Hugo Riemann), archetypical passions (Northrop Frye) and other works.

## 1. Rhetoric and music

Relations between music and verbal arts (grammar, rhetoric, dialectics) are immediately evident but unclear. As stated by Blake Wilson, “all rhetorically related musical concepts originated in the extensive literature on oratory and rhetoric by ancient Greek and Roman writers, principally Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian” (Wilson et al. 2001: n.p.). Among the enduring and influential legacies of this tradition is a fivefold division of the art of verbal discourse into *inventio* (finding the argument), *dispositio* (ordering the argument), *elocutio* (style), *memoria* and *pronuntiatio* (delivery), with the aim of moving (*movere*), delighting (*delectare*) and instructing (*docere*). Quintilian’s requirements for the well-trained orator included “knowledge of the principles of music, which have power to excite or assuage the emotions of mankind” (Wilson et al. 2001: n.p.).

In the past orators’ attention to the role of music in rhetorical texts was constant. Over time the nature of interaction between rhetoric and music has changed due to the inaccessibility of ancient tractates and the material presented therein, due to the changing concept of goals and functions of rhetoric in different cultures, due to the changing requirements of various rhetorical theories and composition regarding performance. On the other hand until the relatively late period in history of Western civilization, music was mostly vocal, related to words. So, composers were influenced by the doctrines of rhetoric, governing the creation of texts for music. Music specialists from the beginning of 19th century stopped studying rhetoric (it disappeared from the majority of educational and philosophical systems). This is the reason why relations between rhetoric and music in the formation of composition are still not sufficiently researched. Now, there is greater understanding about how much the early Western music depended on the concepts of rhetoric (Wilson et al. 2001: n.p.). On the other hand in the 20th century in aesthetics the art of music and the principles of composition began to be appreciated as the objectified expression of emotional dialectics: “Music expresses not only peoples’ feelings and emotions in the exact sense of the word, it embodies a variety of manifestations of life, and even more, it embraces the dynamism of the entire phenomenal world, which generates an internal reverberation inside ourselves” (Sezemanas 1970: 283).

### 1.1. Rhetoric and the concept of intermediality

One of the contemporary theories of interactions between time-based arts is the concept of intermediality (Wolf 2009) which outlines the main directions and models of their relationships. In accordance with conception of intermedial interactions, for rhetoric science the branch of intermediality in its broad sense (extra-compositional intermediality) is more relevant, the so-

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<sup>1</sup> In Lithuania 2018 was declared as The Year of *Sąjūdis*, Father Stanislovas and partisan leader general Adolfas Vanagas-Ramanauskas.



called transmediality. Here, the external contacts of different media or the universal principles of narrativity (variation, repetition, free development, etc.) are manifested, as well as the sensuality of discourse, pathetic expressiveness, which reveals itself in different historical periods. In the branch of intermediality in its narrow sense, interactions between rhetoric and music can occur in both branches: in plurimediality (as structures of vocal genres) and in intermedial reference<sup>2</sup>. Intermedial reference is divided into two subgroups: explicit reference (intermedial thematization, i.e. discussion of music in a novel) and implicit reference (individual or system reference through the form of heteromedial imitation). Implicit reference is arranged into such variants: a) evocation (“graphic” description of a musical composition in a novel), b) formal imitation which is important for rhetoric (structural analogies to music in a novel, to literature in programme music), c) (partial) reproduction (re-presenting song through the quotation of the song text) (Wolf 2009: 147). It is necessary to pay attention that it is rather difficult to describe a theme and its musical analogue in a literary work. Any element can become the base of a shift of the theme's processuality. The compositional function can be fulfilled by the motif, its development, variation, syntax (identical or similar sentences structure, anaphoras, epiphoras, etc.), word music (syntax, intonation, instrumentation)—everything that has the ability to shift, scatter or concentrate (Wolf 2002: 138).

## 1.2. Rhetoric of homilies

Rhetoric of sermons is subject to specific and extremely strict rules of the structure of a text and stylistics, therefore the highest and most complex requirements are imposed on semantics of a sermon, its composition, stylistic expression, the personality of the preacher and his non-verbal language. These texts have to express not only the complex levels of theological sciences and the mystical concept of existence, but also interact with archetypal pulsations and rhythms of the listener, which are actual to persuasion<sup>3</sup>. It is precisely during the liturgy of the Mass when internal being of a human is transformed towards divinity, and Love of God and his heavenly origin of is elevated.

Compositional structures of homilies are extremely diverse, depending on the evangel, the interpretational aspect of the theme (theological, phenomenological, semiotic, existential, theological, etc.) (Engemann 2011), audience structures, knowledge, purpose, and conception. Here it is presented the most common model which is typical to many homilies. First part is the theme, the name title of the homily, which should be short, attractive, interesting, presenting the basic idea and formulated in the Word of God. Second is the text of the Evangel. Third part is the main idea, what is the purpose/what is desired to say? Forth is an introduction (initial situation/history/personal experience/question), it should be brief, encourage the interest in the theme and deepen it. Fifth is the main part and consists of 3 or 2 sections where the subject of entire homily is presented usually using the lines from the *Scriptures*. Each of these sections can contain two arguments, references, and sub-clauses (e.g., other extracts, illustrations, storytelling, personal experiences). They have to highlight further main themes of their section, refine and explain them, and make them easier to perceive. Sixth part is conclusions. This is the culmination of the entire homily. It should be short and simple but its nature can vary (e.g., referral, appeal, motivation, question, concern, challenge, illustration), repeated, newly interpreted theme of the homily, and the quote from the *Bible*, which was read at the beginning.

3 It can be helpful to recall the archetypal energetic origins – positive and negative (Jung 1999), which in various epochs and different sciences are variously named, for example, in Greek mythology the primordial god of love and creation was Eros and god Thanatos was the personification of death, in Christian culture respectively it was God and Satan. In music, the origins of love, joy and death are expressed by harmonies between the minor and the major, in literature it is reflected by various adequate images (see Frye 1990).

It is rather obvious that homilies have a structure close to the requirements of a classical logical composition of rhetoric and stylistic expression (introduction, arrangement of argumentation, reasoning or justification, conclusion, the efficiency of persuasion) but there is no research on the interface with the musical possibilities of enhancing persuasion.

## 2. Expression of musicality in the sermon *About Time* by Father Stanislovas

In order to discuss the principles of the musicality of sermons, a theme of time is chosen which is one of the most favourite threads of contemplations by Father Stanislovas<sup>4</sup>. In the portal *Bernardinai.lt* they are named as *Tėvo Stanislovo pamokslai – Išpažintys (I)*. Šviesa [*Sermons of Father Stanislovas. Confessions (I). Light*] (July 8, 2007) and *Tėvo Stanislovo pamokslai – Išpažintys (II). Apie laiką* [*Sermons of Father Stanislovas. Confessions (II). About Time*] (August 5, 2007), (Tėvas Stanislovas 2001: n.p) It was announced that *Bernardinai.lt* began to publish the cycle of sermons by Father Stanislovas. Both texts were written in 2001 and, according to their editor Lukas Bukauskas, many of their versions are agreed with Father Stanislovas. These sermons express perhaps the most important topics from the majority of his texts, so they can be treated as a two-part cycle (e.g., prelude, toccata, etc., together with fugue) or as the beginning of an anticipated longer cycle. A few more of his sermons (*Dedication, The Path of Youth, And He Always Walks Side by Side, That I would Be Full of Life [The Pentecost Vigil], Eros and Sexus*) also edited by Bukauskas were published a year later in the newspaper portal *Lietuvos rytas*, but the heading does not indicate that they will form a cycle. Therefore, because of the scope of the article, I will analyze only one sermon by Father Stanislovas dedicated to his favorite philosophical and poetic theme which is time (see Bankauskaitė-Sereikienė and Dargužytė 2009).

### 2.1. The aspects of thematization and of word music

The sermon *About time* refers to the musical images. Here the terms of hymn and psalm are repeated 2 times, the motif of rhythm and non-rhythm is found repeated 3 times, the motivation of the rhythm – “dienos slinkties monotonija” [the monotony of the passing of the day], the misal is mentioned as the indirect reference to music 2 times (one of its sections is the Gregorian hymnal), and the *Breviary* is mentioned 3 times (these are the psalms from the *Old Testament*, religious hymns and other religious texts). Many of these terms in Father Stanislovas' s sermon have a philosophical-theological subtext related to the rhythm of the Divine being.

Analyzing the sermon from the aspect of the word music it is easy to notice the richness of sentences and their musicality, so that at the same time they sound like improvisations. The text sounds as if it is chanted, there are no unnecessary function words. (Let us recall that people came to Father Stanislovas to learn the art of Gregorian chanting not only from the whole of Lithuania but also from the former Soviet Union.) Sentences are of various lengths and structure, rhetorically persuasive and emotional, theme is often developed by the method of augmentation – growth. In the quotation below there are many light semantic words with synesthetic support in the front line vowels *e, é, i* and the consonant *j*. The syllables based on these sounds

4 Stanislovas OFM Cap., the Capuchin friar and a priest (1918-2005) also suffered from KGB persecution, he was twice imprisoned in the Soviet Gulag camps in Siberia. After returning to Lithuania, he became a priest, but the Soviet security constantly spied upon him, carried out searches, his sermons' notes and translations of R.M. Rilke's poems were confiscated, he was banned from wearing the Capuchin clothes. In addition to pastoral work, he collected church art and ethnological material. He stored and distributed prohibited literature (*Lietuvos katalikų bažnyčios kronika* [*Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania*], *Aušra*, underground publications delivered from Russia, etc.). In 1976 he was interrogated at the KGB headquarters in Vilnius. There were published several collections of his sermons and essays (*Tėvo Stanislovo pamokslai* [*Sermons of Father Stanislovas*] (1994), *Apie meilę ir tarnystę* [*About Love and Service*] (1997, 2003), *Atsidūsėjimai* [*The Sighs*] (2003), etc, and memoir books about him. During the period of Lithuania's independence, the priest was awarded several state awards.

are pronounced softly: there are more than half of such sounds in a passage (27 from 43, they are in bold by Rūta Brūzgienė), 14 are long ones (they are underlined by Rūta Brūzgienė), and from 16 hard syllables there are 8 long ones. It is doubtful that such instrumentation of light semantics happens to be accidental. “Kad **labiau** užsidegtume **meile Dievui**, vaikštome **Kryžiaus Kelius**, garbiname **Jėzaus Širdį**. **Atidžiai** skaitome **apie šventuosius**, **jų gyvenimus**.” [In order to increase our love for God, we walk our roads to Calvary, we worship the Heart of Jesus. We read carefully about the saints and their lives.]<sup>5</sup> (Here and further based on the quotes are from Tėvas Stanislovas 2001: n.p.)

## 2.2. The aspects of analogues of musical form and technique

The form of sermon is quite close to the traditional principles of the composition of homilies but there are no traditional introductory parts: the text of the evangel, rhetorical introduction, the main idea – the purpose description and the introductory situation. From the rhetorical point of view the sermon begins immediately from the teaching where the theme is divided into two or three aspects. They are developed with the support of examples followed by the ending and conclusion—often it is a culminating sentence. Such a structure of the sermon without the introductory parts, purifies and strengthens the form of persuasion. The text sounds like a poetical-musical work, therefore, it may be very convenient to apply other regularities from the analysis of time-based arts.

The theme of the sermon *About time* consists of three motifs: the sacrality and eternity of the universe in time, the divine letters – events in the earthly existence and the worship of the Creator. The first word is the most important and is a code for the whole text: “Visata it koks didžiulis Mišiolas, kurio raidės, visi atskiri reiškiniai, įvykiai, viskas turi mūsų širdy įžiebtį meilės jausmą ir pagarbą Kūrėjui.” [The universe is like a huge Missal in which letters, all individual phenomena, events, everything has to light a feeling of love and respect in our hearts for the Creator.] Further, all three motifs of the theme are developed: holiness, fire of love in everyday life and liturgical books: “Kad labiau užsidegtume meile Dievui, vaikštome Kryžiaus Kelius, garbiname Jėzaus Širdį. Atidžiai skaitome apie šventuosius, jų gyvenimus.” [In order to increase our love for God, we walk our roads to Calvary, we worship the Heart of Jesus. We read carefully about the saints and their lives.] From the point of view of the musical form this is close to the introduction which contains all the main motifs of the theme.

In the first part (from the musical point of view) the motifs of time the Breviary and the divine teacher are varied in three stages. Initially the image of the Breviary—the divine liturgical book is developed gradually as if expressing the compendium of divine wisdom: “Tarp daugybės maldaknygių ir knygų yra kone visai užmiršta knyga, apie kurią daug kalba mūsų senieji mokytojai. Tai – Brevijorius bei Brevijoriaus himnai.” [Among the many prayer books and other books there is an almost completely forgotten book, the book many of our old teachers spoke about. It is the Breviary and Breviary's anthems.] It is interesting that the preacher when naming what makes up the Breviary firstly mentions the musical texts as the most important and only later moves to other spiritual texts: “Brevijorius – knyga, sudaryta iš psalmių, himnų, Bažnyčios Tėvų raštų ir skirta kasdienėms maldoms ir apmąstymams.” [The Breviary is the book which consists of psalms, hymns, writings of the Church Fathers and is designated to everyday prayers and thoughts.] Further the significance of the *Holy Scripture* or everyday life is emphasized with rhetorical questions and answers by responding to them in two sentences: “Kodėl ji tokia svarbi, reikalinga? Todėl, kad ji padeda prižiūrėti mumyse išžiebusią ugnį. Tai – nepakeičiama atrama, kelrodis kiekvienai dienai, nepakeičiamas vadovas, mokytojas einant per gyvenimą...” [Why is

5 Translation by Daiva Judges.

it so important? Because it helps us to look after the fire ignited inside. It is an indispensable support, a road sign for each day, an irreplaceable leader, a teacher when passing through life...] Such wavy intonation and rising emotional dynamics is created by gradual increments, listing semantic segments in order of increasing significance.

Later the second part begins where the text sounds as the hymn of praise for the rising sun as the Creator, where the motif of light is gradually developed extending the image of the fire which is heard in the first part: “išsižiebusią ugnį” [the fire ignited inside]. This is the glorification known in all religious cultures, especially common for the hermit monks: “Su kokia pagarba reikėtų stebėti tekančią saulę. Teprimena jinai mums apie amžinosios Šviesos neišsenkamas versmes” [You should watch the rising sun with great respect. Let her remind you about inexhaustible sources of eternal Light]. The motif of light is variably developed in everyday life as a search for holiness, opening the new layers of existence and which sounds like a mystical light of the day: “Kaip godžiai turėtume rankioti Šviesos spindulėlius iš studijų, iš matytų gerų pavyzdžių. Ir iš maldos.” [How devouringly we should pick up the rays of Light out of studies, from the good and well-known examples. And from prayer] and “O tas paslaptingas, nepastebimas šviesos bangavimas dienos metu!” [Oh, and this mysterious, invisible surge of light during the day!]. A wavy, swinging, carrying and elevating intonation which is open to the other layers of existence and the favorable graduality which is repeated differently in three stages in terms of individual segments and in terms of the whole structure is one of the oldest archetypal patterns of composition which also sounds in ancient Gregorian chants and resembles a monastic hymn to the Sun and Creator.

In the third part of compositional form the time motif is intensely developed which was also heard in the second part (“užmiršta knyga”, “einant per gyvenimą”, “dienos metu” [forgotten book, passing through life, during the day, etc.]). It also consists of three sections each of which contains different and contrasting aspect of philosophical semantics of time. In all sections—paragraphs of this part the imperative verb form appears (“atidžiai išsižiūrėkime”, “Priimkime”, “Su atidumu sekime” [let us observe closely, Let us accept, Let us follow with care]) where the sections are added to the last two examples. In the first one the anxiety of a person's everyday life and magnificent calmness of time and the contrast of light and darkness are compared: “Kai aplinkui mus visi daiktai ir žmonės taip prisigėrę neramumo, atidžiai išsižiūrėkime į laiką – kiek jame didingos ramybės. Pažvelkime į šviesos ir sutemų didingumą.” [When all things and people around us become so entranced with restlessness, let's take a close look at the time—how much of majestic peace is in it. Let us look at the greatness of light and dusk.] The following lines have the lowest tone of timbre and ends with an anti-cadence question (“suvargina savo monotoniškumu”, “dievobaimingas kantrumas”, “kasdienis kryžius” [tired of its monotony, devout patience, daily cross]): “Priimkime su dievobaimingu kantrumu tą dienų slinktį. Ji mus suvargina savo monotoniškumu. Bet ar tai nėra tas kasdienis kryžius, apie kurį kalba Evangelija?” [Let us accept the passing of the day with the devout patience. It makes us tired of its monotony. But is it not the daily cross which the Evangel speaks about?]. In the third and culminating section of this part God's peace and joy, as the wisdom of time and life, is announced. It especially emphasizes the sensation of God—the Creator who writes the letters of daily life in the divine Missal of Time, his tranquility and joy and his daily breath (“juste pajuntame” [we feel ourselves]):

Su atidumu sekime Dievo rašančią ranką Laiko mišiole. Laiko raidės pamokina mus ramaus gyvenimo ritmo, jos nuolat mus ragina eiti į gyvenimo džiaugsmą ir siekti atsigalvavimo. Jeigu Šventajame Rašte įskaitome Dievo Išmintį, šventųjų gyvenimuose pastebime Dievo apvaizdos ir Gailėstingumo veikimą, tai laike mes jau ne skaitome, ne stebime, bet juste pajuntame Dievo alsavimą. [Let us follow with care the God's hand writing in the Missal of Time. Letters of time teach us a quiet rhythm of life, they constantly urge us to go



towards the joy of life and seek refreshment. If we see the Wisdom of God in the Holy Scriptures, if we notice God's providence and the act of Mercy in the lives of saints, so we not only read or watch in time but we feel ourselves the breath of God.] (Tėvas Stanislovas 2001: n.p.; long syllables are underlined by Rūta Brūzgienė).

The last paragraph would sound like a coda which consists of two emotionally contrasting images: the anxiety of our hearts expressed in rhetorical anti-cadence exclamation and the response in a very soft optative mood (“Tegul klausos” [Let us hear]) which begins the answer of the preacher—the bearer of God's word: “O mūsų širdys taip neritmingai plaka! Tegul klausos jos to dieviško, ramaus ritmo.” [And our hearts beat so out of rhythm! Let them listen to this divine and calm rhythm.] The intonational melodious foundation of this paragraph is based on the long syllables: even 18 from 25 syllables are long (they are underlined, see the citation above), while the basis of 16 of them is the vowels of the back line *a* and *o* (the vowel *o* in Lithuanian language is always pronounced protractedly). These vowels along with other instrumental effects (abundance of semivowels *l*, *m*, *n*, *r*, and *j*) and the phonics of the second sentence (5 vowels *o* and the consonance “ramaus ritmo” [calm rhythm]) create the impression of the end of the wise monastic and philosophical hymn.

Although the structure of the sermon *About time* has elements inherent to traditional rhetoric of homilies in terms of the syntactic derivatives and composition, analyzing it from the point of view of musicality the specific tunefulness, melodiousness, the variety of intonational-syntactic structures is noticed, as well as the tendency to form the three-part rhythm at different levels: at the sentence structure and at the formation of the paragraph—section in relation to the form of whole section or the whole sermon. The composition of the sermon would correspond to the three-part musical form ( $ABA_1$ ) with introduction and coda. It is the expression of the inner form as processuality and its outline acts like the support to the archetypal rhythm with the three-part form, enhances the influence of the persuasion and gives the work not only the artistic-poetic richness and musicality but also transfers it into the dimension of the depth of sacrality.

This sermon *About time* by Father Stanislovas may in fact be as the coded one of his worldview not only in aspects of semantics but also in aspects of creating the form, sound and deep musicality. The worship of the Universe, Light, the Creator and Love, the search for the Wisdom of life in the Calmness of Time are based on the elements of the poetics and rhetoric, complementing each other, and the structures of archetypal musical models.

### 3. Conclusions

Rhetoric as one of the oldest interdisciplinary sciences has longstanding classical traditions. Being a source of many modern disciplines at the same time it experiences the influence of these fields such as communication, psychology, etc., which emphasize the role of the speaker, coding and the influence of nonverbal language on persuasion.

Rhetoric as the time-based art is closely related to the genesis and expression of music, literature and other time-based arts. The concept of intermediality is used for analysis of rhetorical texts which allows to research various aspects of musicality of the text in more detail.

In Lithuania the majority of research on sermons are dedicated to the theory of contemporary homiletics, semantics and stylistics, yet the rhetoric of sermons from the point of view of musicality has not been addressed.

After analyzing the compositional principles of the sermon *About time* by Father Stanislovas, a conclusion has been achieved that this text features a special musicality in terms of thematization, of word music, and analogues of musical composition and technique. Analysis of the musi-



cal form corresponds to some of the compositional principles of the rhetoric of homilies but the musicality of the text is based on the archetypal model of the three-part rhythm and expression of its processuality in the text of which the pulsations move the listener to the deepest levels of subconsciousness.

Musical analysis of sermons is a promising field of research, relevant not only to the rhetoric of various confessions and periods but also to the current science of communication. This aspect would help to return to the research on synergistic effects of the time-based arts while allowing the rhetoric and its musical aspects to take its right place and become a leader of the modern humanitarian studies.

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# SOLITUDE AND TOGETHERNESS IN MUSICAL PERFORMANCE: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

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## **Abstract**

Solo and ensemble performances elicit a different response from the player and the listener according to the instrumentation, to the environment and to the musical communication. Performers themselves live and feel differently according to the instrumentation that is put in place and the audience’s reaction varies depending on their feelings of *empathy* with the players, and on their perception. This presentation will focus both on the performers’ experiences and on the *instrument’s* position and role in the piece. Musical performance includes many aspects and layers: communication, art, interpretation, participation, aesthetics, listening, observing, feeling and understanding. Bridging between the structural dimension of music and its reception is not a simple task. Some works focus mainly on the aesthetics/semiotics of music, while others analyze the emotional and psychological aspects connected to it. *Performance studies* feature a multidisciplinary set of tools, drawing from psychology to semiotics, appropriate to engage this topic properly. This presentation aims at promoting a dialogue between semiotics and performance studies, underlining the commonalities between the two approaches and the benefits of their synergies.

## **1. Introduction**

This article explores the social meaning in musical performance, investigating the ways in which we focus on “[...] the functioning of the performing body, both in itself and in relation to the other dimensions of the performance event.” (Cook 2003: 209). In this frame, my research aims at approaching a particular aspect of musical performance: the opposition between solitude and togetherness, and engaging the many ways to answer the question how solo performances and ensemble performances can make music richer and more expressive with the aims of outlining a set of epistemological paths and analytical tools that can be used to shed some light on this aspect. Due to this twofold nature which is personal and structural, my analysis will be grounded

on an adequate methodology. With performance studies, featuring a multidisciplinary set of tools, also drawing from psychology to semiotics, I should be able to engage this topic properly. Music is, indeed, still a mystery (maybe the greatest of mankind), and every performance includes many aspects and layers: communication, art, interpretation (in both senses of the word!), participation, aesthetics, listening, observing, feeling and understanding, all at the same time. According to Lotman (2011[1967]: 253-254), performance studies offer a middle ground by focusing on the performer and on the performance as possible connections between the two aspects: they interpret the musical text and, at the same time, feel all the emotions expressed in their music. This discipline is able to conjugate various aspects of performing, from more physical and physiological ones, to more ideal and psychological to approach the development of the artists and their musical potential, but also to focus on more pragmatic aspects, such as practicing, rehearsing, intonation and body movement. It also takes into account musicological and semiotic aspects as structural and emotional communication.

## 2. Solo performance

The aim of this paragraph is to explore *solitude in musical performance* in three sections, trying to shed some light to different questions about the issue with the help of a multidisciplinary approach.

### 2.1. Solitude and monologue

In all types of performing arts, the solo performance is the one that requires the highest level of concentration and aspiration, that a performer can improve. In musical solo performance, the solo instrument – and the performer – are alone on stage, all the attention and the communicative power, it is in their hands. Solo pieces feature also a single *focus*: the power of music to attract audience and to arouse emotions, lends to the performer a remarkably large capacity to express her/himself thoroughly. A single instrument is shown in all its nuances and all its peculiarities are revealed. The performer, having the only color of her/his musical instrument, having a metaphorical monolingual communication, looks for every possible way to be expressive. From the point of view of famous musicologists: “The crux of expressive performance is in nuance. Nuance is the subtle, sometimes almost imperceptible, manipulation of sound parameters, attack, timing, pitch, loudness, and timbre that makes music sound alive and human rather than dead and mechanical.” (Lehmann et al. 2007: 85). This definition gives us an idea about what a performance can require from the performer.

As it is said, with a great power, come great responsibilities: during solo performance, the performer has to face all of the requirements of musical work and performance by her/himself. Musical and technical strengths and weaknesses are all under the spotlight while the performer is interpreting music, it makes the performer feel heroic while s/he is dealing with the challenges to cure possible imperfections. The psychological pressure on the performer is particularly harsh as the performance requires demonstrating the specialty of the *virtuoso*, *invention*, and *charisma*. In my opinion, at this point, even though we are talking about musical characteristics and qualities during only solo performance, Eero Tarasti’s theory<sup>1</sup> is a perfect way to explain the musical modalities with a semiotic relation: “Perhaps the most important and original of these

1 “Modalities of Will (*vouloir*), Can (*pouvoir*), Know (*savoir*), and Must (*devoir*), offered by Greimas in the field of linguistics, were for the first time applied in musicology by Eero Tarasti. Modalities provide music with the semantic meaning. In that they can be endogenic, i.e., inherent to the immanent meanings of the music, or exogenic, that is, “activated” from outside depending on how the music is interpreted and performed. While talking about the composer’s work, Tarasti explains the modality of “Will” as follows: *vouloir* appears in, say, Beethoven’s sonata in those episodes where the composer is particularly heroic, that is, the way he wants to be (here and below — from Tarasti’s Musical Semiotics seminars at the University of Helsinki, 2005).” (Navickaitė-Martinelli 2015: 745, Footnote no.11).

levels is the one dealing with musical modalities: “will”, “know”, “must”, “can”, and “believe”. These modalities, which originated in linguistic-semiotic theories, can be defined in purely musical terms as well.” (Tarasti 2002: 61). With this theory, while performing a solo piece, it is the moment to hold all these musical modalities for the performer, that s/he earned until that moment, not only to deal with the possible difficulties, but also for making the performance become a self-congratulation.

## 2.2. Are we “all + one” while performing a solo piece?

Attempting to explore the monolingual communication, a social meaning appears in solo performance and having this point opens the door to defend the thesis of Nicholas Cook: “To understand music as performance means to see it as an irreducibly social phenomenon, even when only a single individual is involved.” (Cook 2003: 206).

Without doubt, it is impossible to ignore the communication between the performer and the audience during any kind of music performance. Several scholars have already showed interest in this relationship and also in the difference between the experiences of performers and listeners. A brief example from the book *Psychology for Musicians* helps me to take the aspect forward:

Both listeners and performers can experience a sense of wonderment at the apparently unpredictable power of some performances. Listeners are not, of course, privy to the hours of deliberate work and shaping that performers can devote in preparation. But even performers sometimes surprise themselves and are unable to explain or predict why one performance is routine and the next performance of the same piece is “magic” (Lehmann et al. 2007: 85).

In the book mentioned, the musical reasons are explained afterwards the quotation above, but the point here, for me, is that the last sentence gives us a clue about something which is happening on stage, while a performer is performing. And what is happening while the performer is alone on stage? Is s/he totally alone during this experience? One of the approaches to find an answer to this question, can be considering solo performance as an unexpected journey into the self. The performer discovers if s/he has something new to say with music through the instrument and each performance is a unique journey. Lina Navickaitė-Martinelli interprets the “individuality and standards in the art of a performer (after Eero Tarasti’s theory of subjectivity)”:

The way I see it, the *Moi* side<sup>2</sup> of the performer’s self is intrinsically related to the Greimassian internal (endogenic) modalities Will and Can, while the *Soi* part of one’s identity is reflected by the external (exogenic) modalities Know and Must, thus encompassing all the spheres and categories through and in which the performer’s art is communicated.

- Greimassian modality of “Will” corresponds here to an inner identity (*Moi*) of a performer. This part might include a personal (family) background, artistic tastes or religiousness if any. It also encompasses the person’s musicality, together with a distinctive “performer’s charm,” or charisma.
- “Can” embraces the performer’s technical capabilities, “psychophysical harmony.” Virtuosity, corporeal reality, and a certain quality of sound, realized in performance, are also included here.
- “Know,” or the *Soi* of a performer, consists of preestablished social codes, stereotypes of the given perfor-

2 “Several authors in the field of semiotics have been dealing with the concept of semiotic self, [...] which consists usually of two aspects: an inward and outward side within the subject. Among these dualities, we have, for instance, the “I” (self as such) and “Me” (“I” in the social context), as used by George Herbert Mead; *Moi* and *Soi* by the French authors (Ricoeur, Sartre, and Fontanille use these concepts in their writings); controlling, deeper self versus critical self by Charles S. Peirce; or the Bergsonian differentiation between the “superficial” and the “deep” ego.” (Navickaitė-Martinelli 2015: 744).

mance tradition (“school”); usually, manners of playing are rated according to certain standard criteria, with some adjudged better than others.

- “Must” means the composer’s intentions as put in the score, the work’s immanent modalities. It is something called out by the requirements of a musical work—the subjective potentialities of its style, without which the work could not “live.” (Navickaitė-Martinelli 2015: 745-746).

Therefore, a solo performer is in dialogue with her/himself discussing about how to interpret/recreate music, how to introduce her/himself to the audience, how to catch the standard of the day with her/his background, how to adapt her/his style to the requirements of musical work, and additionally, s/he is secretly in a dialogue also with the composer. Realizing the situation of the performer, being alone on stage, reminds me the origin of the word “alone”, which is “all + one”. Thus, the answer can be: “Yes, we are alone while performing a solo piece, bunching all that we have and all that we are / can be together, to tell a story”.

### 2.3. Storytelling

In this last section on solitude, the focus is on the role of the musical instrument in solo performance, considering that music is a story and musical instruments are the characters of that story. In this case, I choose to consider music performance as a theatre play, taking Roland Barthes as an example: “The modern location for music is not the concert hall, but the stage on which the musicians pass, in what is often a dazzling display, from one source of sound to another.” (Barthes 1977: 153).

From my point of view, when a story is told by a single performer, the performer is not only one of the characters of the story, but s/he is a storyteller. We hear/feel this manner of telling in music from time to time. Gino Stefani mentions this musical experience in *Competenza musicale e cultura della pace*: “The production of musical sense occurs through codes that stem from social practices. It is due to this that the beginning of a classical piece may be constructed/perceived as a ceremonial entrance or the beginning of a speech; that the articulation of a melody may remind of a spoken utterance [...]” (Stefani 1985: 87, translation taken from Navickaitė-Martinelli 2015: 749). The sense which occurs, described by Stefani, arises mostly from a *solo* of an instrument in a chamber music or in a symphonic music. And when it comes to a solo piece, “the beginning of a speech” turns into the entire story, which is being told by a storyteller. To understand better what makes a storyteller special, and how it can have a connection with the role of a single musical instrument during a solo performance, it is necessary to take a closer look at the general qualities and characteristics of storytelling and what makes it different from theatre Liz Warren<sup>3</sup>:

- First, most storytellers do not memorize a script as actors do. They prefer to learn (but not memorize) a story – thoroughly and deeply – so that when they are telling it, they can respond freely to the particular audience in attendance. This provides dynamism, unpredictability, and freshness to storytelling that is very satisfying for both the teller and the listener.
- A storyteller does not maintain the persona of a single character. The teller portrays all the characters in the story while remaining herself.
- Actors generally relate to other actors on the stage rather than directly to the audience. In the theatre, there is the concept of the fourth wall, an invisible wall through which the audience witnesses the events on stage.

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In storytelling there is no fourth wall, or if there is, it is behind the audience. Storytellers seek to establish a relationship with the audience, at least for the duration of the story, and believe that the stronger the connection between them and the audience, the stronger the impact of the story. In some storytelling events, a high degree of participation from the audience is expected and encouraged.

- Storytellers do not use directors. In theatre, the director is responsible for interpreting the text and directing the actors in fulfilling the vision. In a storytelling event, the teller is responsible for the interpretation of the story, its development and delivery. Storytellers do, however, often use coaches who help them interpret and actualize their vision of the story.
- Storytellers do not use sets, props, or costumes. A storyteller seeks to create a world inside the listener's mind. It is her job to communicate this with words and her body rather than with objects. In this sense, the story is co-created by the teller and the listener in the moment of the telling. Many storytellers believe that props, sets, and costumes can interfere with this process.

(Warren 2008).

Besides certain very theatrical cases, it is inevitable to find similarities and connections between storytelling and musical solo performance. A solo performer works with an extra effort to learn and to understand music with all of its nuances, each sound parameter, attack, timing, pitch, loudness, timbre, sometimes, even gestures or body movements. The musical instrument does not represent only one character, but it portrays all the characters in the story while remaining the storyteller. The instrument and performer have a connection between themselves and with the audience, just as there is no other accompaniment of another instrument and performer. There is no conductor, solo performer is responsible for the interpretation of music, its development and delivery. And finally, during a solo performance, the instrument seeks to create a world inside the listener's mind using all the nuances with performer's communicative possibilities.

My conclusion, in the end of these three sections, which are dedicated to *solitude* in musical performance, is that solitude gives a big power to the performer which puts her/him in a heroic but also fragile position at the same time because it is a moment to learn/know about her/himself and to discover the treasure inside, and finally to tell the story (music) with her/his voice (instrument) and interpretation, intentionally introducing variations in the parameters of the performance.

### 3. Ensemble performance

The aim of this paragraph is to focus on *togetherness in musical performance* in three sections, trying to shed some light to different questions about the issue with the help of a multidisciplinary approach.

#### 3.1. Togetherness and dialogue

Even though ensemble performance is considered as a typical musical event, and we already have a broad body of literature on it, its complexity opens many doors to investigate. In the opposite of solo performance, ensemble performance is a team work and collaborative representation, just as the word itself<sup>4</sup> explains the meaning and the objective. The way to pursue this objective for ensemble performers, is to communicate their individual instruction, such as which is a part of the whole musical structure, and their expressive aspirations to other performers and to the audience. Peter E. Keller, who has several publications on music psychology and musical ensemble performance, determines ensemble music making in one of his articles, *Ensemble performance: Interpersonal alignment of musical expression*:

<sup>4</sup> *Ensemble* is a French word which is used also as a musical term: "a group of things or people acting or taken together as a whole, especially a group of musicians who regularly play together." (Cambridge Dictionary).

The special challenge for ensemble performers, however, is that these expressive devices are no longer merely a matter of individual variation, but rather inter-individual co-variation. [...] Expressive intentions refer to the specific musical character with which a performer - or group of performers - wishes to imbue a piece. These intentions are realized during performance through deviations from what would be considered to be a prototypical interpretation of the piece in the prevailing cultural context (Keller 2014: 260).

On this basis, my intention is interpreting these inter-individual co-variations in different forms of ensemble with the support of Tarasti's theory.

### 3.2. Togetherness for unity: being one

The smallest forms of ensemble, investigate dialogue and triologue with different types of organics. It is focused on small and intimate formations, with only a few performers that share the musical experience. A clarinet, for example, converses with different instruments, discusses with the piano or the guitar and if it is a trio ensemble, the clarinet participates in larger and more elaborate talks with the winds or the violin and piano. The uniformity of solo is substituted with variety and multiplicity. A single instrument is now confronted with other timbres, with other musical expressions - and so is the performer, who will now interact with other musicians that have other sensibilities, needs and possibilities.

In larger forms of ensemble, in a quintet, for example, the intimacy of its predecessors is substituted with a larger instrumentation, big enough for the individual identities of the musicians and instruments to blend, but not so big that a single performer would drown, in which the ensemble eclipses the single performer. And when it comes to septets and octets, winds and strings are always together, weaving their voices into a unanimous chant. The number of instruments bring this ensemble close to a small chamber orchestra, making the choral effect the centre of the attention. Now, the single instrument, on the one hand, seems to drown in the homogeneous appearance of music, but, on the other hand, manifests its presence and its necessity among the polyphony of the pieces. The instrument - and the performer - although only a small part of these ensembles, are nonetheless essential to it.

Finally, the largest form of ensemble is an ensemble orchestra which represents the apotheoses of togetherness, gathering a big ensemble - ranging from strings to percussion - to tell a story together.

### 3.3. Characters in a tale

In this last section on togetherness, it is still possible to mention *storytelling*, but this time, each instrument impersonates one character in the story. Even though it is mostly imaginary to build a character for the performer and to receive it for the listener, depending on the information that is given by the composer/interpreter, in some compositions, the story and the character of each instrument are already stated, such as *Peter and the Wolf* by Sergei Prokofiev, which is a symphonic fairy tale for children. Prokofiev produced detailed performance notes in both English and Russian for *Peter and the Wolf*. According to the English version:

Each character of this tale is represented by a corresponding instrument in the orchestra: the bird by a flute, the duck by an oboe, the cat by a clarinet playing staccato in a low register, the grandfather by a bassoon, the wolf by three horns, Peter by the string quartet, the shooting of the hunters by the kettle drums and bass drum. Before an orchestral performance it is desirable to show these instruments to the children and to play on them the corresponding leitmotifs. Thereby, the children learn to distinguish the sonorities of the instruments during the performance of this tale (Morrison 2008: 52).

A different kind of example can be a symphonic poem, *The Moldau*, from *MaVlast (My Fatherland)* by Bedřich Smetana:

The movement starts with light, rippling figures that represent the emergence of the Moldau River as two mountain springs, one warm and one cold. Water from the springs then combines to become a mighty river, symbolized by a thickly orchestrated, stately theme that recurs periodically throughout the remainder of the work. Farther downstream, the river passes jubilant hunters, portrayed by a horn melody, and then passes a village wedding, signaled by a passage in polka rhythm. The river then enters a gorge where, according to legend, water nymphs –suggested by serene and mysterious melodies –come out to bathe in the moonlight. With the morning light, the main river theme returns, though it soon breaks into tumultuous dissonance as the river enters the St. John's Rapids. Beyond the white water, the river reaches Prague, where to grand arpeggios of a regal hymn, it flows past the castle Vyšehrad, once the seat of power for Bohemian kings. After fading to a trickle, the piece—and the journey –comes to an unambiguous close with a loud two-chord cadence (Schwarm 2011: 77-78).

Here again, modalities of “will”, “can”, “know” and “must” come into play. First of all, the color and sound capacity of each instrument (can) makes it possible to decide what kind of character an instrument “can” portray. Then, structural instructions, requirements of the musical work – composer's intention (must) has a big role for the performer to understand which way to follow and finally, expressive intentions (will) of the performer and how s/he represents/communicates them (know) to other performers and to the audience, constructs the entire ensemble performance.

#### 4. Conclusion

As it emerges clearly, this topic has a twofold nature, focusing both on the performer and her/his personal and artistic experience, and on the instrument and its position and role in a musical piece. The balance between weaknesses and strengths, abilities and imperfections is an extremely important feature of music, and it is never fixed. The psychological factor has a great impact here, changing the quality and characteristics of the performer greatly, according to the environment that surrounds her/him.

The difference in organics is not only a difference in quantity and variety – more performers, more instruments – but it is an ontological difference, deeply rooted in the semiotic possibilities of expression and in the way music may be experienced. The performers live and feel very differently according to the organic that is put in place: the pressures and the pleasures of musical isolation and musical involvement are of a great variety. Then again, also the audience's experience varies according to the organic, both in the feeling of *empathy* with the players, and in the semiotic devices that different musical discourses are still able to deploy.

This is not a mere differential analysis, focusing only on the differences between the various organics, but it also engages the many ways in which solo performances and ensemble performances can make music truly richer and more expressive. Tracing connections between solitude and togetherness in musical performance, despite the contrast, exposes a framework of relations between them, that points out their aim at making a whole reuniting all.

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# SOUND GESTURES AND BODY GESTURES IN 18TH CENTURY OPERA

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## **Abstract**

Composers such as Handel and Vivaldi used both opera style and concerto style: according to Ratner (1980), there was an interaction and an exchange between the two styles. The aim of our research was to collect evidence that the use of “gestures” was openly perceptible in the opera realm while it was implicit in the context of concertos, where musical passages similar to opera might be used. We examined Handel’s opera *Giulio Cesare* and we analyzed some arias belonging to three different emotional and dramatic categories: fury, love and pain. We also considered three fragments taken from Vivaldi’s concertos where structural and performative features correspond to the three categories described. As a general hypothesis we could say that composers and performers aspired to create clearcut expressive types with regards to these three categories. A clearcut definition was however possible only within the opera dramatic text, context and plot. Without characters, words and narrative elements a listener could certainly recognize the emotional aspects of musical passages, but could not precisely establish a semantic description.



## 1. Introduction

The plots of operas from the first part of the 18th century are constantly oriented between two principal polarities: the rational conducts of political power (the narration must show noble and morally sublime examples), and the ungovernable cases of love passions: the characters strive to adapt their passions to the good rules of human behavior, not always succeeding in their efforts. Such conflicting events tended to generate the dramaturgical substance of the operas, a situation that is very far from the habits and the social values of our time (thus explaining the difficulties encountered by today's directors). From a musical point of view this dramaturgical substance is undoubtedly at the core of the narration. For example, the arias, which normally conclude dialogues between characters, sum up their sense and have the function of manifesting the characters' inner emotional reactions, are the major strong points of the whole event. These emotional aspects of arias, their social as well as their private values, are very interesting as they provide a model of emotional expression and regulation that is not far from modern psychological theories (Scherer 2005).

In a recent paper some members of our group (Baroni et al., forthcoming) already discussed how in the opera *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* by Handel three main affective situations could be considered: love, fury and sorrow. By "sorrow" we intended a general idea of regret, by "fury" – an idea of violence, and by "love" – an idea of positive desire. And we must also take into account that in music the expression of affects does not have the same distinctive precision as in verbal semantics.

Our choice of opera fell on Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* for two main reasons. Firstly, because it is a well-studied and frequently performed work, and secondly because the rationalistic culture of the 18th century tended to impose on its music rather precise formal conventions which, moreover, were explained and discussed by philosophers and musicians of the time. Handel's opera obtained its aesthetical results thanks to the powerful creativity of its author, but its author also deeply respected the conventions and the tastes of his epoch, which could gain him the necessary appreciation of his rich and noble followers.

The majority of Handel's arias are composed according to the so-called ABA form, and we are aware that this was far from being a preference for mere musical symmetry. Recent psychological studies on the organization of musical time (Imberty 2014 [2005]; Huron 2006) and on the processes of the modulation of emotional events evidenced that in the human emotional experience repetition is present and has a special value and meaning: it means transformation, creation of new expectations and surprises. The "da capo" aria can be interpreted according to this perspective and may describe emotional events rather than single states.

In the previously mentioned paper (Baroni et al., forthcoming) we described the main elements of emotional situations concerning love, fury and sorrow, examining the musical score, the vocal performances of singers and the body gestures used by the interpreters. The results of these analyses pointed out some clearcut profiles in which structural features (such as major-minor mode, speed variations, cadences, regular-irregular rhythms and so on) interacted with vocal accents, portamentos and embellishments (among other vocal features), and with the intensity and amplitude of body gestures and postures. The authors managed to differentiate the love profile from that of sorrow, and both of these from fury, allowing to offer some speculations and hypotheses about the role of single musical, vocal or gestural components might have in the definition of an emotional situation and how that situation could evolve and bring new meanings to the plot. A new research was nevertheless necessary to test the validity of these emotional profiles within specific categories of listeners and under different conditions that could elicit emotional responses from musical structures, singing features and body gestures, taking into

consideration, where possible, the role of single musical, vocal or gestural components. The aim of this paper moves precisely in this direction. Before describing our research project and results we would like to make some considerations about the study of emotions in music and particularly in an opera such as Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*.

## 2. Music and emotions: musical emotions

In the study of human emotions two procedures are generally used: encoding procedures and decoding procedures. Encoding procedures are used in order to select the stimuli or the materials that are supposed to elicit an emotional reaction or response. In the paper previously described (Baroni et al., forthcoming) the authors selected some audio or audio-video materials from arias of *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* that could elicit specific emotional reactions in listeners. Decoding procedures, on the other hand, are used to test the meaning attributed to emotional stimuli or materials by a certain number of judges. The materials selected in the study on *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* could be used in a decoding task. Decoding procedures may involve either a categorial assessment of the emotional meaning attributed to the stimuli to be judged (i.e., the name of an emotion) or a dimensional approach concerning some dimensions (such as pleasant-unpleasant) through which emotional stimuli can be judged. In pure dimensional approaches emotional experiences are described in terms of qualities rather than names or verbal labels: so, for example, "happiness" is described in terms of a pleasant valence with more or less intense arousal. Many other terms such as "delight" may overlap with "happiness". Dimensional approaches have the advantage of looking at the multiple aspects, not restricted to a single word, that are present in the emotional experience. The same idea that emotions can be described in terms of processes more than static events can be found in the theory of Klaus Scherer (2005).

It is obvious, of course, that emotional experiences in listening to music and the representation of events in music are made up of more than just a single word that gives a definition to a single emotion. On the other hand, words are necessary to understand the shift from one emotional experience to another. In the realm of opera, where not only music, but also words, gestures, body movements and facial expressions are involved in the description of emotional experiences, it may be useful to refer to a set of given meanings which can give a clear message to the listeners: in this respect Scherer's theory could be of use. One tool that proves to be useful in dimensional studies is the Semantic Differential. The Bipolar Differential Semantic Scale is a well-known technique used in psychological researches. In particular, it is useful in describing an item or an object according to some opposing qualities generally expressed by pairs of adjectives. The aim of this technique is simply to give a coordinate picture of individual reactions to an object or to an event according to some evaluative qualities.

In a new approach (Zentner et al. 2008) Scherer's processual theory (2005) was applied to understand individual differences in musical tastes. According to this approach three main broad factors were described: 1) sublimity (with five sub-factors: wonder, transcendence, tenderness, nostalgia, peacefulness); 2) vitality (with two sub-factors: energy and joyful activations) and 3) unease (with two sub-factors: tension and sadness). This model can to some degree help to explain the differences between the arias of love, fury and sorrow defined in the previously mentioned research on Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. In fact, many, if not all, of the sub-factors that are in the factor "sublimity" can be recognized as appropriate to express different aspects of love. In the case of fury we could make similar considerations: not only anger but also energy and vitality should be considered to understand the situation linked to the single arias. Finally, in the case of sorrow, not only sadness should be recognized as the main feature of such arias, but also pain, physical pain, inanition and loss of energy.

### 3. Our research project

Keeping in mind the ideas previously proposed about the attribution of emotional meaning to some arias by Handel, and adding some other material, we organized the following experiment as described below.

#### 3.1. Participants and methodology

We asked a sample of expert (17 music analysts and musicians) and non-expert participants (17 university students with no musical experience) to judge 18 stimuli coming from Handel's operas and other materials under 3 different conditions: music only excerpts (MO), audio singing clips (AS), audio-video singing clips (VS). The stimuli referred to three different emotional situations (love, fury and sorrow) and two different types of materials: congruent and incongruent. The congruent materials consisted of the same arias from *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* as previously studied: only the instrumental introduction of the aria in MO, the singing phrase linked to the instrumental introduction in AS; the same singing phrase in the audio-video presentation in VS. Incongruent materials used in MO were excerpts from Vivaldi's Concerto *La Notte* with structural features that according to the previously mentioned analysis (Baroni et al., forthcoming) could belong to love, fury or sorrow situations, while for the conditions AS and VS arias by Handel different from the congruent ones were used. Therefore the experimental design was: 3 conditions x 3 emotions x 2 features (congruent vs incongruent) = 18 stimuli. The complete list of stimuli is as follows:

- 1MO. Vivaldi, *La Notte*. LOVE.
- 2MO. Handel, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. Cesare "Empio dirò tu sei". Instrumental introduction FURY.
- 3MO. Vivaldi, *La Notte*. SORROW.
- 4MO. Handel, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. Cesare "Non è sì vago e bello il fior del prato". Instrumental introduction. LOVE.
- 5MO. Handel, *Rodelinda*. "Ombre, piante, urne funeste". Instrumental introduction. SORROW.
- 6MO. Vivaldi, *La Notte*. FURY.
- 7AS. Handel, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. Cornelia "Amico sasso..". SORROW.
- 8AS. Handel, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. Cleopatra "V'adoro pupille...". LOVE.
- 9AS. Handel, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. Cesare "Empio dirò tu sei". FURY.
- 10AS. Handel, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. Cesare "Non è sì vago e bello il fior del prato". LOVE.
- 11AS. Handel, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. Tolomeus "L'empio sleale, l'indegno". FURY.
- 12AS. Handel, *Rodelinda*. "Ombre, piante, urne funeste". SORROW.
- 13VS. Handel, *Rodelinda*. "Ombre, piante, urne funeste". SORROW.
- 14VS. Handel, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. Cesare "Non è sì vago e bello il fior del prato". LOVE.
- 15VS. Handel, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. Tolomeus "L'empio sleale, l'indegno". FURY.
- 16VS. Handel, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. Cleopatra "V'adoro pupille...". LOVE.
- 17VS. Handel, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. Cornelia "Amico sasso..". SORROW.
- 18VS. Handel, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. Cesare "Empio dirò tu sei". FURY.

The participants first had to listen to each single stimulus and immediately afterwards fill in the differential semantic scale we proposed. They were asked to judge the music excerpts according to a bipolar 7 point Likert scale: 3 points close to an adjective if it fits the target item (very much, much, somehow), 3 points close to the opposite adjective, plus a neutral point between the two adjectives.

Example: HAPPY 1/2/3/ 4 5/6/7 SAD.

Participants had to judge the stimuli according to all the adjectives proposed.

Our differential semantic scale was made up of 12 pairs of opposing adjectives, chosen on the basis of their emotional value or sensorial meaning. These were organized according to two dimensional axes (valence and activation) as in some well-known wheel representations of emotions (Sacharin et al. 2012). Valence corresponded to the pleasure/displeasure axis, activation to the presence/absence of arousal or other energetic aspects. For example, the pair happy-sad is on the valence axis, while calm-angry is on the activation axis, predictable-unpredictable express the extent a person can keep a situation under control, and so on.

Here is a list of the adjective pairs used:

1. Happy-Sad;
2. Relaxed-Tense;
3. Satisfied-Dissatisfied;
4. Calm-Angry;
5. Brave-Fearful;
6. Delighted-Disgusted;
7. Praised-Despised;
8. Optimistic-Pessimistic;
9. Humble-Arrogant;
10. Sure-Doubtful;
11. Loved-Hated
12. Predictable-Unpredictable
13. 6 of the pairs were presented with inverted values to avoid habituation effects.

### 3.2. Data analysis and hypotheses

Data collected from the differential semantic scale were transformed from a bipolar scale into a 7 point unipolar scale (from 1 to 7) assuming that low values (from 1 to 3) correspond to positive polarities of pairs (happy, relaxed, satisfied, calm, brave, delighted, praised, optimistic, humble, sure, loved and predictable) while high values (from 5 to 7) correspond to negative polarities of pairs (sad, tense, dissatisfied, angry, fearful, despised, pessimistic, arrogant, doubtful, hated and unpredictable). Pairs with inverted values were considered in their original direction, correcting and inverting the expressed values. Means of the answers were calculated according to the two groups of participants, non-experts and experts. Differences between the groups were analyzed with the Kruskal Wallis non-parametric test for independent samples. Differences among conditions (MO, AS and VS) were also analyzed with the Kruskal Wallis test.

Our main hypotheses concern the different conditions MO, AS and VS. In line with the previous study on *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* (Baroni et al., forthcoming), we predicted that the attribution of emotional meaning would be wider and deeper in AS and VS in comparison with MO, as singing and gestures tend to make the emotional situation clearer. Therefore AS and VS results should be more intense compared to the MO condition. Emotional meaning especially in AS and VS should be consistent with the previously mentioned model of music emotions (Sacharin et al. 2012) and be open to a situation where many emotional aspects are present. With regards differences between expert and non-expert participants, we predicted that some differences might be present due to a certain familiarity with the 18th century musical repertoire among expert participants.

### 3.3. Results

The main results are summarized in Tables 1 and 2, which show the mean scores of non-expert and expert participants with reference to the 12 pairs of adjectives in our differential semantic scale (the first 6 pairs are in Table 1, the others in Table 2) in the three conditions MO, AS and VS. Considering the results as a whole, if we fix two cut-off values – 2.9 or less for the positive pole adjectives (such as happy, relaxed and so on) and 5.0 or more for the negative pole adjectives, leaving aside the intermediate values between 3.0 and 4.9 – and if we take into consideration evaluations that are beyond the cut-off values in at least one condition and at least once in both groups of participants, we have the possibility of describing 3 different emotional profiles as follows:

1. Love excerpts are described as: Happy, Relaxed, Satisfied, Calm, Delighted, Praised, Optimistic and Sure.
2. Fury excerpts are described as: Tense, Angry, Brave, Disgusted, Despised, Pessimist, Arrogant, Sure, Hated.
3. Sorrow excerpts are described as: Sad, Dissatisfied, Despised, Pessimistic, Arrogant, Doubtful.

The different emotional situations encompass a large variety of adjectives. In Fury two positive qualities are described: Brave and Sure. Some qualities are clearly present only in the VS condition, as in the case of fury where Disgusted, Despised and Pessimistic reach the cut-off values only in that condition. In the Sorrow situation elements of psychological pain (Sad, Dissatisfied, Doubtful) are present instead of indicators of physical pain, as in our instrument this dimension was not present because we had to balance the adjectives within the three emotional situations. These results are consistent with our main hypothesis concerning the difference among conditions. More in detail, all differences among conditions (MO, AS and VS) are statistically significant in 10 adjectives out of the total of 12 according to the Kruskal Wallis Test: Happy (Chi-Square 17,172 df 2 sig <0.001), Relaxed (Chi-Square 9,881, df 2 sig <0.01), Satisfied (Chi-Square 40,737 df 2 sig <0.001), Calm (Chi-Square 14,372 df 2 sig <0.01), Brave (Chi-Square 11,433 df 2 sig <0.01), Delighted (Chi-Square 46,202 df 2 sig <0.001), Praised (Chi-Square 25,572 df 2 sig <0.001), Optimistic (Chi-Square 29,981 df 2 sig <0.001), Sure (Chi-Square 20,190 df 2 sig <0.001) and Loved (Chi-Square 27,785 df 2 sig <0.001). Differences are concentrated especially between the VS condition and the other conditions. For example, in the Fury situation the pair Delighted-Disgusted scored 3.4 in MO, 4.1 in AS and 5.2 in VS. This difference can be easily explained by the fact that in the video condition the disgust expressed on the face of the singers offered the judges an element that was not present in the music. Similarly, in the Sorrow situation the pair Relaxed-Tense scored 4.1 in MO, 4.6 in AS and 5.1 in VS as tension could be progressively perceived in the voice and gestures. In other cases the differences can take reverse directions: in the Love situation the pair Happy-Sad scored 2.7 in the MO condition, 3.2 in AS and 3.7 in VS: the happy element was clear in the music but somehow disguised in the other conditions.

In line with our predictions, some differences between the two groups of non-expert and expert participants are statistically significant, according to the Kruskal Wallis Test (see Tables 1 and 2). In the emotional situation of Love, differences concern the adjectives Happy, non-experts 2.2 vs experts 3.2 (Chi-Square 12,088 df 1 sig <0.01), Loved, non-experts 3.2 vs experts 2.6 (Chi-Square 4,201 df 1 sig <0.05), and Predictable, non-experts 3.6 vs experts 2.7 (Chi-Square 4,597 df 1 sig <0.05), for the MO condition, the adjectives Relaxed, non-experts 3.6 vs experts 2.4 (Chi-Square 7,332 df 1 sig <0.01), Calm, non-experts 3.3 vs experts 2.4 (Chi-Square 7,111 df 1 sig <0.01), Delighted, non-experts 3.4 vs experts 2.7 (Chi-Square 5,146 df 1 sig <0.05), Praised, non-experts 3.6 vs experts 2.7 (Chi-Square 4,386 df 1 sig <0.05), and Sure, non-experts



3.5 vs experts 2.6 (Chi-Square 6,041 df 1 sig <0.05), for the AS condition and the adjective Praised, non-experts 3.9 vs experts 3.2 (Chi-Square 4,846 df 1 sig <0.05), for the VS condition.

In the emotional situation of Fury, differences concern the adjective Predictable, non-experts 5.2 vs experts 3.8 (Chi-Square 10,182 df 1 sig <0.01), for the MO condition, the adjectives Relaxed, non-experts 4.8 vs experts 5.9 (Chi-Square 5,259 df 1 sig <0.05), and Predictable, non-experts 5.2 vs experts 3.8 (Chi-Square 7,625 df 1 sig <0.01), for the AS condition, and the adjective Sure, non-experts 4.1 vs experts 4.6 (Chi-Square 4,595 df 1 sig <0.05), for the VS condition.

In the emotional situation of Sorrow differences concern the adjectives Delighted, non-experts 4.3 vs experts 3.6 (Chi-Square 4,048 df 1 sig <0.05), Praised non-experts 5.1 vs experts 3.8 (Chi-Square 9,740 df 1 sig <0.01), and Loved non-experts 4.7 vs experts 3.4 (Chi-Square 8,880 df 1 sig <0.01), for the MO condition, the adjectives Calm, non-experts 4.6 vs experts 3.5 (Chi-Square 4,554 df 1 sig <0.05), Praised, non-experts 5.3 vs experts 4.2 (Chi-Square 5,558 df 1 sig <0.05), and Loved, non-experts 5.2 vs experts 4.2 (Chi-Square 5,302 df 1 sig <0.05), for AS, while there are no significant differences in the VS condition.

It is not easy to explain the differences that emerged between non-experts and experts, but it is possible to make some general considerations. The majority of the differences concern the Love situation. Differences are concentrated within the MO and AS conditions, while very few are in the VS condition and this is quite understandable as in the VS condition we have gestural communication that goes beyond musical ability and experience. We can interpret in the same line the fact that the differences are mostly concentrated within the MO condition where, of course, musical experience matters. Furthermore, the expert sample tends to have more results along the neutral points. Various reasons can explain this phenomenon; probably acquaintance with music rules can make certain solutions more predictable in comparison with non-expert listeners, but this, of course, may be just a speculation

EMOTION	CONDI-TION	PARTICIPANTS	HAPPY	RELAXED	SATISFIED	CALM	BRAVE	DELIGHTED
LOVE	MO	NON-EX-PERTS	2.2***	2.5	2.7	2.5	3.2	2.5
LOVE	MO	EXPERTS	3.2***	2.7	2.7	2.8	3.2	2.6
LOVE	AS	NON-EX-PERTS	3.4	3.6***	3.2	3.3***	3.6	3.4*
LOVE	AS	EXPERTS	3.2	2.4***	2.8	2.4***	2.9	2.7*
LOVE	VS	NON-EX-PERTS	3.5	3.9	4.1	3.5	3.9	3.7
LOVE	VS	EXPERTS	3.9	3.6	3.9	3.1	3.9	3.4
FURY	MO	NON-EX-PERTS	3.1	5.6	3.1	4.9	2.7	3.3
FURY	MO	EXPERTS	2.8	5.9	3.5	5.4	2.6	3.5
FURY	AS	NON-EX-PERTS	3.0	4.8*	4.6	4.7	3.5	4.1
FURY	AS	EXPERTS	2.8	5.9*	3.5	5.4	2.6	3.5

EMOTION	CONDI-TION	PARTICIPANTS	PRAISED	OPTIMIS-TIC	HUMBLE	SURE	LOVED	PREDICTABLE
FURY	VS	NON-EX-PERTS	4.2	5.7	5.5	5.7	3.8	5.0
FURY	VS	EXPERTS	4.5	6.0	5.6	6.1	3.3	5.4
SORROW	MO	NON-EX-PERTS	5.9	4.7	5.4	3.3	5.4	4.3*
SORROW	MO	EXPERTS	5.9	3.6	4.7	2.8	4.3	3.6*
SORROW	AS	NON-EX-PERTS	5.9	4.8	5.7	4.6*	5.1	4.6
SORROW	AS	EXPERTS	6.1	4.4	5.4	3.5*	4.6	4.2
SORROW	VS	NON-EX-PERTS	6.2	5.5	6.0	4.4	5.3	4.9
SORROW	VS	EXPERTS	6.6	4.8	5.8	4.1	4.9	4.6

**Table 1.** Differences between non-expert and expert participants according to emotions and conditions. Means of Bipolar Differential Semantic Scale values. Second 6 pairs of adjectives. Low values related with positive poles.

\*= significant differences <0.05

\*\*\*=significant differences <0.01 (Kruskal Wallis Test)

EMOTION	CONDI-TION	PARTICIPANTS	PRAISED	OPTIMIS-TIC	HUMBLE	SURE	LOVED	PREDICTABLE
LOVE	MO	NON-EX-PERTS	2.7	2.6	4.4	2.5	3.2*	3.6*
LOVE	MO	EXPERTS	2.5	2.5	3.9	2.6	2.6*	2.7*
LOVE	AS	NON-EX-PERTS	3.6*	3.9	3.1	3.5*	3.7	3.1
LOVE	AS	EXPERTS	2.7*	2.4	3.0	2.6*	3.0	3.2
LOVE	VS	NON-EX-PERTS	3.9*	4.0	4.3	3.8	3.9	3.8
LOVE	VS	EXPERTS	3.2*	3.9	4.1	3.3	3.4	3.3
FURY	MO	NON-EX-PERTS	3.7	3.4	5.6	2.9	4.1	5.2***
FURY	MO	EXPERTS	3.6	3.6	5.7	2.2	3.9	3.8
FURY	AS	NON-EX-PERTS	3.8	3.9	5.0	3.6	3.9	4.9***
FURY	AS	EXPERTS	3.6	3.6	5.7	2.2	3.9	3.8***
FURY	VS	NON-EX-PERTS	5.2	5.1	5.5	4.1*	5.2	4.2
FURY	VS	EXPERTS	5.2	5.4	5.6	4.6*	5.4	4.0

EMOTION	CONDI-TION	PARTICIPANTS	PRAISED	OPTIMIS-TIC	HUMBLE	SURE	LOVED	PREDICTABLE
SORROW	MO	NON-EX-PERTS	5.1***	5.5	2.9	5.3	4.7***	4.1
SORROW	MO	EXPERTS	3.8***	5.2	3.3	4.8	3.4***	4.2
SORROW	AS	NON-EX-PERTS	5.3*	5.8	3.3	4.7	5.2*	4.0
SORROW	AS	EXPERTS	4.2*	5.9	3.5	4.7	4.2*	4.4
SORROW	VS	NON-EX-PERTS	5.3	6.0	3.0	4.8	5.1	3.9
SORROW	VS	EXPERTS	4.5	6.1	3.3	5.1	4.4	3.8

**Table 2.** Differences between non-expert and expert participants according to emotions and conditions. Means of Bipolar Differential Semantic Scale values. Second 6 pairs of adjectives. Low values related with positive poles.

\*= significant differences <0.05

\*\*\*=significant differences <0.01 (Kruskal Wallis Test)

### 3.4. Discussion

On the whole our experiment is consistent with our main hypotheses and confirms the validity of a model concerning musical emotions where so many processual and aesthetic elements are taken into account. We can see that some emotional meanings may be related to the different conditions. Gestures are indeed important elements that can amplify the emotional meaning of a given situation. The limited sample of our two groups suggests that another experiment with a larger number of participants should be scheduled in the near future. In a way this experiment is a complement of a previous work (Baroni et al., forthcoming) and tests the results of that work in a decoding task situation. The selection of new musical materials, the possibility to compare different interpretations in different historical periods and traditions in the singing situation as well as in gesture repertoires are other directions our research should consider as its next steps.

### 4. Conclusions

What we have tried to stress in this paper is the relationship between gestures, postures, facial expression and music expressions in the arias belonging to the 18th century opera. As a provisional conclusion we can say that body postures and gestures reflect sound gestures but may also have autonomous values that can add different meanings to emotional situations. Music alone is somehow different from music accompanied by singing, and from music and singing accompanied by gestures. In our experiment we have tried to demonstrate this difference. The idea that emotions are processes rather than stable traits is particularly evident in the context of the arias we have studied. Furthermore, some models such as the “da capo” aria can be considered as good strategies to elaborate and modulate emotions and have a general value in different contexts, beyond their historical specificity: in the psychology tradition the role and importance of repetition has been described in dealing with traumatic events and strong emotions; similar aspects concerning the relationship between music and emotions are present in many forms of music therapy.

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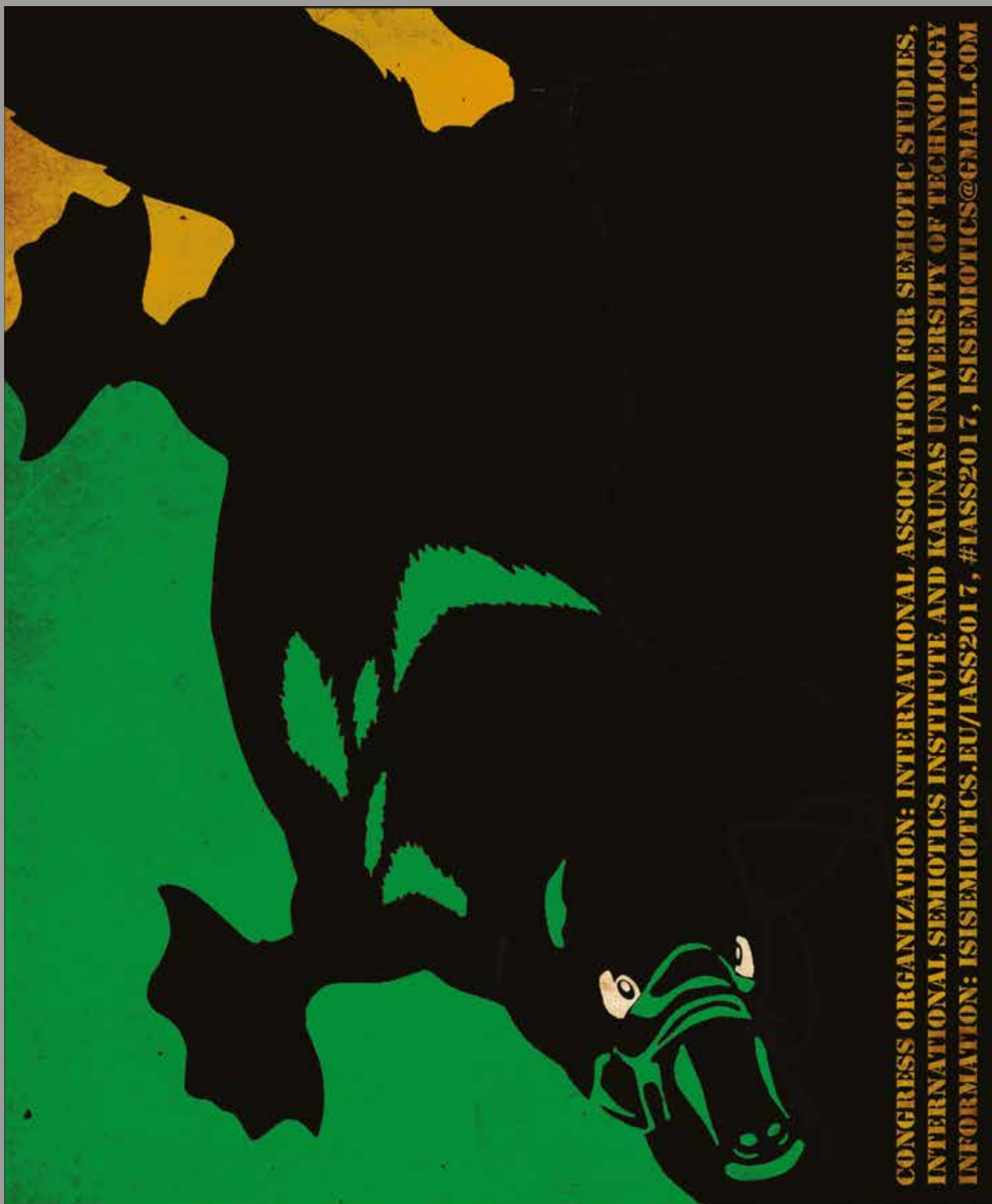
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# POPULAR CULTURE, MARKETING, CONSUMPTION

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# THE LEXICON OF BOYS' LOVE FAN CULTURE: A CHINESE CASE

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## **Abstract**

Boys' Love (BL) fan culture is an emerging phenomenon in the Chinese cyberspace, yet it has not been widely examined in the field of semiotics. The present paper attempts to understand the semiotic lexicon of BL fan culture through the case of WiFi fandom on Weibo, the Chinese counterpart of Twitter. Through negotiating Barthesian semiotics and social semiotics, Section 2 introduces the research approaches of the present paper. Section 3 provides four examples of fan discourses, and discusses the origins and formations of typical signs in the lexicon. Section 4 sketches the basic formats of discourses in this multimodal fandom, and their relationship with different forms of typical signs.

## **1. Introduction**

Recent years have witnessed the mainstreaming of BL fan discourses on the Chinese internet. Previously used by small groups of BL fans, these discourses are becoming popular among the majority of netizens. The WiFi fandom, which originated from the TV series *Gujian Qitan* (*Swords of Legends*), is a good example in this respect. Makers and broadcasters of the TV series attempted to please fans' imaginations about the romantic relationship between two male protagonists. Some media reports have also noticed this new phenomenon in mass culture. More interestingly, three years after the first broadcast of the TV series, the fandom remains active; fans have been incorporating visual, written, and other materials into their discourses from various sources. In terms of both social and linguistic significances, this multimedia collection of BL fan discourses worth semiotic inquiries.

In existing studies, some semiotic theorizations have been made on fan culture in general. For instance, John Fiske (1992: 37) and Henry Jenkins (2013: 50) have revealed that in fans' production, there's a semiotic process in which signs from original works are transferred. Jenkins further stresses the active role played by fans in modifying the original meanings. On their basis, the present paper attempts to provide a semiotic analysis specifically appropriate to the Chinese

case of BL fandom; due to the limited space, the research object is restricted to the lexicon rather than the whole structure of the fandom as a sign system. The first part outlines the model of analysis, which combines Roland Barthes's *Elements of Semiology* with the social semiotics represented by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen. The second part demonstrates with examples how various original signs are turned into typical signs of the BL fan discourses. The last part addresses the question of multimodality in relation to the lexicon.

## 2. Research design

The analytical framework mainly follows the concepts and approaches coined by Barthes, and takes into consideration the critical revisions made by social semioticians.

Adopting Barthes's (1977: 30-31) definition, the present paper treats the WiFi fandom as a complex system of signs. On the one hand, the fandom is a collection of relatively homogenous discourses concerning the same character-pairing of male stars, and these discourses are composed of various forms of signs. For instance, among discourses in the fandom, there are fan fictions mainly dependent on written signs, and there are also processed images made up by visual signs. On the other hand, different kinds of signs interact in some discourses as well as in the whole system. Fan-made videos, for example, often involve the mixture of visual, sonic, written, and other signs. With the concept of multimodality developed by Kress (2001: 68-72) and van Leeuwen (2005: 179), this interactive aspect in the complex system can be discussed in more details.<sup>1</sup>

An overall methodological question in studying this complex system is the tension between code and recourse. As summarized by Carey Jewitt and Rumiko Oyama (2001: 134-136), Paris school semiotics prioritizes code, whereas social semiotics focus on resource. Concerning this question, aforementioned theorizations made by Fiske and Jenkins can be bracketed with social semiotics, as they pay more attention to the utilization of resource. Given the reproductive nature of fan culture as a whole, their choice is understandable. However, in dealing with BL fandom on Weibo, the researcher is confronted with an enormous quantity of discourses which are highly similar with each other. This calls for a reconsideration of the rules that encode fan discourses. Thus, in addition to investigating the sources of signs in the lexicon, the present paper also strives to extract certain rules applicable to the majority of discourses in the case studied.

Drawing on Barthesian and social semiotic approaches, the research procedure is divided into five steps. The first step is to provide several representative examples of fan discourses with necessary annotations. Secondly, it is necessary to single out typical signs that serve as "nouns" in these examples. Thirdly, through comparison between typical signs and their originals, the present paper shows how original signs are reproduced with modifications in the fandom. Last but not least, with reference to the technological and other features of Weibo, the paper discusses how these typical signs appear in different formats or modes of expression.

## 3. Typical signs

### 3.1. Examples

For the convenience of readers, this section presents four samples of WiFi fans' discourses with English descriptions instead of showing the Chinese originals.<sup>2</sup>

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1 For instance, compared with Barthes, van Leeuwen (2001: 92) puts more emphasis on syntagmatic relationships in visual language. Van Leeuwen (2005: 179-267) has also provided a more detailed framework concerning modes of interactions (e.g. consistence, exchange, etc.), technological conditions, and other specific aspects for studies on multimodality.

2 All the four examples are translated into English by the author of the present paper. All following analyses are based on the English translations. Links to original examples on Weibo are listed in the references.

Example 1 is a self-introduction written by TingFeng Bar, a central account among fans on Weibo. It writes, "This is TingFeng Bar~ Home of WiFi(s)~To submit your work, please message us".

Example 2 is a micro fiction written by a fan. The author's Weibo ID is "Yi-Feng's Love Letters to Dengdeng". It is posted on Weibo in only one sentence "Essentially, I like girls, but for now and ever, I love you". Following the sentence is the hashtag "TingFeng".

Example 3 is a fan-made image. It comes from two advertising pictures of the same smartphone, in which the two male stars act as spokesmen respectively. In each advertisement, the star holds a red smartphone in his hand. In her work, the fan merges the two pictures into one. The two stars are simply put side by side in the new image, yet the smartphones in their hands are replaced with the Chinese marriage certificates. There is also a sentence above this image in the fan's post: "Love life, love TingFeng".

Example 4 is a comic picture drawn by a fan. The two stars are depicted as infant-like figures. Since the facial and bodily features of figures are cartooned, it is hard to tell what they stand for. One of the figures wears a cat-shaped pajama, who climbs on the body of and bites childishly the head of the other figure in a dog-shaped pajama. The former's head is linked to a symbol of fishbone, which indicates the state of mind like a cat eating a fish for food; whereas the latter's head is linked to a symbol of heart, which may reasonably be considered as an indication of love. Above this comic picture in the post are two lines. The first line begins with two hash tags: "TingFeng" and "MChao". Following the tags are an emoji of cat and an emoji of dog; then the words "Mew and woof pajamas"; in the last, another emoji that imitates a person lying down. In the second line, the fan mentions another fan's username, and writes, "the MChao you asked for".

### 3.2. Discussion

It can be seen from these examples that signs related to the stars consistently act as the "nouns" in fans' discourses. This consistency may be regarded as a natural result of the fandom's BL motif, but in this way, one may lose sight to specific operations of signs in it. In general, these signs can be singled out and dated back to their originals. The term *TingFeng*, which repeatedly appears in all four examples above and many other fan discourses, is a combination of two signs; *Ting* comes from the name of Star A (*Chen Wei-Ting*, whose English name is *William*), and *Feng* from the name of Star B (*Li Yi-Feng*). *WiFi*, which is the self-name of fans, is a similar product; the first letter *W* comes from *William*, and the third letter *F* comes from *Yi-Feng*. Besides these written signs, it is also found in Example 3 that stars' visual images are imported as "nouns" in fans' discourse.

Transformed into the sphere of WiFi fandom, these signs jointly make up a new lexicon, and thereby constitute new interrelations. To illustrate the differences, the present paper calls a sign derived from Star A as Sign A, and a sign derived from Star B as Sign B. In most of original discourses concerning the two stars, a Sign A and a Sign B are independent from each other, and are only related occasionally in discourses. For instance, the name of *Chen Wei-Ting* and the name of *Li Yi-Feng* may appear together in discourses concerning their co-starred TV series, but they can surely signify separately in many other discourses. Entering WiFi fandom, by contrast, a fan discourse necessarily involves at least one syntagmatic combination of a Sign A and a Sign B. In Example 2, the user's Weibo ID anchors the subject and object in the micro fiction. The first-voice narrator *I* corresponds to *Yi-Feng*, the given name of Star B; the fictional addressee *you* corresponds to *Dengdeng*, the nickname of Star A; the verb *love* and other components further specify the syntagmatic relations between Sign B (*I/Yi-Feng*) and Sign A (*You/Dengdeng*). Similarly, in Example 3, Sign A is the advertisement image of Star A, and Sign B is the advertisement of Star B; the two are not only spatially put together, but also linked by the marriage

certificate. Although the syntagm in this visual discourse is not as clear-cut as in Example 2, it still functions cognitively.

This divergent form of syntagm leads to the fandom's own method of sign production. At a first glance, both original signs and the fandom's typical signs come from the stars and the characters they have played in various cultural products. But, in BL fan discourses, two classes of typical signs develop almost contrapuntally: Class A made up by the collection of Signs A, and Class B by the collection of Signs B. A Sign A must be, in most fan discourses, symmetrical with a Sign B in terms of form and/or content. For example, BL fans tend to use more one-letter signifiers than producers of original discourses to designate the stars and the characters they have played. Besides aforementioned *Ting* and *Feng*, *M* and *Chao* in Example 4 are also one-letter signifiers in Chinese. *M* is from *Mike* (a character played by Star A), and *Chao* is from *Xiang Yun-Chao* (a character played by Star B). The two original images in Example 3 are also highly symmetrical in form and content.

More importantly, this symmetry brings about semantic nuances between original signs and typical signs of the fandom. If their denotations seem to be the same stars or characters played by the stars, the typical signs bring about connotations unfound in the original signs. Among the original signs, either a Sign A or a Sign B is normally masculine, which is consistent with the gender of the male star. However, in the fandom, the pairing of a Sign A and a Sign B highly gendered; Sign A is in most cases the masculine, and Sign B is accordingly the feminine. Animals in Example 4 most clearly illustrates this binary opposition. The cat and the dog as signs metaphorizing characters played by the two stars can hardly be found in original discourses, but they are commonly used by WiFi fans. Quite like the "cats versus dogs" genre in popular culture, the cat and the dog are depicted as opposite among the fans. The dog, which is a Sign A always linked to Star A, connotes stereotypical masculine traits, such as endurance, enthusiasm, activeness, and so on; the cat, which is a Sign B, often connotes stereotypical feminine traits accordingly. In this sense, although original signs and typical signs overlap in terms of denotation, they can be quite different in terms of the gendered connotation.

#### 4. Multimodality

Although the examples above cannot exhaust variations of signs in the lexicon of WiFi fandom, it can already be seen from them that different forms of signs interact in the generation of meanings. This makes the fandom qualified as a complex system by Barthes's definition, or a multimodal system in social semiotics. As each Weibo post produced by and relevant to WiFi fandom serves as an example in empirical analysis, it is necessary to give a description of the basic format of it. In addition to the universal format of all Weibo posts, the fandom also exhibits some specific patterns, which are also noted.

The Weibo posts can be divided into two kinds: the original posts and the reposted posts. In an original post, the user's ID and the textbox are two necessary components, and the image, video, and other components are optional to it. A WiFi fan's ID is usually made up by Chinese, English, and/or Japanese written characters. Other forms of signs like image (e.g. emoji) are rarely found in the IDs of WiFi fans, and are thus neglectable. In the context of the fandom, an ID can be either meaningless or meaningful. A meaningless ID is merely a name which differs a user from another. A meaningful ID does not only identify the user, but also echoes the fandom's motif; this echoing is usually achieved through incorporating one or more typical signs, just like the IDs in Example 2 and 4.

The textbox is another requisite in an original repost. Besides written signs, it can also include emojis and links to all kinds of external sources. The textbox's limit over space was 140 charac-



ters at the earlier stage, and this limit has been cancelled since early 2016 with the introduction of a longer text function. Even though, most posts are still within the limit of 140 characters. As for their contents, the textboxes in the fandom conventionally contains hashtags concerning the general motif (e.g. *TingFeng*) or the specific pair of characters (e.g. *MChao*). These hashtags make the contents more recognizable and searchable for other fans.

Apart from the hashtags, contents made up by written signs in the textbox can be categorized as four types. The first one is micro fiction within 140 characters, a genre especially shaped by the technological feature of Weibo. Second, fictions longer than 140 characters constitute an interesting contrast with micro fictions. In addition to the longer text function, these fictions can also be posted via external link to another website. The third type is “factual” statement or interpretation. Unlike fictional genres, these statements or interpretations often adopt realistic tone, and focus on factual elements concerning the two stars, such as the discovery that the two stars used to wear the same design of clothes. However, it should never be forgotten that there’s a fundamental fictionality underneath these facts, that is, the romantic relationship between two stars. The stars’ similarities in dressing are utilized as clues of their fictional romance. This type also includes fans’ subjective experiences concerning character-pairing, interactions between fans, etc. The last type is a loose collection of other contents. For instance, since the textbox can’t be empty even when the fan attempts to post an image, it can be filled in the textbox the phrase “*Shared an image*”. Some other written contents without autonomous meanings related to the motif can also be classified into this type.

Two optional but popular components of a Weibo post are picture and video. Although a post can contain no more than nine image files, each file can be long enough to include far more than one pieces of images. The length of the image file makes it another carrier of fictions. Before and after the validation of the longer text function, many fans have been transferring their fictions into image files. Hence, this area of picture is not exclusively dominated by image-signs, but also includes written signs. Moreover, even in images (re)created by WiFi fans, written signs play more important roles than in original discourses, as one can get a glimpse from the text *Certificate of marriage* on the image of the certificate in Example 3. Regarding image-signs in the fandom, the present paper suggests to further differ photographic signs from comic signs. As shown in Example 4, comic images are on one hand more symbolic than photographic images, and on the other hand create new signs (e.g. the cat and the dog) absent in original discourses. Hence, some special treatments should be devoted to their differences in analysis.

Compared with the components above, the video is possibly most difficult to analyze with written language. The technological issues further add to these difficulties. For instance, videos that can be directly uploaded to, shown and played in Weibo posts are usually short; their image qualities are often not very high, and lack popular functions like bullet screen. As a result, fans often upload videos to external websites like Bilibili, and then share external links to them on Weibo. It is therefore necessary to take these videos into account. Analogical to the textbox, contents of the videos can be divided into fictional and factual videos. The fictional mainly refer to those re-edited videos produced by fans. The factual, like those factual written texts, are “original” videos about the two stars; the only difference is that, relocated in the context of the fandom, and reinterpreted by the fans with written or other signs, their meanings are modified. For example, an original video in which Star A talks about his friendship with Star B can easily be reinterpreted as boys’ love in the fandom; in this process, as analyzed in Section 2, the original signs have been virtually transformed into typical signs. In both kinds of videos, the mixture of written, sonic, visual, and other signs functions.

To briefly sum up, it can be seen from above that multiple forms of signs, genres, and modes of expression are involved in the WiFi fandom on Weibo. On the one hand, different forms of

typical signs constitute the same lexicon of the fandom, and their functioning in signification transcends the limits of a certain form of signs like natural language (Kress 2001: 68-70). On the other hand, there are materialized differences between these forms, which lead to some distinct or nuanced positions within the multimodal system. It should also be stressed that although an empirical study has to make some classifications and isolations, the fandom as a sign system is dynamic. As analyzed in Section 3, every component of the formats, even the seemingly meaningless IDs, can take active parts in signification; the boundary of the fandom, as one can see from the case of external links to videos, is neither completely decided. To provide a more holistic scope of the fandom, some further studies on syntagms are still needed.

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- Examples
- Example 1. (2014)  
[https://weibo.com/tingfengba?topnav=1&wvr=6&topsug=1&is\\_hot=1](https://weibo.com/tingfengba?topnav=1&wvr=6&topsug=1&is_hot=1) (accessed 07 November 2017)
- Example 2. (2015)  
<https://weibo.com/5560140149/CcOwp5r9?type=comment> (accessed 07 November 2017)
- Example 3. (2017)  
[https://weibo.com/1811555673/FrGV6yqv?filter=all&root\\_comment\\_id=0&type=comment#rnd1511975842059](https://weibo.com/1811555673/FrGV6yqv?filter=all&root_comment_id=0&type=comment#rnd1511975842059) (accessed 07 November 2017)
- Example 4. (2017)  
[https://weibo.com/5123415631/FssV037m4?filter=hot&root\\_comment\\_id=0&type=comment#rnd1511975625866](https://weibo.com/5123415631/FssV037m4?filter=hot&root_comment_id=0&type=comment#rnd1511975625866) (accessed 07 November 2017)

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**FROM THE SESSION  
“CONVERGENCE  
TECHNOLOGIQUE,  
USAGERS ET CONFLIT  
COGNITIF”**

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# CONVERGENCE TECHNOLOGIQUE ET CONFLIT COGNITIF<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

La recherche socio sémiotique synthétisée prend comme base analytique la réalisation de deux projets de recherche : avec des jeunes (11-12/16-18/20-24), et avec des adultes (30-35/40-45/50-55), différenciés par genre et strate sociale. Nous avons réalisée deux sondages sociologiques à la ville de Santiago, en différents périodes (dans les jeunes, 2008, 544 cas ; et dans les adultes, 2013, 544 cas) et nous avons construit un Index de traitement de la complexité (combien de choses il est possible de faire à la fois), qu'il est appliqué aux deux échantillons intentionnels. S'il est vrai qu'il y a des différences de temporalité dans la capture des données, la comparaison fait la contribution de poser la problématique de l'existence des différent protocoles cognitives en corrélation à la variable âge de vie, qu'il faut dans les recherches à l'avenir faire la mesure dans la même temporalité. À partir de cela il est possible différencier deux profils chez les jeunes: *simple* (perception d'un seul espace cognitif, 22% ou 26% de la totalité), et *complexe* (perception d'au moins dix espaces cognitifs, 29% ou 25% de la totalité). La plupart des jeunes présentent une complexité moyenne (quatre espaces cognitifs à la fois, 46,9% de la totalité). Chez les adultes, la situation est différente, seulement les 30- 35 ans ont les mêmes situations cognitives, mais les 40-45 et 50-55, ont seulement une simplicité cognitive. Dans la recherche sémiotique s'est fait une sélection des cas pôles : il y a différentes interfaces par rapport la focalisation de l'espace perceptif (image ou mot) et par rapport aux liens entre les espaces focalisée. Alors on décrit une zone de conflit qui touche à la théorie sémiotique, et à la convergence. La convergence technologique et le logiciel multiplateforme ont généré un traitement cognitif complexe, on peut dire « un traitement parallèle de l'information » et, peut- être il n'est pas en concordance avec les protocoles perceptivo-cognitifs des tous les usagers.

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1 Projet de recherche Fondecyt Régulier No 1120064 « Navigation par Internet : perception et cognition dans la population adulte du Grand Santiago », cette recherche a été possible par les fonds provenant du Centre national de la recherche scientifique et technologique (FONDECYT) du Gouvernement Chilien.

## 1. Convergence technologique : le lieu des procès de médiation/ médiatisation

Si dans le période de la télévision publique il y avait un rapport verticale entre la chaîne et leur publique, et dans le période de la télévision de la demande à travers des études d'audience les chaînes produisent selon les goûts d'un public présumé par le marketing, dans le période d'aujourd'hui, avec la convergence technologique les rapports ne sont pas linéaire, on pose plusieurs relations possibles. Sonnac et Gabszewicz (2013) décrit le procès comme un écosystème à quatre couches avec des relations multiples : l'interface des réseaux et terminaux, l'interface des opérateurs de réseaux, les interfaces des plates — formes et intermédiaires, et en plus les interfaces du produit elle — même, à niveau des contenus et de la forme audiovisuelle. Car, l'objet est construit à partir d'un carrefour des transactions d'un couche sur des autres, « la convergence induit une hybridation des processus de création de valeur » (Sonnac et Gabszewicz 2013 : 9). On peut penser que l'objet culturel a plusieurs principes de cohérences, et, en plus le logiciel multiplateforme implique la mise en marche de plusieurs textes à la fois, la télécommande universelle n'existe pas, et les appareils ont plusieurs fonctions, « c'est la raison pour laquelle je n'arrive pas à trouver un téléphone qui ne soit qu'un téléphone » (Jenkins 2014 : 35). Il ne s'agit pas d'un changement seulement technologique : « La convergence altère le rapport entre les technologies, les industries, les marchés, les genres existants, d'un côté, et les publics, de l'autre » (Jenkins 2014 : 35).

Alors, le concept de procès de médiatisation qui avait un lieu analytique central à l'époque de la télévision publique et de la télévision de la demande, aujourd'hui laisse leur lieu à l'étude des processus de médiation : les usagers et leur rapport avec les objets culturels construit est un besoin analytique pour donner compte du fonctionnement culturels de la société total. C'est un problème qui touche à la sémiotique, à la sociologie et à tous les sciences sociales et humaines. Dans ce cadre transdisciplinaire, il y deux contributions importants qu'ils feront une contribution analytique, les sémiotiques numériques et la science cognitive, par rapport la description du réel.

## 2. La contribution des sémiotiques numériques: hypertextualité, interface, interaction

Il y a trois concepts théoriques qui nous permettrons décrire le procès de médiation entre les usagers et les objets culturels : s'il s'agit d'étudier l'interaction du processus il faut savoir aussi sur la forme de fonctionnement du logiciel multiplateforme, l'hypertextualité, et aussi décrire le principe cognitif mise en acte, c'est à dire, le concept d'interface. Dans la navigation, comme dans le jeux-vidéo est plus visible étudier les protocoles cognitives des usagers, parce qu'il y a d'interaction, et nous pouvons regarder en acte la façon cognitive de résoudre des problèmes cognitives. L'hypertextualité sera définie comme le fonctionnement textuel où l'argumentation impliquée, est construite à travers de links avec d'autres textes, ce que remet à une argumentation parallèle qui n'opère pas nécessairement comme une enclave dans une histoire de base, mais comme une carte de navigation qui ouvre la voie à multiples lectures, selon les chemins que choisit l'utilisateur en transaction avec la plateforme du logiciel (Del Villar 1997, Balpe 2003, Del Villar, Campos, Perillán 2014). Le concept d'interfaces sera défini comme le principe organisateur d'attachement de fragments focalisés « qui obéit à un programme, à une interface proposée » (Del Villar et Scolari 2004 : 14). Il y a deux interfaces, celle projetée par le dessinateur du projet multimedial, « le modèle conceptuel du dessinateur, la représentation mentale du système qu'il a construite et de l'utilisateur idéal » (Scolari 2004 : 81), et l'interface réelle de l'utilisateur, « le modèle mental développé par l'utilisateur à partir de son interaction avec le système, au-delà de sa connaissance du fonctionnement réel de ce dernier » (Scolari 2004: 81). En définitive « l'interface peut être considérée d'entrée un modèle de la pensée, puisqu'il met en évidence une façon d'agir et de penser » (Català 2010: 62). Le troisième concept descripteur de ce qui est le procès



de médiation est l'interaction. Celle-ci est doit y avoir équivalence entre le modèle d'interfaces proposée par lequel conçoit le web et/ ou tout objet culturels, et les cartes cognitives de l'utilisateur, en construisant depuis cette optique une communication qui peut arriver à l'utilisateur.

### 3. La contribution des sciences cognitives

#### 3.1. Les sciences cognitives

Alors les procès de médiation sont produits à l'intérieur de la corrélation/non-corrélation entre les interfaces des usagers avec l'espace du logiciel multiplateforme objet d'étude. Car, tout passe dans le processus de la perception-cognition du cerveau, le programme d'interfaces. Les sciences cognitives d'aujourd'hui ont testé l'impossibilité de la première science cognitive qu'elle avait pensé que le cerveau fonctionne comme un ordinateur, à travers d'un programme logique : « le déplacement définitive du cognitivisme (non pas applicabilité) et leur remplacement par le connexionnisme est datée en 1985 » » (Dortier 2003: 26). La rupture épistémique est que la perception et la cognition opèrent des manières distribuées; ainsi « l'intelligence la plus profonde et fondamentale est celle du bébé qu'il peut acquérir le langage à partir de manifestations quotidiennes et dispersées, et qu'il peut distinguer des objets significatifs à partir de ce qui paraît être une mer de lumières » (Varela 1996 : 56). La stratégie connexionniste « consiste à construire un système cognitif non à partir de symboles et de règles, mais de composants simples qui seraient dynamiquement reliés entre eux de manière dense » (Varela 1996: 61). Dans un tel système ne serait pas requise une unité de procès centrale logique qui guiderait toutes les opérations, mais processus d'autoréalisation du système où « les symboles, en sens conventionnel n'effectuent aucun rôle » (Varela 1996 : 77). À l'intérieur du connexionnisme il y a des points communs et aussi des différences : « les théories de A. Damasio, G. Edelman, et celles de Varela comportent tout la notion de sélection. Ces neuroscientifiques mettent tous en avant l'idée que l'activité cérébrale es l'œuvre des processus complexe au sein desquels se produit un sélection » (Infurchia 2014 : 52). Mais, il y a une différence très significative entre Edelman et Varela. Edelman fait une liaison théorique sans la base d'une validation empirique. Le sujet focalise des objets sélectionnés à partir des propres cartographies à la mémoire, et il établit des rapports entre eux pour procéder à le donner un sens, mais la « remémoration résulte non seulement des liaisons entre cartographies avec des régions du cerveau non cartographies qu'il appelle organes de la succession » (Edelman 2004: 161). Les organes du cerveau non cartographiés sont les principes de fonctionnement organique propres de chaque sujet, dans laquelle le concept central est l'*autopoiesis*. Le concept d'autopoiesis, d'autorégulation du système à partir des traces biologiques n'est pas testé. Seulement on dit quelques métaphores de liaison entre la société et le sujet avec leur système immunologique, mais, il s'agit d'une philosophie ne pas d'une validation.

#### 3.2. Les modèles enactives: la contribution de Francisco Varela et les rapports avec les sciences sociales.

Le sujet focalise des objets sélectionnés à partir des propres cartographies à la mémoire, et il établit des rapports entre eux pour procéder à le donner un sens, mais le procès est lié à l'histoire de vie, et à l'expérience existentiel. Et dans ce cadre, Varela ne parle pas de la philosophie, il parle des catégories qu'ils sont possibles de falsifier, les données empiriques le permettent l'établissement de la catégorie, ne pas la transcendance. Les modèles enactives (Varela 1996, 2004, Varela, Thompson et Rosch 1992, Letelier 2015) construit par rapport la perception-cognition des animaux, comme notre propres recherches sur la cognition des jeux-vidéo et la navigation (Del

Villar 2006), ils ont testé que la perception est un produit des procès cognitives dans les parcours de la vie des sujets, cette procédure est appliquée par rapport la lecture des objets culturelles comme par rapport la cognition de la vie quotidienne, des hommes et des animaux.

#### 4. La recherche empirique

Dans le contexte chilien deux recherches ont développé le but d'étudier les parcours visuels mobilisés lors de la navigation sur internet pour décrire non seulement les parcours des usagers mais aussi et surtout ce qui est à la base de son style de navigation. La recherche sur des étudiants universitaires chiliens et françaises 19-22 années réalisée par Meza (2014) qui met au jour un certain nombre des régularités dans les parcours de navigation des sujets, grâce à une méthode d'extraction et de visualisation de traces de navigation. La technique d'interprétation des traces de navigation permet de réaliser des graphes de parcours d'étudiants pour une tâche d'enseignement-apprentissage précise. Les modules indispensables à l'accomplissement d'une tâche apparaissent sous forme de nœuds, dans l'outil graphique. La distance entre les nœuds sert à représenter le nombre de modules utilisés pour arriver au nœud important suivant.

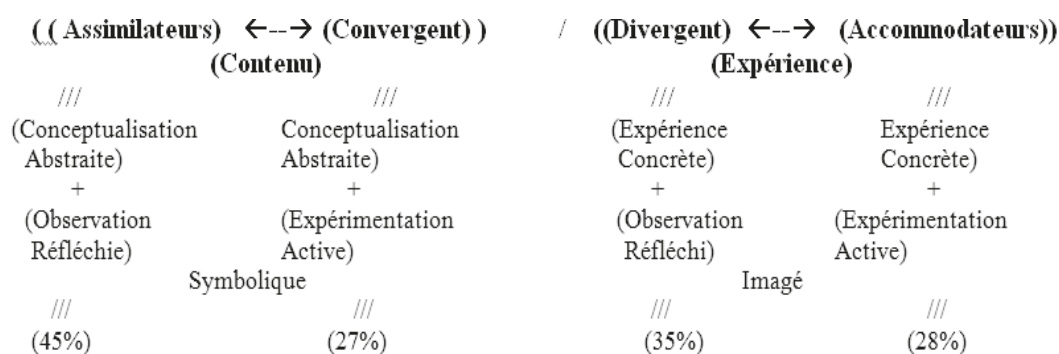


Figure 1. Focalisation sur les styles d'apprentissage.

La recherche est soutenue à partir de la théorie du *Learning Style Inventory* qui établit les styles d'apprentissage convergent, divergent, assimilateur et accommodateur, conformément à la stratégie d'apprentissage dominante du sujet (Kolb 1983, Honey et Mumford 1992, Kolb et Kolb 2005). Ces stratégies correspondent respectivement aux facteurs dominants : expérience concrète, observation réfléchie, conceptualisation abstraite, et expérimentation active. Dans la recherche (Meza 2014) on obtient quatre scores indépendants et deux combinaisons de résultats tels que préférence pour l'abstrait par rapport au concret et préférence pour l'expérimentation par rapport à la réflexion.

Il est clair que la recherche (Meza 2014) décrit deux types de focalisation perceptive : par des concepts, et par l'expérience. Il faut remarquer deux choses. D'un côté la possibilité de succès peut être donnée par les deux voies de focalisation. Bien sûr que la focalisation à partir des concepts a fait un succès de 72% en face de 63% de la focalisation dans les images mêmes, par rapport la tâche d'enseignement-apprentissage demandée. Plusieurs recherches permettent valider la présence des deux modes de focalisation qui peut être des mots (concepts). D'autre côté, il faut tenir en compte que la recherche synthétisé (Meza 2014) nous permet valider notre propres recherches sur le même sujets. La catégorie des styles d'apprentissage est une conceptualisation construit sur une donnée empirique : la focalisation d'images versus la focalisation des concepts. Notre dispositif analytique éloigné théoriquement des déjà décrits arrive à la même description

par rapport la focalisation images/ concepts. Par notre recherche, l'ancrage théorique est l'école néo- freudienne de Paris, Lacan (1966, 1973) et leur application au domaine de la culture : Kristeva (1974, 1980, 2013), Metz (1979), et Aumont, Bergala, Marie, et Vernet (2008). Dans ce contexte, on parle d'identification imaginaire/identification symbolique. L'identification symbolique est l'identification œdipienne, le modèle parental et l'ordre social, même l'identification contre-phobique, leur rejet (Kristeva 1974), il s'agit de l'adscriptions des rôles sociaux établit et des attributions des valeurs ou rejet. Par rapport l'identification imaginaire Lacan, Kristeva et Aumont, Bergala, Marie et Vernet n'ont pas donné une opérationnalisation spécifique. Pour Lacan est le domaine de la non signifiante, il est l'identification symbolique qui fait la coupure de la galaxie signifiante et lui donné un sens. Mais, il n'y a pas de preuve, il y a une présupposition transcendantale, non testé. Para Metz (1979) l'identification imaginaire est de l'ordre de la condensation/ déplacement de l'énergie psychique : « la condensation et le déplacement, nous pouvons considérer qu'ils affectent directement à le signifiant » (Metz 1979 : 241) ; mais, l'opérationnalisation sont des conjonctions d'image (condensation) et passer d'une image à l'autre (déplacement). Situation similaire dans Aumont, Bergala, Marie et Vernet (2008). Dans ce contexte, nous avons développée un outil de mesure basé dans la contribution de Wilhelm Reich (1952-2002). Alors, l'identification imaginaire est conceptualisée comme correspondant aux traces de condensation et de déplacement d'énergie liées à la manifestation de l'image : variations de luminosité, temporalité du montage, organisation spatiale gestualité et proxémique narrative, et par rapport la relation entre la machine (l'écran, l'artefact) et le corps (Del Villar 2001, 2004, 2015), à partir d'une reconceptualisation des contributions de Petitot-Cocorda (2000) et de Wilhelm Reich (2002). Dans les limites de la présente communication il est impossible exposer tous les fondements des paragraphes précédents, mais il est clair qu'on arrive, au niveau empirique, à la même différence trouvée par Meza (2014), malgré la différence théorique. Il faut tenir en compte que quarante années derrière Metz avait compris qu'il n'y a pas équivalence entre la perception et la nomination, entre le perçu et le nommé, il y a deux procès possible : « grâce aux traits pertinents du signifiant iconique, le sujet identifie l'objet (= il établit le signifié visuel) ; de là, il passe au sémème correspondant dans sa langue maternelle (= signifié linguistique) » (Metz 1977 : 145). Mais, Metz détecte aussi le chemin inverse « elle peut aussi être parcourue dans l'autre sens, depuis le signifiant phonique jusqu'au repérage perceptif » (Metz 1977 : 145).

## Focalisation du regard lors de la navigation selon âge de vie

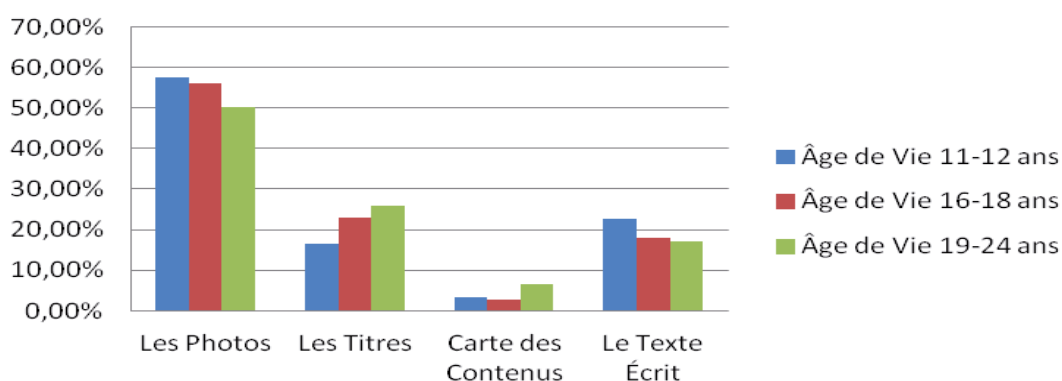
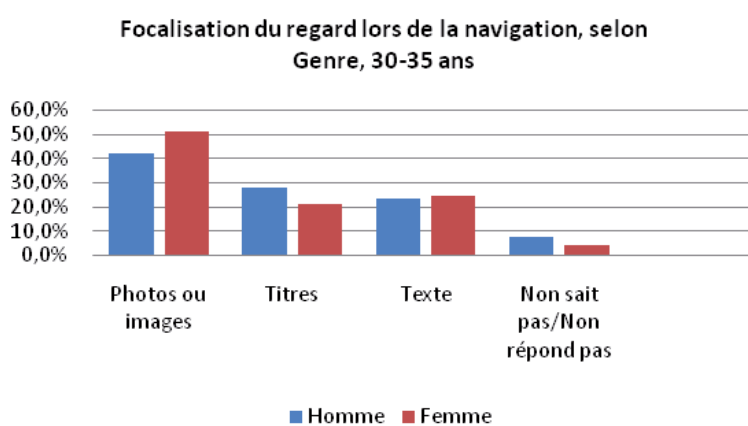


Figure 2. Focalisation du regard lors de la navigation jeunes

Par rapport aux procès de focalisation, on observe deux types : a) la focalisation sur des concepts et leurs liens, qui a été qualifiée de *symbolique*, et b) la focalisation sur des images, que le sujet cherche à associer et que l'équipe de recherche a qualifiée d'*imaginaire*.

Dans notre recherche sur les jeunes (Fig. 2), les deux formes sont principalement liées à l'âge du sujet : les enfants de 11 et 12 ans, les adolescents de 16 à 18 ans et les jeunes adultes de 20 à 24 ans mobilisent les deux types de protocoles cognitifs et perceptifs (concepts/images), la majorité des jeunes étant imaginaires sans qu'il n'y ait de grandes différences entre les strates sociales et le genre. Mais, il faut regarder qu'à la mesure que l'âge monte la focalisation symbolique monte aussi.

Cependant, les tranches d'âge de 40-45 ans et 50-55 ans privilégient la localisation de titres et de textes écrits, à la différence du groupe des 30-35 ans qui ont un comportement similaire aux plus jeunes (Fig. 3).



**Figure 3.** Focalisation du regard de la navigation selon âge de vie 30-35 années.

Mais, la mise en acte de l'interface pour percevoir-connaître le réel, c'est-à-dire un protocole cognitif n'implique pas seulement focaliser, il faut faire la liaison entre les objets focalisées. Ce que nous avons dénommé comme interface est la procédure d'ancrage cognitif et de liaison (parallèle-complexe/ non parallèle-séquentiel simple) entre les objets focalisées. Cependant, nous devons garder à l'esprit que la focalisation perceptive n'est pas un processus simple, puisqu'il couvre deux réalités différentes. A cet égard, Petitot-Cocorda situe deux niveaux de construction perceptive : a) la notion de forme avec des contours visibles dans le sens de parties qui font la constitution d'un objet phénoménologique, dans le sens des gestaltistes (Kanizca 1986), il s'agit des « parties 'détachables' au sens de 'morceau' » (Petitot-Cocorda 2000 : 75) ; et b) la notion de parties non-liées, ce qui signifie ici fragment associatif qui se détachent de l'objet en représentant autre chose, par une relation associative dans d'autres espaces perceptifs : « les parties 'non détachables' ou moments — comme les contours ou les couleurs qui, bien qu'étant des composantes nécessaires des objets, entretiennent avec leur extension un rapport de dépendance » (Petitot-Cocorda 2000 : 75). Ainsi existent-ils deux types de segmentations de l'expérience sensorielle, et quelques fragments renvoient de manière plus approfondie aux procès des liaisons, c'est-à-dire, à la mémoire associative.

Pour la plupart des chercheurs les formes de liaison peuvent être spatiales (contiguïté) ou conceptuelles. Dans notre perspective théorique nous avons fait l'inclusion d'une troisième catégorie : le dispositif pulsionnelle du propre corps par rapport l'écran et la machine même. Petitot, Varela, Pachoud et Roy (2002) à l'intérieur des sciences cognitives connexionnistes

enactives catégorisent le procès des liaisons avec quatre types ou niveaux d'intelligibilité des objets réels : 1) les relations des ensembles : un fragment du réel est perçu ; 2) des relations de contiguïté : le sujet détecte deux variables qui peuvent être connectées pour coexister l'une près de l'autre ; 3) des relations de connexion et de dépendance : deux opérations peuvent être liées et en produire une autre ; et 4) une capture de moments regroupant les figures ou éléments précédents. Il y aurait un traitement parallèle quand différents aspects de l'information sont traités en même temps par des unités semblables aux neurones appelées parfois des neurones formels. Car, on peut construire un indice de traitement de la complexité qui permet de détecter la conduite d'entrée des sujets. Alors, il y aura un type de protocole cognitif qu'il s'approche à un traitement cognitif simple, parce qu'il mise en acte seulement une séquentialité en opposition à un traitement cognitif complexe parce qu'il mise en acte plusieurs espace avec des rapports multiples. La complexité sera définie par l'attachement que le sujet fait de ces espaces de la réalité détectés. Nous avons fait la mesure de la simplicité/ complexité cognitive à partir d'un sondage (échantillon intentionnel) qui nous a permis l'acquisition des paramètres réels de la catégorisation. Après, nous avons réalisée l'étude sémiotique des usagers dans une situation de navigation concrète, livre (cinq minutes) et en fonction de remplir un but demandée (25 minutes). Pour cet étude nous avons sélectionné les cas à partir de demander aux sujets l'élaboration livre d'un essai et/ ou un conte, et étudier sémiotiquement le texte généré par rapport à tester si le sujet à étudier a la condition d'être simple ou complexe. Cette procédure a généré un échantillon des pôles de traitement cognitif de 54 cas jeunes et 54 cas adultes. Alors, la mesure de la complexité/simplicité cognitive prendre comme base le sondage, c'est-à-dire la construction d'un indice statistique de traitement de la complexité.

Cet index a été créé afin de mesurer le niveau de maniement d'espaces parallèles que les personnes interrogées sont capables d'exécuter simultanément. Pour sa construction quatre questions sont employées (basée sur 7 variables):

- Question 1 : Quand tu travailles dans l'ordinateur, écoutes-tu une musique ? (Jamais, Parfois, Toujours).
- Question 2 : D'habitude travailles-tu sur l'ordinateur et le chat en même temps ? (Toujours, Parfois, Non).
- Question 3 : As-tu des problèmes d'attention pendant les cours ou au travail quand ... (par ex. les instructions sont trop complexes, ils sont trop évidentes, le sujet ne s'intéresse pas et je n'ai pas de problèmes de concentration) ? Les valeurs ont été traitées à partir des 4 variables différentes.
- Question 4 : Habituellement, avec combien de personnes peux-tu chatter à la fois ? (on fait une échelle). Au moyen de la fonction recod de spss on a recodifié les 7 variables de manière qu'elles aient le même niveau de mesure (nominale) et les mêmes attributs (une complexité basse, haute et moyenne). Le même index a été généré pour l'étude de la complexité/ simplicité cognitive des jeunes et des adultes. S'il est vrai qu'il y a des différences de temporalité dans la capture des données, la comparaison fait la contribution de poser la problématique de l'existence des différents protocoles cognitives en corrélation à la variable âge de vie, qu'il faut dans les recherches à l'avenir faire la mesure dans la même temporalité.

Alors, la recherche a notamment détecté deux formes de liaison : le premier *simple* (perception d'un seul espace cognitif), et le second *complexe* (perception d'au moins 10 espaces cognitifs), et la plus part des jeunes ont une complexité moyenne. La figure 4 représente la complexité selon les tranches d'âge : 11-12 ans ; 16-18 ans ; 19-24 ans. En suite, la preuve statistique chi carré (variables catégoriques) a été appliqué en contrôlant variable traitement complexité par la strate, le genre et nous avons testé qu'il n'y a pas des différences significatives dans les jeunes.



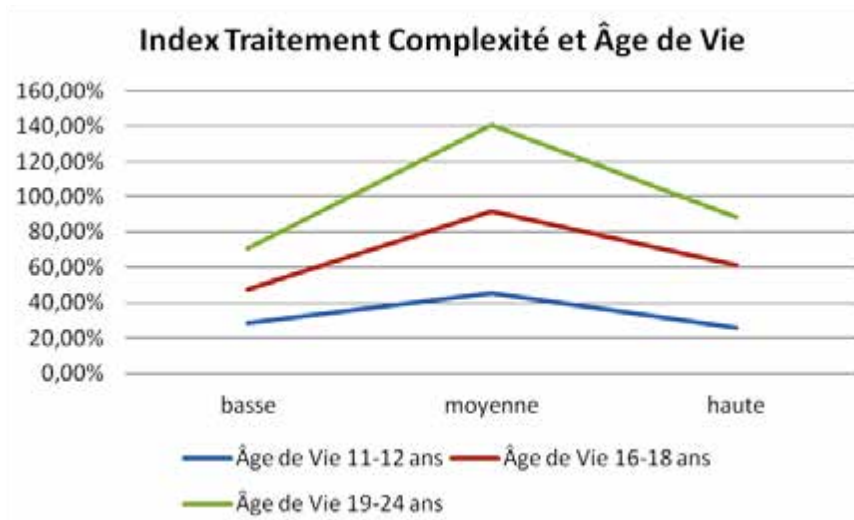


Figure 4. Index traitement complexité et âge de vie jeunes.

Par rapport les âges de vie 30-35 ans, 40-45 ans et 50-55 ans, nous avons testé l'existence des différences significatives par tranches d'âge de vie, mais pas par rapport à la strate sociale et au genre. La tranche d'âge de vie 30-35 ans a le même comportement statistique que les jeunes, c'est-à-dire la plupart une complexité cognitive moyenne, et deux pôles haute et basse. La preuve statistique chi carré (variables catégoriques) avec l'index de traitement de complexité, en contrôlant cette variable par la strate sociale, le genre, et la tranche d'âge permet observer seulement différences significatives par rapport l'âge.

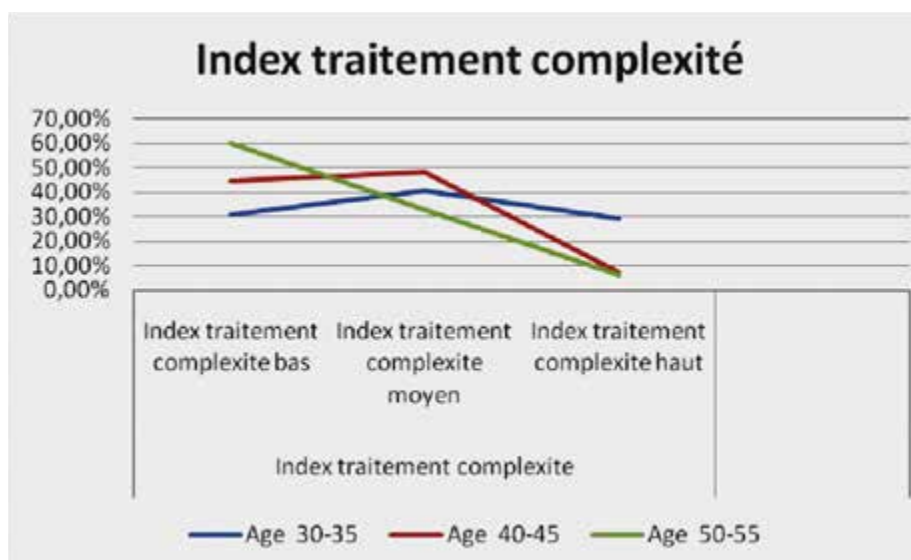


Figure 5. Index traitement complexité adultes.

## 5. Convergence et conflit cognitif

Car, les descriptions précédents nous permet saisir un déséquilibre de fonctionnement de notre construction culturelle d'aujourd'hui : il n'y a pas les mêmes protocoles perceptives-cognitives, dans le cas chilien ils sont différents par tranches d'âge de vie, non pas par strate social et genre. Dans ce contexte on requiert d'inclure le concept de *conflits instrumental* développé par Mar-

quet dans une catégorisation élargie : « les conflits instrumentaux permettent de rendre compte d'obstacles individuels à des actions collectives finalisées, en désignant les interférences entre les niveaux d'appropriation des objets didactiques, pédagogiques, des objets techniques et des objets sociaux en jeu dans les environnements actuels » (Marquet 2004 : 120). L'élargissement théorique serait l'inclusion de la catégorie de conflit cognitive, parce que le plus probable serait la non corrélation entre les interfaces proposée par le modèle communicative persuasive, et aussi des stratégies de enseignement- apprentissage, par rapport les protocoles cognitives des usagers. La contribution de Verón (2013) avec la description des stratégies de visite d'un musée décrit les parcours des usagers à niveau réel, mais, il n'agit pas d'un problème des styles de vie, c'est un problème de la culture et micro-culture d'adscriptions, des protocoles perceptives-cognitives mises en acte, parce que, comme les modèles cognitives nous faisons regarder, ils sont construit par les relations sociales dans un temps historique.

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# CONVERGENCIA TECNOLÓGICA, POSICIONAMIENTO Y WEB MARKETING

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## **Abstract**

Se trata de sintetizar una investigación semiótica cuyo objetivo es describir el posicionamiento visual en la Web marketing en relación a su coherencia con los otros soportes de la campaña (afiches, spots, etc.) en el Chile de hoy. En Francia, Médiamétrie ha detectado que el tráfico en Internet (Mayo 2014) implicaba visitas a partir de tres tipos de fuentes: “Acceso directo, un 31%; Lazos externos, un 40%, y a través de Motores de búsqueda un 29%” (Eouzan, Dupuis y Michalon 2016: 90). Luego se trata de un problema complejo de medir y analizar cualitativamente pues no hay una sola fuente de acceso. Por otra parte es necesario agregar que el posicionamiento distintivo se juega en lo local (la memoria histórica asociada al producto) y en la inserción de lo global (con otras historias socioculturales) en lo local. Ello implica que muchas veces los principios de posicionamiento se superponen. Los principios distintivos del posicionamiento están llenos de interferencias de conflictos de interface, bastante alejados de la primera semiótica de la publicidad que había detectado en el lenguaje de la publicidad una denominación distintiva (marca) y una atribución de valor diferente a la competencia (la teoría del posicionamiento).

## **1. Formulación del problema**

Se trata de sintetizar una investigación cuyo sentido es describir cómo ha enfrentado la teoría semiótica publicitaria la nueva realidad de funcionamiento de la industria cultural en épocas de convergencia tecnológica y en una economía global.

Respecto a la relevancia del marketing digital, si bien es cierto que el comercio por Internet es minoritario en muchos países, ello no significa que no tenga importancia. “Según un estudio del 2012, en Francia un 78% de los consumidores se informan sobre la Web antes de desplazarse para comprar un producto”, (Eouzan, Dupuis y Michalon 2016: 46). Un 32% lo hacen en Internet mismo, un 30% en el celular, un 15% a través de avisos publicitarios en el móvil, y un 7% por ofertas y/o bonos que aparecen en el celular.

La penetración en Chile de Internet es en el año 2016 de 72,4%, en el año 2015 era de un 70% a nivel nacional, luego es un proceso de continuo aumento, siendo en los países más desarrollados de un 78% según estadísticas actuales (Sub-Secretaría Telecomunicaciones Gobierno de Chile 2015), por lo que Internet es una referencia clara. Hoy en Chile, según las mismas estadísticas, un 79,2% de los accesos a Internet son a través del celular, “en España es de 70%, en Reino Unido 74%, en Francia un 62%, en Finlandia un 67%, y en la Unión Europea (28 países) 57%” (Rodríguez 2016: 45). Luego, si bien es cierto que el comercio por Internet es reducido, él va en aumento, pero su importancia hegemónica es que ella es un centro de referencia previo a la compra. Se torna, entonces necesario describir esta nueva forma de funcionamiento, y el aporte concreto que en la coyuntura actual ha realizado y/o puede hacer la semiótica.

Si la ciencia es un dispositivo teórico, esto es, un modo de producción de conocimientos que delimita un objeto real de estudio concreto, a través de herramientas de producción, entonces, preocuparse sobre el aporte de la semiótica de la publicidad a la nueva situación emergente no es un problema teórico, sino que una práctica meta-semiótica que debe delimitar cuáles son las condiciones concretas de delimitación del objeto real realizado por la primera semiótica, y las herramientas que ella desarrolló para transformar la realidad en conocimiento científico. La primera semiótica llenó una necesidad de uso social. Detectar los cambios de funcionamiento del objeto real y las herramientas que se elaboran hoy para hacerse cargo de la nueva necesidad social emergente, es el objeto de este trabajo. Debemos tener en cuenta que la Web marketing no nace de la nada, sino que toma el saber acumulado del marketing al nuevo objeto real Web, desarrollando desde allí nuevas operatorias tecnológicas. Si la primera semiótica de la publicidad dio un aporte al marketing de la marca con Péninou (1972), Semprini (1993), Floch (1993), Magariños (1984), Verón (1987), entre otros, al cambiar el objeto real se plantea, ¿cuáles son los rasgos distintivos de dicho cambio, ¿cuál es el aporte que hoy (2017) ha propuesto la semiótica publicitaria?, ¿cuáles son los desafíos que ella enfrenta?

## **2. El aporte de la primera semiótica a la teoría del posicionamiento publicitario**

### **2.1. Posicionamiento**

Para la publicidad el concepto central es el de *posicionamiento*. El concepto es definido por el hecho de que toda publicidad debe ocupar un lugar central en la mente de los consumidores, distintiva, diferente a la competencia. Y este posicionamiento (estrategia creativa) debe manifestarse en todos los soportes y/o medios que se utilizarán en la campaña. El consumidor debe reconocer al producto y asignarle un atributo, un valor y/o cualidad. Serán Jack Trout y Al Ries A. (1985) quienes desarrollarán más el concepto de posicionamiento haciendo ver la importancia del diagnóstico de los vacíos dejados en la mente del consumidor, esto es si los productos de la competencia tenían los atributos X, Z, S el producto publicitado debía tener, entonces, cualquiera atributo siempre que fuese distinto a X, Z y S: era la batalla por ocupar un lugar en la mente de los consumidores.

### **2.2. El aporte de la primera semiótica al posicionamiento publicitario (1960- 1970)**

Ella emerge con George Péninou (1972) en una coyuntura donde el campo teórico de la publicidad estaba dominado por dos perspectivas: el A.I.D.A. y el análisis de motivaciones. El modelo A.I.D.A. ponía énfasis en la Percepción, en el Impacto Visual. El impacto visual se pensaba que iba junto a la memorabilidad y se basaba en una deducción realizada a partir de la Gestalt y de la psicología de las facultades mentales que se presuponía de valor absoluto. El análisis de las motivaciones ponía énfasis en los estudios de psicología social de la época que permitían medir las motivaciones de compra del consumidor.



Ambas corrientes de la publicidad no estudiaban el mensaje construido, solo tomaban como objeto de análisis los contenidos que se postularían según el estudio de mercado realizado (análisis de motivaciones) o las figuras visuales y/o palabras que se supondrían que impactarían, sin ver lo que la semiótica había descubierto: el sentido de un mensaje es dado por la combinación de los elementos de un todo, el proceso de significación se produce por la combinación de todos los elementos en un afiche y/o spot. Luego, la primera semiótica tiene algo nuevo que decir, se nutre de la investigación de mercado que detecta las motivaciones del consumidor, pero aporta respecto a detectar si dichos contenidos y/o motivaciones son expresados realmente en el mensaje.

### 2.3. Nuevos Aportes de la semiótica publicitaria década 1980- 1990

A posteriori Floch (1995) y Del Villar (1992, 1997, 2004) plantearán la existencia de dos tipos de construcciones de identidades visuales: la tradicional, basada en un solo principio central creativo y la emergencia de identidades visuales que se construyen como un bricoleur que cristalizan varios principios.

Por otra parte, Jesús González y Amaya Ortiz (1999) establecen siguiendo en definitiva a Metz (1979), Kristeva (1994) y Aumont, Bergala, Marie y Vernet (1985) dos tipos de predicación: su grado cero donde no se argumenta y el spot es el todo de lo que se ofrece, es lo que los autores citados llaman publicidad seductora y que corresponde al imaginario teorizado por Lacan (1973) y la publicidad retórica, donde el nudo sería la argumentación lógica, la propiamente predicación.

Por identificación simbólica entenderé, desde el punto de vista del sujeto, las identificaciones del “yo”, del “súper yo” y en definitiva, la identificaciones con Roles Sociales y Valores, que se expresa en los contenidos de las palabras y los gestos. Y entendemos también los protocolos cognitivos intelectivos al respecto basados en identificar conceptos, ideas, valores, racionalmente argumentados.

La publicidad seductora es el dominio de identificación imaginaria, onírica, no racional, donde no se postula un atributo concreto de la marca del producto, sino que, incluso cuando aparentemente se hace, se lo hace desde un punto de vista que racional mente ello es imposible. Es definida a partir de Metz (1979) respecto a la identificación en el cine basada en Lacan (1966) esto es, de paso en definitiva de una mirada a otra, de una imagen a otra, como flujos asociativos diferentes al orden simbólico.

La semiótica publicitaria aportaba, entonces, al análisis de la significación de los textos publicitarios generados en la campaña y al diagnóstico respecto a si los diferentes soportes (afiches, spot, papelería, logo, marchandising, volantes) expresaban la misma atribución de valor; esto es la coherencia de la campaña, ya sea simbólico o imaginaria, única o plural.

Pero, la semiótica ocupaba también otro lugar: el análisis de los mundos de los consumidores, sus archivos mentales. Esto se ve claramente en los Estudios de Jean Umiker-Sebeok (1987), de Jean Marie Floch (1993) sobre los consumidores del metro de París, y de Eliseo Verón (2013) desarrollado sobre el mismo objeto en 1985 y publicado en 2013.

Andrea Semprini (1993) aportará con la necesidad de hacer corresponder la coherencia de la campaña (enciclopedia de la producción) con los archivos mentales de los consumidores (enciclopedia de la recepción).

Juan A. Magariños de Morentín (1984) contribuirá a la semiótica publicitaria con la operacionalización de los lugares vacíos dejados por la competencia, pensada desde la intersección de las categorías Forma/Existencia/Valor a nivel de la puesta en imágenes y a nivel de los contenidos, categorización basada en Peirce, de la mano con Primeridad/Secundaridad/Terceridad.

Esto es, la semiótica publicitaria aportaba con la construcción de varios objetos científicos: a) un mapa del posicionamiento de la competencia; b) por otro, nos permitía diagnosticar los mapas mentales de los consumidores, sus propios trayectos simbólicos y/o imaginarios, luego otro objeto científico y c) a través de la deducción semiótica se construía una descripción de la correspondencia entre ambos objetos delimitados.

### **3. El saber del marketing de la época y su ligazón con la semiótica publicitaria**

Luego, había en las coordenadas históricas de la época: a) un análisis de la empresa y del mercado desde el punto de vista económico: el mercado y el público objetivo, lo que se estudia en estrecha correlación con las posibilidades económicas concretas de la empresa y sus ventajas y debilidades comparativas respecto a la competencia, b) un análisis de las motivaciones del consumidor desde el punto de vista sociológico y/o psicosocial, sea por medios cualitativos, sea por estudios en base a encuestas estadísticamente válidas por bases muestrales representativas de la población estudiada, c) un análisis del Consumo de Medios, que permitía establecer donde se manifestará la campaña y d) un análisis semiótico publicitario ya sintetizado. De allí que, insertada en una estrategia de marketing es claro que la semiótica proveía a la construcción de una estrategia persuasiva de herramientas concretas, llenando una necesidad tal como fueron los primeros aportes de Georges Péninou (1972).

### **4. Las herramientas que la publicidad ha elaborado para enfrentar la publicidad Web**

Las herramientas para diseñar Web marketing en sus grandes principios de funcionamiento abstractos son sacadas del saber acumulado del marketing, pues cómo se ha dicho para los publicistas existe “la necesidad de diseñar una estrategia digital integrada en los planes de marketing de la empresa” (Rodríguez 2016: 113). Ahora bien, el punto de partida para el Web marketing es siempre el logro del posicionamiento y para que esto ocurra “primero es necesario definir el mercado y el público objetivo” (Ellwood 2010: 93). El saber de la economía permite definir las ventajas comparativas de la empresa lo que implica indagar sobre los consumidores por medio de herramientas sociológicas y/o de psicología social y/o de etnografía, un espacio analítico donde la semiótica no está. Lo que hicieron Verón (1985) y Jean Umiker-Sebeok (1987) respecto a los usuarios del museo, o Floch (1993) respecto a describir los usuarios del metro no existe. Siguiendo las propuestas de la Web marketing se trata de correlacionar la propia posibilidad empresarial con el diagnóstico de las propuestas de la competencia la que es definida como diferencias, debilidades y fortalezas basadas en Contenidos. El aporte de Andrea Semprini (1993) y con ello de la semiótica publicitaria nunca existió. “Un buen posicionamiento coincide con la adecuación perfecta entre la imagen querida y la imagen percibida” (Eouzan, Dupuis y Michalon 2016: 85), pero para ello los autores proponen una herramienta previa a la contribución de la primera semiótica: “la publicidad utiliza para definir los objetivos de la comunicación el método A.I.D.A. que es el método secuencial de persuasión siguiente: llamar la Atención, suscitar el Interés, Provocar el Deseo y Empujar a la Acción” (Eouzan, Dupuis y Michalon 2016: 85).

### **5. Cambios de funcionamiento del objeto real**

#### **5.1. La Publicidad en Redes**

Si antes, la estrategia creativa estaba en el marco de la significación expresada en Spot, Papelerías, Afiches, Arreglos de Mercadería, es decir en un mensaje visto como un todo, ahora emerge la publicidad en redes de acciones no de asignación de atributos o valores, como los ejemplos de Nike y Zara.

## 5.2. Acceso multicanal: una Web no es un afiche

Médiamétrie en Francia ha detectado que el tráfico en Internet, en Mayo del 2014, implicaba visitas a partir de tres tipos de fuentes: “Acceso directo, un 31%; Lazos externos, un 40%, y a través de Motores de búsqueda un 29%” (Eouzan, Dupuis y Michalon 2016: 90), luego el problema es complejo de medir y analizar cualitativamente pues no hay una sola fuente de acceso, un sitio no es un afiche.

## 5.3. Cambios en la Estrategia de Medios

“La estrategia de medios se plasmará en las decisiones sobre los soportes concretos que se utilizarán para transmitir el mensaje de marketing, el momento y duración de la campaña y su secuencia temporal” (Rodríguez 2016: 259). Hoy no tenemos una inducción probabilística del consumo de medios. Con la tecnología de la Web sabemos con certeza que número de personas llegaron al sitio, cuánto tiempo estuvieron y qué ligazones hicieron con otros sitios es decir existe una medida de la audiencia, pero de ella solo tenemos la identificación del IP de los computadores implicados en la lectura o consumo Web, luego estamos en un espacio muy heterogéneo, como decíamos no es casual que Eouzan, Dupuis y Michalon digan que “no existe ninguna estadística confiable para conocer la media exacta de repartición de las fuentes de tráfico en el mundo (demasiadas desviaciones o sesgos están presentes en las herramientas estadísticas pues ellas no analizan las fuentes de la misma manera)” (2016: 90). La medida de un sitio necesita necesariamente la participación de la totalidad; recordemos que los consumidores no llegan directamente a un sitio sino que se pasean entre sitios incluso de la competencia, además que llegan por buscadores y/o avisos publicitarios en otros sitios, por lo que muchas veces no se tiene la información de todas las posibilidades de tráfico, incluso para el mercado competitivo son fuentes importantes de base dato por lo que no están dispuestos a hacerlos visibles. Es claro que las herramientas de medida son desbordadas por los usos, las ofertas de operadores móviles no hacen más que generar sujetos nómades que dificulta aprehender las prácticas Web de un individuo que pasa de fijos a móviles en diferentes equipos por lugar de trabajo y/o estudio. Además, existe también el paso no menor de la Televisión a lo digital a la compra por Internet a partir de allí, a veces por la misma pantalla, “con esta dispersión de los medios de difusión y de terminales de visionado medir el consumo televisivo hoy constituye un verdadero desafío metodológico” (Beauvisage 2016: 210).

## 6. Semiótica de la Web

Son pocos los autores contemporáneos que han desarrollado una semiótica de la Web y lo hacen desde una teoría de alcance medio que pretenden desarrollar algunos instrumentos analíticos. Para Julia Bonaccorsi (2016) la pantalla de la Web constituye una superficie y un cuadro que oculta códigos digitales y al mismo tiempo los muestra. En ese contexto “la actividad interpretativa efectuada por el lector es a la vez una actividad de lectura y de reconocimiento” (Bonaccorsi 2016: 138). La semiótica de la Web reemplaza la categoría de link o lazo hipertextual con la categoría de *signo de paso*: “clickear es un gesto de interpretación no sólo un gesto funcional” (Bonaccorsi 2016: 139). En la Coyuntura Actual esta nueva semiótica no aporta solamente una descripción, sino que hace ver que la puesta en marcha de una estrategia persuasiva en la Web implica construir un architexto que coherencia y da sentido al posicionamiento manifestado a través de los espacios hipertextuales, los signos de paso. Esto es se desplaza el problema de la descripción semiótica a sólo describir las huellas generadas por estos signos de paso: “se trata de una operación de reconocimiento de formas que pertenecen a la memoria social” (Bonaccorsi 2016: 143). Luego la semiótica de la Web está en sus inicios y solo nos provee de una herramienta de evaluación de la coherencia.

## 7. El vacío de las herramientas de la primera semiótica publicitaria, ejemplos del Chile de Hoy (2017)

¿Cómo enfrenta la publicidad Web chilena la construcción de huellas, de signos de paso que sean realmente equivalentes en sus principios de posicionamiento visual? No se trata de un análisis exhaustivo de toda la publicidad de Web marketing sino que de tomar como objeto real sólo el caso de bancos y de dos grandes tiendas (*retail store*). Se analizó todos los sitios Web presentes en la sociedad chilena, se recolectó información y se describió la forma de funcionamiento de ellos. La recolección se dio entre el 23 y el 29 de mayo 2017 y entre el 5 al 11 de junio 2017. Lo que significa decir que ellos no son más que fragmentos de toda la realidad de funcionamiento existente de Web marketing de la sociedad chilena, por lo que su sentido es sólo exploratorio.

### 7.1. El caso de los Bancos

#### 7.1.1. Introducción

Respecto a los avisos publicitarios Web de bancos, ello no aparece como práctica generalizada en la sociedad chilena, él es usado solo por dos bancos: Banco Santander y Banco de Crédito e Inversiones BCI. Hubo dos excepciones en el período analizado, un aviso publicitario del Banco Security en el sitio Web de Radio Cooperativa y uno referido al Banco Scotiabank. Cómo se trata de un estudio exploratorio, sólo se tomó los casos de Banco Santander y Banco BCI, pues constituyen la mayoría de los casos de Web marketing de bancos.

#### 7.1.2. Consideraciones posicionamiento visual Banco de Crédito e Inversiones BCI (Chile)

Debemos tener en cuenta que en el período recolectado ya establecido aparecen avisos publicitarios del Banco BCI en los Sitios Web de siete radios (Cooperativa, ADN, Duna, Zero, Activa, Concierto, Agricultura) en dos Diarios (La Tercera, y El Mercurio), y en el sitio Web de dos revistas (The Clinic, y El Capital).

Los contenidos puestos en acto en los 12 avisos recolectados son distintos: se trata de diferentes signos de paso que implican, desde distintos puntos de vistas, con el banco. El Signo de paso BCI Accesible aparece en Radio ADN, Radio Zero, Radio Activa, Radio Concierto, Radio Duna y Radio Agricultura. En Sitio Web Radio Agricultura se incorpora el Signo de Paso BCI Plan Empresarios, en Sitio Web Radio Cooperativa la Nueva Tarjeta BCI Dúo, en Diarios El Mercurio y La Tercera Crédito Consumo Moda, en Revista Capital Signo de Paso BCI Asesores de Bolsa y en Diario El Mercurio Signo de Paso BCI espectáculos. Cabe señalar que en las fechas especificadas no aparece aviso publicitario del BCI en los sitios Web de las otras radios de la sociedad chilena ni en otros sitios Web.

La forma de funcionamiento, entonces, es de colocar avisos publicitarios con alguno de los signos de paso descritos. En todos se da la operación de hacer clic y se desarrolla una operación de abrir un archivo que opera en el espacio del sitio del banco, donde hay una referencia al signo de paso, pero además se puede hacer más clic y ponerme a navegar por el sitio del banco (salvo en el caso del sitio Web del Diario El Mercurio donde sólo es posible ampliar el aviso) donde el sitio Web del banco mismo en su primera página repite los otros contenidos no vistos, según el signo de paso que yo he implementado. Se postula entonces una coherencia argumentativa, la que es visual y lingüística. Lo lingüístico ancla la lectura, pero también se argumenta con la puesta en escena, los objetos y los personajes focalizados. Y en todos ellos aparece tanto el logo del Banco, sus colores corporativos como la idea de modernidad dada por los personajes del animé del banco. En ese contexto el posicionamiento es coherente en todas sus manifestaciones; esto es, los signos de paso son coherentes a nivel de contenidos visuales y lingüísticos con un architexto coherente que se expresa en el sitio Web del banco.





Figura 1. Signos de Paso Banco BCI en otros sitios.

### 7.1.3. Consideraciones posicionamiento visual Banco Santander (Chile)

Debemos tener en cuenta que en el período recolectado ya establecido aparecen avisos publicitarios del Banco Santander en los sitios Web de tres radios (Cooperativa, Bio Bio, Duna) y en los de dos Diarios (La Tercera, y El Mercurio). Si realizamos el mismo tipo de análisis precedentes respecto a la coherencia de huellas dejadas por los signos de paso nos encontramos con una coherencia de posicionamiento visual.

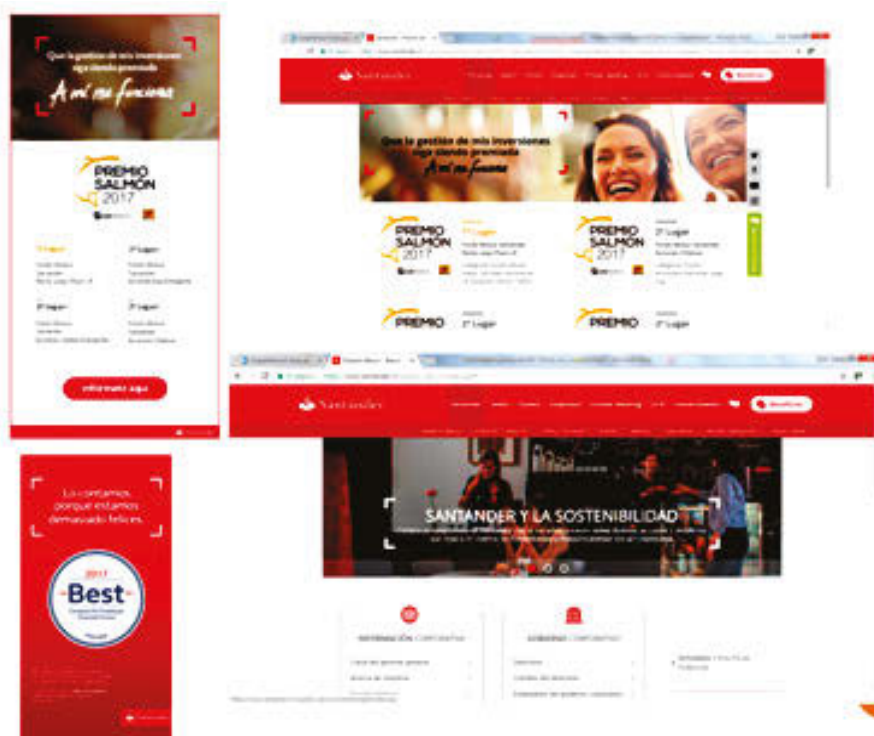


Figura 2. Signos de Paso Banco Santander.



#### **7.1.4. Consideraciones sobre la herramienta semiótica elaborada para el Web marketing: su pertinencia y debilidades en el caso de los bancos**

Sin embargo, respecto a la distintividad del posicionamiento visual, la herramienta semiótica elaborada para los sitios Web es incipiente, pues no tenemos cómo a partir de allí dar un diagnóstico de la pertinencia del posicionamiento elaborado, sólo sabemos que es coherente, pues en el uso del marketing falta el estudio semiótico del posicionamiento visual de la competencia. Los aportes de la primera semiótica no han sido tomados en cuenta ni tampoco redefinidos para la nueva realidad del Web marketing.

#### **7.2. El caso de dos de las grandes tiendas**

No hay coherencia en los signos de paso y sus ligazones entre ellos, ni un aval en la primera página del sitio institucional. Más bien, la construcción sigue de cerca la propuesta de los manuales de Web Marketing aparecido con profusión a partir del 2013, se trata de enfatizar reiteración de contenidos y propuestas de impacto visual.

En Almacenes París se pone énfasis a los signos de paso “Papá Hincha Nacional”, y “El regalo perfecto para tu Papá” reiteración en todos los sitios Web de Almacenes París manifestados en la semana del 5 al 11 de Junio 2017. Su campaña utiliza los Sitios Web de 3 Diarios Electrónicos (El Mostrador, Últimas Noticias, Diario La Tercera) de 4 Revistas en versión electrónica (Tú, Ser Padres, The women’s Health, The Clinic) del sitio Web Youtube y del de Radios CL. Dicha reiteración de los signos de paso tienen todos el Logo Azul de Almacenes París y se hace referencia en todos a contenidos de índole referencial. Hay una diferencia de contenidos en los medios más masivos referidos, se habla de Deporte (Papá Hincha Nacional) y de afeitadora; en cambio en las revistas referidas a jóvenes adolescentes y a parejas jóvenes se plantea la referencia a hacer algún regalo posible dentro de la tienda. La implicación es dada por lo lingüístico, los objetos que vemos en la imagen, y el croma azul del logo nos reitera la tienda de manera indirecta. Luego es claro de que se reiteran solo contenidos y el impacto visual de mantener el azul.

En el análisis del posicionamiento visual Web de Falabella se detectan los signos de paso “Botas”, y “Abrigo” que son en definitiva variantes del signo “moda”, los que aparecen en el Diario El Mercurio Digital y en la Revista Hola Digital; además aparece el signo de paso “Día del Padre” en el sitio Web de la Radio Santiago como en el sitio Youtube durante la semana estudiada del 5 al 11 de Junio 2017. En todos se reitera el color verde del logo y del mensaje lingüístico Falabella. Luego, se proponen dos contenidos diferentes: uno vinculado a signos de paso “moda” y otros referidos al “Día del Padre”. Es claro que si navego en los signos de paso “Día del Padre” no me encuentro con Moda, sino que con objetos como una cama, un Smartphone y un televisor de pantalla plana, por lo que no hay un architexto más abstracto que haga una vinculación global. La propuesta, entonces, es de un Web marketing basado en contenidos, en este caso la moda y el día del padre y la referencia a implicar visualmente por la reiteración del color verde.

### **8. Consideraciones**

Luego, esta investigación exploratoria sobre la acumulación del saber semiótico en la actualidad es un indicio de que ante la profunda transformación de producción, circulación y consumo cultural la semiótica está en retroceso respecto a su aporte original, sus estudios actuales dejan ver que sólo se trata de teorizaciones de alcance medio, operatorias para el logro de una coherencia, que por lo demás en las Grandes Tiendas Chilenas no se ocupa. Todo vuelve a la antigua práctica publicitaria del Modelo A.I.D.A. y de perfilar un posicionamiento de contenidos, atributos desligados de la propuesta global que debiese ser visualmente coherente. El caso de los

Bancos es de coherencia de los signos de paso, pero en absoluto es clara su distintividad respecto a la competencia.

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# CULTURA POPULAR JAPONESA EN CHILE: CONTRADICCIONES DE UNA CONEXIÓN ENTRE EL CUERPO Y LOS VALORES DE UNA SOCIEDAD IDEALIZADA

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## **Abstract**

La globalización e Internet han permitido que la cultura visual de diversas regiones del mundo permee la percepción de los individuos. Los videojuegos, el anime, el manga y las series japonesas y coreanas son altamente consumidos por los jóvenes. El sistema significativo de la cultura japonesa es complejo, tal como ha sido descrito por Kristeva (*La travesía de los signos*) o por Barthes (*El imperio de los signos*). En este sistema, la narración no es el código preponderante en la vehiculización de la información, sino que tiene la misma importancia que el código cromático o el de la organización de la imagen. Sin embargo, los jóvenes chilenos leen esta realidad cultural a nivel de la cultura occidental, de manera narrativa, en el sentido de A. J. Greimas, es decir, como recorridos narrativos en los cuáles se insertan los recorridos discursivos. En ese contexto los valores leídos son aquellos de la oposición a la cultura del consumo, y los procesos de identificación son los del Occidente. Además, el intercambio no es solamente a nivel estético: los jóvenes socializan en eventos sobre cultura popular asiática, tras lo cual realizan una lectura valórica idealizada sobre Japón y Corea, bajo marcos cognitivos occidentales.

## **1. Formulación del problema**

El desarrollo de internet y la globalización han permitido que la cultura visual de diversas regiones del mundo moldee la percepción de muchos individuos, sobre todo de los adolescentes. En ese contexto, los videojuegos, el animé, el manga japonés y todos sus productos asociados han sido altamente consumidos por jóvenes en los últimos 15 años, creando un verdadero nicho alternativo de fanáticos tanto en Chile, Latinoamérica y en muchos países fuera de Japón.

Hoy en Chile, el consumo de estos productos es eminentemente digital y convergente, debido a la escasa oferta de programación de dibujos animados en la televisión abierta. Según el estudio *Oferta de programación y consumo de televisión infantil en Chile en 2015* del Consejo Nacional de Televisión, sólo un 7,6% de la programación de la televisión abierta en Chile es televisión infantil. Incluso, si se excluye al canal de la Universidad Católica de Valparaíso y a Telecanal, las dos señales con menos audiencia en la televisión abierta chilena, la oferta se reduce a un 2,9%.

Lo anterior se ha potenciado gracias a las redes sociales en las comunidades de fanáticos. Según el estudio *Uso de internet en Chile: la otra brecha que nos divide* de la Fundación País Digital (2015), el 90% de los jóvenes usa internet, mientras que a los 70 años, un 90% no lo utiliza.

En ese escenario, el consumo audiovisual por Internet se ha fortalecido. Según la *Primera encuesta nacional sobre contenidos audiovisuales y televisión por internet* publicada en octubre de 2016 por el Consejo Nacional de Televisión, el 55% de los consultados señaló que consume contenido audiovisual a través de YouTube. El 49% lo hace vía redes sociales, el 36% mediante Netflix y plataformas similares y el 32% en páginas de Internet de otros medios. Estas cifras dan señales del cambio que experimenta el consumo desde un modelo lineal y masivo, como es la televisión abierta y por cable, hacia uno más personalizado y multiplataforma.

Pese a su popularidad en Occidente, el sistema significativo de la cultura japonesa es complejo y basado en una epistemología distinta a la occidental. Esto, desde el punto de vista semiótico y cognitivo plantea las interrogantes sobre cuáles son las lecturas que los seguidores del animé, el manga y la música asiática realizan de la imagen japonesa y en algunos casos, de la coreana, dado el éxito del K-Pop en los últimos años. Esto también lleva a preguntarse si existe una eventual contradicción entre los protocolos cognitivos y perceptivos de la cultura japonesa y aquellos presentes en Occidente.

Las preguntas anteriores trataron de responderse a través de la investigación realizada para la memoria de título *Videomúsica oriental en Chile: un "metarrelato" de contradicciones: Japón y Corea al límite*, en la Escuela de Periodismo del Instituto de la Comunicación e Imagen de la Universidad de Chile.

La metodología de investigación involucró observación en los espacios donde interactúan los seguidores, como los eventos, centros tiendas especializadas y el visionado en detalle de los productos culturales más populares (series de animé, videomúsica y videojuegos).

Luego, este trabajo de observación se comparó a través de entrevistas con fans, organizadores de eventos, cantantes y grupos de baile para conocer razones de gusto e identificación con la cultura popular japonesa y videomúsica oriental en Santiago de Chile.

## 2. Marco Teórico

Para entender las lecturas de los textos narrativos y audiovisuales, una primera aproximación la ofrece el enfoque de Algirdas J. Greimas, reforzado posteriormente por el Grupo de Entrevernes (1979) en *Análisis Semiótico de los textos*, quien plantea que la secuencia narrativa de un texto se organiza en torno a una realización principal, llamada programa narrativo (PN). Esta es "una realización particular de la secuencia narrativa en un relato dado, es decir, a toda la serie de estados y cambios que miran a efectuar la relación de un sujeto de estado a su objeto" (Grupo de Entrevernes 1979: 84).

A partir de esta transformación principal, el PN comporta toda una jerarquía de estados y transformaciones estructurada y organizada para su realización. El relato tendrá un carácter polémico, "dado que toda unión supone una desunión y que el sujeto dominante en un cambio propone un anti-sujeto dominado" (Grupo de Entrevernes 1979: 86).

De este modo, los programas narrativos se despliegan simétricamente. “Todo PN proyecta frente a él un anti programa narrativo centrado en cambios inverso [...] Se abren así múltiples posibilidades para dar figura a los papeles actanciales de un relato: todo papel actancial de PN proyecta un papel inverso en un anti PN” (Grupo de Entrevernes 1979: 87).

No obstante, la manera en que se perciben y apropian los contenidos audiovisuales comenzará a cambiar desde un predominio del concepto a una participación más activa del cuerpo. En esa línea, los aportes de las ciencias cognitivas, desde la perspectiva de Francisco Varela, Eleanor Rosch y Evan Thompson (1997) ayudan a entender de mejor forma este proceso.

La ciencia cognitiva es aquella rama de la biología que estudia como funciona la percepción y se procesa la información adquirida. Proveniente de la neurociencia y sus descubrimientos más recientes tienen un impacto en las comunicaciones y en las ciencias sociales, aportando nuevas formas de entender la cultura audiovisual.

Para Varela, Thompson y Rosch (1997) la fenomenología es la filosofía de la experiencia humana dentro de la cultura occidental, pero como filosofía sólo considera al pensamiento abstracto y la razón. Los autores en este planteamiento se alejan de la razón, pues este vuelco hacia la mente misma deja de lado la dimensión corpórea y empírica de la experiencia. Esta no será sólo conciencia, sino que será también cuerpo y acción.

Así, lo que las ciencias cognitivas descubren es que “el sujeto no capta al objeto real como relación estímulo-respuesta, sino que el objeto existe para el sujeto a través de una sinapsis que lo aprehende a partir de sus propios principios de auto-organización” (Del Villar 2004: 44).

La propuesta de Varela, Thompson y Rosch (1997) en la obra *De cuerpo presente* es indagar la tradición filosófica budista del examen de la experiencia como método denominado meditación con miras a la presencia plena: “Creemos que las doctrinas budistas del no-yo y del no dualismo, que surgieron de este método, pueden hacer un aporte significativo en un diálogo con las ciencias cognitivas. [...] Presencia plena significa que la mente, en efecto, está presente en la experiencia corpórea cotidiana; las técnicas de presencia plena están diseñadas para retrotraer la mente desde sus teorías y preocupaciones, desde la actitud abstracta, hacia la situación de la propia experiencia” (Varela et al. 1997: 46).

En este proceso perceptivo, donde experiencia, cuerpo y acción son protagonistas, otro aporte a la discusión lo hará el semiólogo francés Roland Barthes (1970) en su interpretación sobre el funcionamiento de los signos en la cultura japonesa en *El Imperio de los Signos*. Barthes (1970) señala que el signo en esta cultura no tiene un sentido fijo al cual representar o designar, por lo tanto, será “vacío”. Se vive en la experiencia misma a partir de su dimensión significante. “La riqueza de la cosa y la profundidad del sentido no se toleran más que al precio de una triple cualidad, impuesta a todos los objetos fabricados: que sean precisos, móviles y vacíos” (Barthes 1970: 67).

Por lo tanto, el arte y la escritura en el contexto japonés no describen ni representan, sólo existen por su interacción con el cuerpo del sujeto que se hace parte de él. Los conceptos y significados no se entienden como absolutos. Una lectura complementaria a dicha interpretación la realiza Dalai Lama (2006) en su obra *El universo en un solo átomo*, quien postula que las cosas y los acontecimientos son vacíos en el sentido de que no poseen una esencia inmutable, una realidad intrínseca o una realidad absoluta que les confiera independencia.

En consecuencia, todo está compuesto por acontecimientos interrelacionados e interdependientes, por fenómenos que interactúan sin cesar, carentes de una esencia fija e inmutable y que mantienen relaciones dinámicas en un perpetuo proceso de cambio. El mundo de la experiencia es real en tanto lo percibimos y el observador afecta lo observado.

En un estudio más concreto, el académico chileno Rafael Del Villar (2003) realiza un análisis semiótico comparativo con el fin de entender cómo estos puntos se manifiestan a nivel visual y narrativo en la videoanimación japonesa y americana.



Del Villar (2003) señala al respecto que en contraposición a la animación norteamericana, el manga y el animé se caracterizan por una ausencia de intencionalidad predeterminada de los personajes. Esto significa que sus objetivos son propuestos por la vida, a diferencia de la animación norteamericana, donde los objetivos de los protagonistas son individuales, y por lo tanto, no hay un objeto de deseo que constituya al sujeto como tal. Los enfrentamientos entre protagonistas y antagonistas son parte de procesos mayores que los contienen y su identidad no es fija, sino que evolucionan de conformidad al relato. Los personajes, finalmente, actuarán de acuerdo al bien común del grupo.

### 3. Descriptores de funcionamiento de la imagen japonesa

Ya se señaló al inicio de este artículo que el sistema significativo de la cultura japonesa es diferente al occidental, planteando las interrogantes sobre las lecturas que los seguidores occidentales, y en el marco de esta investigación, latinoamericanos, realizan de la imagen japonesa y coreana, en algunos casos.

Al considerar el marco teórico anterior, se generaron tres descriptores para comprender de manera clara el funcionamiento de la imagen japonesa en los productos de su cultura popular, altamente preferidos por los adolescentes. Estos son la ausencia de sujeto, el código narrativo en un segundo plano y la importancia de la argumentación visual.

#### 3.1. Ausencia de sujeto

Este primer descriptor indica que la construcción de la imagen japonesa no distingue la presencia de un sujeto que tenga una intención y que esté por sobre el entorno que lo rodea. A través de la interconexión de todos los elementos de la imagen, y junto a otros soportes en una relación hipertextual, la significación puede ser construída, pero es parte de un proceso que no es meramente contemplativo.

Para entender este punto, Del Villar (2003) plantea que Francisco Varela toma consciencia como científico cognitivo que “en la episteme budista nos encontramos con estructuras conectivas y enactivas; donde no es una acción lo que tiene en mente el sujeto, sino que la acción es redefinida por la serie de eslabones de los complejos en que se vive” (Del Villar 2003: 8).

De este modo, “lo que está en juego, al disminuir el rol de sujeto que hace la acción, no es sólo abolir una intencionalidad; sino que construir un hacer a partir de la interrelación de complejos, de múltiples acciones posibles” (Del Villar 2003: 8). Por lo tanto, “no hay una separación, todo interactúa con todo y se nutre de la historia, de la vida, de la enacción. Se debe estar siempre atento, todo cambia (enacción), todo interactúa (conexionismo). De allí la transgresión de la relación figura/ fondo (Del Villar 2003: 8).

Así, el contenido plasmado en el código narrativo y los valores involucrados responden a la sensibilidad del sujeto a las condiciones imperantes. El sujeto tendrá que actuar con responsabilidad en torno al bien del grupo y la naturaleza y no existe una identificación con valores que respondan a motivaciones individuales. El sujeto es parte de la naturaleza, no un ente separado y la interconexión en pos de la armonía es clave para garantizar el funcionamiento de todo.

Roland Barthes (1970), en su análisis en *El Imperio de los Signos*, también va a dar cuenta de la ausencia de sujeto para explicar el funcionamiento de los signos en la cultura japonesa. De esta forma, señala que la fragmentación del signo y sus interconexiones no deben terminar ni coagular nada. No hay un núcleo primario que dirija el proceso de significación. El “yo” es la totalidad de los significantes que se conectan unos con otros para construir un sentido que no es absoluto ni lo más relevante en este proceso y lo ejemplifica con el haiku, tipo de poesía japonesa

que generalmente se basa en el asombro o emoción que produce la naturaleza, con alguna referencia directa o indirecta a las estaciones del año.

“El número, la dispersión de los haikus, por un lado; la brevedad, el hermetismo de cada uno de ellos, por otro, parecen dividir, clasificar el mundo hasta el infinito, constituir un espacio de fragmentos puros, una polvareda de acontecimientos que, por una desherencia de la significación, ni puede ni debe coagular, construir, dirigir, terminar nada” (Barthes 1970: 105).

Esto se debe, según Barthes,

Porque el tiempo del haiku no tiene sujeto: la lectura no posee otro yo que la totalidad de los haikus cuyo yo, por refracción infinita, no es más que el lugar de la lectura [...]. Se podría decir que el cuerpo colectivo de los haikus es una red de diamantes, en la que cada diamante refleja a todos los demás y así sucesivamente hasta el infinito, sin que nunca haya que mantener, un núcleo primario de irradiación (Barthes 1970: 105).

### 3.2. Código narrativo en segundo plano

Este descriptor refiere a que en las series de animé, el manga, los videojuegos y la videomúsica, el código narrativo no es el que modaliza el relato, sino que todos los demás códigos se interrelacionan en una “misma jerarquía”. Esto es relevante en el sentido de que el proceso cognitivo también involucrará al cuerpo en la experiencia perceptiva.

En esa línea, no hay un solo un “yo”, un sujeto que capte lo simbólico como un articulador, sino que lo relevante es la interconexión de todo para vivir la experiencia. La descripción simbólica, como operación semántica, no opera en la imagen japonesa como sí lo entendemos en occidente.

Del Villar, en su análisis semiótico comparativo, lo indica con este ejemplo: “En Dragón Ball, nos encontramos con una estructuración pulsional de la secuencialidad de la imagen en secuencia. En las secuencias analizadas se refleja la misma estructuración pulsional: lo pulsional no es regido por lo simbólico, sino que va junto” (Del Villar 2003: 8). El estudioso agrega que:

La pulsionalidad no está en la música, no está en la historia, no está en los gestos, está en todo. El mismo hecho que sea más importante los gestos que los diálogos, nos hace ver que la “historia” se construye no sólo por lo simbólico, sino que por su interrelación pulsional. La información pulsional propuesta es la de una conexión entre cuerpo e imagen (Del Villar 2003: 9).

Por lo tanto, será la energía del cuerpo que por medio de dispositivos pulsionales se expresa en la música. Y en el caso de la animación japonesa “es la energía del cuerpo que se va correlacionando con lo gestual narrativo, con lo cromático, con la organización de la imagen y con la música” (Del Villar 2003: 9).

### 3.3. Argumentación visual

El tercer descriptor se refiere a que la percepción y cognición de lo real en la experiencia, tal como lo plantea Varela, no le otorga protagonismo a la abstracción y al concepto en la construcción del sentido. En esa línea, la experiencia visual será fundamental para los procesos cognitivos y perceptivos, lo que se manifiesta en el uso de la argumentación visual para la comunicación en la vida cotidiana.

En este proceso de argumentación visual, las imágenes no son meros elementos descriptivos de una realidad externa, sino que la imagen es un mediador para vivir la experiencia en un entorno donde el sujeto no está disociado de su objeto. Roland Barthes lo gráfica en la de-

nominación de las calles en Tokio: “Hasta en un pedacito de papel, una calle, un inmueble, un canal, una vía férrea, un rótulo y que hacen del intercambio de direcciones una comunicación delicada, donde retoma su lugar una vida del cuerpo, un arte de gesto gráfico” (1970: 54). Así, el semiólogo agrega que :

La ciudad más grande del mundo está, prácticamente, inclasificada, los espacios que la componen en detalle están innominados. Esta domiciliación borrada parece incómoda a los que (como nosotros) se han habituado a decretar que lo más práctico es siempre lo más racional. Tokio nos repite, sin embargo, que lo racional no es más que un sistema entre otros (Barthes 1970: 53).

Esta argumentación visual la plantea, de igual forma, en el uso del lenguaje descriptivo, al sostener que “la descripción, género occidental, posee su garantía espiritual en la contemplación, inventario metódico de las formas atributivas de la divinidad o de los episodios del relato evangélico (con San Ignacio de Loyola, el ejercicio de la contemplación es esencialmente descriptivo)” (Barthes 1970: 104).

En oposición a la descripción, Barthes indica que “el haiku, por el contrario, articulado sobre una metafísica sin sujeto y sin dios, corresponde al mu budista, al satori zen, que no son en ningún momento descenso iluminativo de Dios, sino despertar ante el hecho, aprehensión de las cosas como acontecimiento y no como sustancia” (1970: 104).

#### 4. Conflictos en protocolos perceptivos

Tras definir los descriptores del funcionamiento de la imagen japonesa, en la investigación realizada se logró identificar en la mayoría de los entrevistados protocolos perceptivos opuestos a los descriptores planteados. De acuerdo a la investigación, éstos se identifican con valores orientales en los productos que consumen, en oposición a los imperantes en la sociedad y mercado occidental (en este caso, Chile), buscan vincularse con un personaje o sujeto como tal y se implican con los códigos de la imagen, pero hacen una lectura simbólica de aquellos.

##### 4.1. Búsqueda de valores

En este primer caso, existe una lectura predominante de los valores transmitidos por el código narrativo. La mayoría de los seguidores se identifican con valores propios de la sociedad japonesa y coreana en algunos casos, en contraposición a los valores imperantes del sistema occidental. Cada uno de ellos trata de aplicar estos valores en sus actividades, proveer de entretención a los seguidores que no encuentran estos valores en las ofertas masivas y así socializar entre ellos.

Gonzalo García, CEO de NoiX Entertainment, productora dedicada a espectáculos masivos de música japonesa y coreana en Chile, señala en una de las entrevistas para la investigación que los valores de las series de animación son un atributo fundamental para identificarse con ellas:

Son pocos los padres que en algún aspecto veían los valores del animé por los años 90, al contrario, decían «*huevón*<sup>1</sup> grande viendo monos». Además que nosotros como fanáticos empezamos a ver cosas más allá de lo que solo daban en la televisión, que son los valores. El valor que entregan ciertas historias es trascendental en la visión de un niño, a muchos los formó y los hizo ser las personas que son hoy en día (Donoso 2013: 281).

Bárbara Bustamante, cantante de música de animación japonesa en la ciudad de Santiago, sostiene en una de las entrevistas que le gustaría que a ella se le reconociera como un referente positivo y que sus seguidores tomen los valores positivos de las series de animación japonesa:

1 Huevón es un sustantivo que en el uso informal del español en Chile hace referencia, en el contexto de la cita, a persona o amigo.

Me gustaría que se me conociera como una impulsora y un referente positivo. Los chicos que entran a esta cultura están recién formando su carácter, y a mí me interesa que lo hagan de forma positiva. Que tomen lo bueno del animé, del mundo otaku y que no se queden con resentimientos. Por eso los temas que he compuesto tienen que ver con mensajes positivos, así como los mensajes del animé me transmitían nunca rendirme, siempre creer en la amistad, yo quise traspasar ese mensaje en mis canciones (Donoso 2013: 98).

Mónica Rivera, seguidora del pop coreano en la ciudad de Santiago, indica que uno de los elementos que más valora en estos productos es el respeto hacia el ser humano. “Hay una cosmovisión diferente. Hay un respeto hacia el ser humano que es muy importante para ellos. Hay una manera expresarse distintos. Todo eso me atrae porque creo en el respeto al ser humano ante todo. Esos valores los veo muy reflejados en oriente y me siento más identificada con ellos en un sentido moral, incluso espiritual” (Donoso 2013: 201).

#### 4.2. Búsqueda de sujetos

En el segundo caso, la identificación con valores también conlleva una conexión con los atributos de los personajes, ya sean de series, artistas o grupos musicales. Los valores, que son encarnados por estos personajes, son una vía para suplir una carencia presente en el mundo real y reafirmar una identidad en oposición a los valores imperantes por el mercado. Los valores corresponden al objeto de deseo del sujeto que se define en torno a él.

En ese contexto, la identificación termina anclada en sujetos y valores claros. No se comprende la ambigüedad del sujeto, un sentido que no es fijo. No hay espacio para entender que los hombres se pueden transformar en mujeres y viceversa. La identificación es con los patrones occidentales de lo masculino y lo femenino.

Un ejemplo que clarifica esto es la inquietud que suscita la figura del cantante Mana, vocalista de la banda japonesa Malice Mizer y que en una de las entrevistas aparece con claridad. La entrevistada Bárbara Echard señala:

Es que quieres saber qué son. A mí me pasaba lo mismo con esta mina que tocaba guitarra. ¿Es una mina? ¿O es un tipo? Y si es un tipo, ¿Por qué se viste de mujer? Y si es una mujer, ¿Cómo llegó a ser guitarrista? Porque no es común. Me refiero a Mana de Malice Mizer. Me pasaba ese tipo de cosas y yo odiaba Malice Mizer. Odiaba la música, pero me llamaba tanto la atención de verlo así, ¿Por qué se viste así? ¿Por qué tan femenino el tipo? ¿Por qué se ve femenino pero tiene voz ronca?, ¿Qué pasa? (Donoso 2013: 54).

También existe una asociación a la “homosexualidad” de los seguidores de la música coreana y a sus expresiones “afeminadas”. Así lo retrata Sebastián Carrasco, apodado *Shippo* en honor a uno de los personajes del manga y serie de televisión Inuyasha, en Valientes, documental emitido en 2011 por Canal 13.

Sí, me decían chino *fleto*<sup>2</sup> y cuestiones así, pero a mí nunca me importó (...) si estás seguro de tu gusto, *pa donde vas*, no hay problema. A uno cuando le gusta algo no tiene que estar ni ahí con lo que digan los demás y yo por lo menos pienso así. Además que a mi mamá le encanta, mi viejo no vive conmigo pero le gusta, me pasa plata *pa'* los trajes, siempre que cumpla en el colegio, obvio (Donoso 2013: 220).

Igualmente se puede constatar como los seguidores se identifican con cantantes y personajes que respondan su forma de ser y motivaciones personales, tal como lo señala Francisca Collao, fanática del pop coreano, y su inclinación con Dara, una de las integrantes del grupo 2NE1:

2 Adjetivo informal usado en Chile para referirse a la condición homosexual de una persona.

Dicen que yo y Dara somos un poco parecidas. En el momento en que decidí bailar fue un poco como «me gusta ella» y en el camino me empecé a enamorar de lo que ella era (...). Dara me sirvió para sacar personalidad. Ella es muy chiquitita y yo igual soy como flaca, me sirvió para darme cuenta de que no importaba el qué dirán. Por ejemplo, ella es muy linda, pero la gente suele decir que no es muy talentosa. Pero me aferro mucho a ella, en el sentido de que es muy esforzada (Donoso 2013: 230).

#### 4.3. Valoración simbólica del significante

En el tercer caso, existe la tendencia a valorar la “perfección” estética de la visualidad japonesa y coreana en relación a la articulación de los códigos que la componen. Esta articulación “perfecta” de la imagen, el sonido y el relato a través de la energía es un factor importante a la hora de implicar a los seguidores, pero su interpretación final sigue anclada a la búsqueda de sujetos y valores.

Ivana Donoso, una de las entrevistadas y miembro de uno de los fan clubs de Super Junior, grupo de pop coreano, señala: “yo me pongo a ver los videos de Super Junior 30 veces al día y los veo, los veo, los veo y los veo... me llama la atención la cantidad de plata que invierten, la producción, el esfuerzo, los efectos de luz, los vestuarios y lo que me gusta más es que es un grupo grande” (2013: 207).

Lo mismo sostiene Fabián Cerda, seguidor del animé y de diferentes grupos de música japonesa.

Son tipos muy rigurosos. Cuando ellos están arriba del escenario, sienten la obligación de dar un buen espectáculo, siempre. Pienso que eso es lo que me identifica, por ejemplo, con Hironobu Kageyama; no puedo entender cómo un tipo que tiene 50 años puede interpretar de esa manera, moverse y entregar un espectáculo notable de principio a fin. Eso es lo que me hace admirarlo tanto (Donoso 2013: 35).

#### 5. Conclusiones

Los seguidores de la cultura popular japonesa y coreana se sienten cómodos con la manifestación de su visualidad, cuyo funcionamiento es hipertextual. Esta construcción visual está ligada a la cultura budista, en especial la japonesa, que se percibe en imágenes y a partir de conexiones entre diferentes puntos, en un sentido que no está fijo en un solo significante. No obstante, la lectura que se hace del sentido es bajo un marco occidental, en una estructura donde el sujeto busca un objeto en un programa narrativo, e identificarse con los valores de determinado personaje o integrante de una serie o una banda.

Por ejemplo, en las series de animé, el fan busca identificarse con valores distintos a los de su entorno, léidos para validar un yo que no se identifica con los valores y modos de consumos imperantes en su misma región, en este caso en Chile. Sin embargo, los valores en oriente responden a la sensibilidad a las condiciones imperantes y al actuar con responsabilidad en torno al bien del grupo y la naturaleza. Yo y naturaleza son lo mismo, donde un profundo respeto hacia el otro.

Todo lo anterior genera una idealización de las sociedades japonesa y coreana en términos valóricos, en oposición a los valores de Latinoamérica y Occidente. En ese contexto, la pulsionalidad de la imagen provoca gusto en el espectador, pero es leída valoricamente y bajo los marcos cognitivos occidentales. Los fans en Chile no son conscientes del funcionamiento visual de las imágenes japonesas y en definitiva, no conocen su articulación códiga, a diferencia de cómo un sujeto japonés o coreano consume e interpreta ese contenido.

Estas conclusiones nos plantean las brechas aún existentes entre ambas regiones —Chile y Asia Pacífico— para lograr un mayor entendimiento. Los procesos perceptivos y cognitivos en los fans de estas culturas foráneas son un indicio importante para avanzar en la integración de estas dos regiones y superar los muros, que no son sólo idiomáticos, en un contexto de convergencia digital.



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# EL ESPACIO DEL METRO DE SANTIAGO DE CHILE: DESCRIPCIÓN DE LA FOCALIZACIÓN PERCEPTIVA Y LA TIPOLOGÍA DE SUS PASAJEROS

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## **Abstract**

Jean Marie Floch propuso una tipología de usuario del Metro de París en 1993. Esta investigación retoma esta propuesta, basada en la descripción del cuadrado semiótico de A. J. Greimas, para ser aplicada en el Metro de Santiago en 2015-2016. Dicha tipología clasifica a los pasajeros en Agrimensores, Sonámbulos, Dinámicos y Vagabundos. Agrimensores y Vagabundos tendrían en común la observación de la realidad externa, mientras que los Dinámicos y Sonámbulos estarían volcados en su mundo interno. Nuestra observación relaciona lo anterior con el planteamiento de los diferentes niveles de complejidad cognitiva (alta, media o baja) que a su vez tendría relación con las edades de vida. En un segundo momento, un grupo de pasajeros fue entrevistado, arrojando datos que desechaban la premisa de que los pasajeros con más alto nivel cognitivo clasificaban como Agrimensores o Vagabundos. Paradójicamente, se encontró que los pasajeros mayores, generalmente relacionados con el nivel cognitivo bajo, son quienes más observan el espacio externo en el Metro. A diferencia de los pasajeros jóvenes, identificados con múltiples espacios cognitivos simultáneos, que clasificaban como Sonámbulos o Dinámicos. Todo lo anterior visibiliza un conflicto de interfaces que la actual convergencia tecnológica implica.

## **1. Introducción**

La presente investigación tuvo por objetivo principal describir a los usuarios del Metro de Santiago; las acciones que desarrollan, y, por lo tanto, la focalización del espacio. En definitiva, buscamos un diagnóstico acerca de la significación que sus usuarios, en sus gestos y actividades, dan a este espacio público.

El presente objetivo se sustenta en los trabajos de dos autores. Por una parte, para comprender los procesos perceptivos de los pasajeros del Metro, se consideraron dos planteamientos. La

percepción no tendría un ordenamiento determinado: “[...] En los cerebros reales no hay reglas ni un procesador lógico central, y que la información no está almacenada en lugares precisos. En cambio, es evidente que el cerebro operaba a partir de interconexiones masivas” (Varela 1990:53). Asimismo, la historia social de los sujetos, su contexto, tiene un rol fundamental en este proceso de percepción. Es decir, los sujetos son agentes en el proceso cognitivo: “El contexto y el sentido común no son artefactos residuales que se puedan eliminar progresivamente mediante el descubrimiento de reglas más elaboradas. Constituyen la esencia misma de la cognición creativa” (Varela 1990: 96).

Por otra parte, Jean Marie Floch ofrece una suerte de guía para el análisis semiótico del trayecto en metro, que considera a este tal como un relato, con partes identificables con un inicio (entrada a la estación), un desarrollo (viaje en metro) y un final (salida de la estación de llegada): “[...] Al igual que un texto, el trayecto puede ser objeto de una segmentación, es decir, de una división en un número limitado de unidades, de etapas o de momentos que se relacionan entre ellos según ciertas reglas” ([1990] 1993: 39). Y luego nos entrega una pauta claramente identificable de los distintos momentos que componen un viaje por la red subterránea: “Reconocibles al anotar el seguimiento — como vamos a ver — mediante una determinada secuencia o macrosecuencia gestual (móvil/inmóvil, de pie/sentado, acelerado/marcha lenta...) o proxémica (abertura a los otros/repliegue sobre sí mismo, distancia/proximidad, encuentro frontal o tangente) [...]” (Floch [1990] 1993: 39).

De esta observación se desprende una tipología de usuario que será incorporada plenamente en nuestra investigación. Así, diremos que alguien es Agrimensor cuando se dedica a observar el paisaje de la estación, conociendo los diferentes servicios que una estación determinada puede ofrecer (locales de venta de comida, lectura, pagos de servicios básicos, etcétera), de esta forma el agrimensor intenta diversificar los usos asignados al Metro; por otra parte, los Dinámicos esquivarán los grandes flujos de pasajeros y se ubicarán en lugares estratégicos del andén para esperar el próximo tren, de sus movimientos raudos se desprende que ellos buscan optimizar el tiempo de su trayecto, evitando eventos que puedan entorpecer su paso; los Sonámbulos se ubicarán en un lugar determinado y se enfocarán totalmente en una actividad, que puede ser chatear o escuchar música, entre otros; y finalmente, los Vagabundos, que se dedicarán a apreciar afiches y pantallas, o cualquier espectáculo inesperado que se presente en el Metro.

Para concluir la introducción, es necesario contextualizar brevemente acerca del espacio físico en el que se desarrolló la observación de los sujetos: el Metro de Santiago, Chile. Estamos hablando del medio de transporte que concentra el 61% de las preferencias de los pasajeros de la región Metropolitana, con 800 millones de viajes anuales proyectados para el año 2018 (Diario El Mercurio, 2014), año en que la red de Metro contará con 7 líneas, lo que haría disponer de 139 estaciones operativas. El Metro de Santiago fue inaugurado en 1975, por lo que cuenta con una historia de servicio relativamente reciente, si lo comparamos con otros metros del mundo, como el caso del Metro de Londres, inaugurado en 1863. O el de París, que comenzó sus servicios en 1900. Estamos hablando de un sistema de transporte masivo y de gran concurrencia, con un público altamente heterogéneo, considerando la presencia en aumento de inmigrantes, además de pasajeros de todas las edades y estratos sociales.

Además, es necesario considerar la presencia masificada de tecnología en el contexto de los trayectos realizados en Metro. Específicamente nos referimos a teléfonos inteligentes, y, en menor medida, tablets (Observatorio Digital del Gobierno de Chile 2010). Estamos hablando de un objeto que actualmente interviene en prácticamente todos los aspectos de la vida de los sujetos,

y en este sentido, los tiempos de trayecto de los pasajeros no están exentos de su presencia. Los teléfonos inteligentes no sólo se presentan como distractores o herramientas, sino también modifican la forma en que los sujetos se relacionan con el espacio. Como veremos, el espacio y tiempo de viaje que los pasajeros experimentan también se verá modificado, e incluso, resignificado.

## 2. Metodología

Comenzamos por definir los grupos que serían observados, a modo de captar los segmentos más representativos de los pasajeros. En este sentido, se estableció la observación de tres grupos etarios. Para fundamentar la elección de estas edades utilizamos los Proyectos de Investigación Fondecyt Regular N°1000954 y N°1120064 (Del Villar 2006, 2014). Estas investigaciones sostienen la tendencia de mayor complejidad cognitiva en los grupos etarios más jóvenes, mientras que se evidencia una curva menor en los grupos etarios más adultos, es decir, habría mayor simplicidad cognitiva en estos últimos. El resultado más significativo es que en los tres estratos sociales en los segmentos etarios 40-45 y 50-55, se da una predominancia del manejo de complejidad baja y a posteriori media, lo que es cualitativamente distinto en 30-35, que se aproxima a 11-12, 16-18 y 20-24, donde se manifiesta una curva normal (Del Villar 2014). De allí que los grupos escogidos para la observación sean pasajeros de 16-18 años, 20-35 años y 40-55 años.

Para sistematizar aún más la información se establecieron polos de observación. Estos consistieron en dos estaciones de Metro: estación El Golf y estación Hospital Sótero del Río. Ambas representan dos sectores significativamente distintos en relación con indicadores socioeconómicos (Astroza y Graells 2014). En este sentido, no sólo nos preguntamos acerca de si la brecha socioeconómica influye en el proceso perceptivo de los pasajeros, también es necesario observar el contexto de los sujetos, pues es la historia personal la que tendría un papel decisivo en este proceso perceptivo-cognitivo (Varela 1990).

Las observaciones fueron realizadas entre los meses de octubre y diciembre de 2015, días martes, miércoles y jueves. En cuanto a las observaciones de trayectos (dentro de los vagones) y andenes, en el caso Hospital Sótero del Río-Tobalaba, estas se realizaron en el horario punta de la mañana (7:30-9:00 horas) para lograr captar el desplazamiento de los pasajeros desde sus residencias hacia sus lugares de trabajo y estudio. En cuanto al trayecto El Golf-Los Dominicos, se observó en el horario de la tarde, entre 13:00 y 16:00 horas, para lograr captar el grupo de usuarios del sector, distinto al que utiliza el Metro en horario punta, que sólo acude a estas estaciones en este horario luego de finalizar su jornada para dirigirse hacia otros puntos de la ciudad.

Respecto a las entrevistas, estas fueron realizadas en julio de 2016, a personas que se ajustaran a las edades requeridas. Consistieron en dos mujeres de 16-18 años, dos hombres de 16-18 años, dos mujeres de 40-55 años y dos hombres de 40-55 años, dando un total de ocho entrevistas. Estas entrevistas semiestructuradas a pasajeros permitieron observar la relación entre las variantes según grupo etario, género y segmento socioeconómico. Se intentó plasmar la mayor diversidad posible en relación con los niveles de procesos perceptivo-cognitivo, es decir, personas que sean simples y otras que sean complejas para tratar de validar y profundizar los análisis etnográficos realizados. De allí que se generara una mini encuesta respecto al procesamiento cognitivo para seleccionar a aquellos que se entrevistaron. Finalmente, en estas entrevistas se aplicó la tipología de usuarios propuesta por Floch: agrimensores, sonámbulos, dinámicos y vagabundos. Si hay una relación entre las edades y la complejidad cognitiva, sería importante detectar cómo opera ello en realidades concretas de uso del Metro. Concretamente, si los adultos tienden a ser simples y los complejos tienden a ser los jóvenes, ¿qué pasa con el uso del celular, que por

convergencia tecnológica es teléfono, internet, televisión, GPS, etcétera? ¿El sujeto complejo utiliza la complejidad sólo al utilizar el celular? ¿Ha visto o no la señalética del metro, o está en condiciones de verla?

### 3. Análisis

En ambos trayectos se observó las actividades que los pasajeros realizaban a bordo del vagón. Con esto quisimos registrar en qué enfocan su atención los usuarios en cada recorrido, por lo que en un primer momento clasificamos el tipo de actividad que ejecutan (leer, revisar el celular o nada). Luego se registró el aspecto perceptivo de estas actividades, es decir, realizan una actividad o varias a la vez (Del Villar 2006, 2014).

Posteriormente se observó a los usuarios según sus tipos de recorrido en los andenes de las estaciones El Golf y Hospital Sótero del Río. De esta forma se aplicó la tipología de usuario propuesta por Floch ([1990] 1993).

#### El Golf-Los Dominicos

	16-18		20-35		40-55	
ACTIVIDADES:	H	M	H	M	H	M
Leer	0%	0%	6,7% (2)	13,3% (4)	3,3% (1)	3,3% (1)
Celular	56,7% (17)	40,0% (12)	60% (18)	56,7% (17)	40% (12)	40% (12)
Nada	43,3% (13)	60% (18)	33,3% (10)	30%(9)	56,7% (17)	56,7% (17)
PERCEPCIÓN/COGNICIÓN:						
-Sólo ejecuta una acción (celular o leer)	26,7% (8)	23,3% (7)	50% (15)	70% (21)	16,7% (5)	30% (9)
-Mira la ventana, afiches, lee o mira el celular	36,7% (11)	23,3% (7)	23,3% (7)	13,3%(4)	40% (12)	16,7% (5)
-Mira a la gente solamente	36,7% (11)	53,3% (16)	26,7% (8)	16,7% (5)	43,3% (13)	53,3% (16)

Figura 1. Focalización del espacio perceptivo El Golf-Los Dominicos.

#### 3.1 Focalización del espacio perceptivo según tipo de actividad

Si bien existen ciertas diferencias, ninguna de ellas es significativa. La variable determinante en este sentido sería constituida por los grupos etarios, es decir, existen tendencias marcadas por los grupos etarios y estas serían transversales a los sectores socioeconómicos. Vemos cómo en los dos casos son los del grupo 20-35 quienes más utilizan el celular dentro de los vagones, mientras que los adultos de 40-55 son quienes más observan a las personas, y los del grupo más joven, 16-18 años, son quienes más tienden a percibir varios espacios a la vez.



Hospital Sótero del Río / Tobalaba

ACTIVIDADES:	16-18		20-35		40-55	
	H	M	H	M	H	M
Leer	3,3% (1)	0%	6,7% (2)	13,3% (4)	10% (3)	16,7% (5)
Celular	40% (12)	3,3% (1)	63,3% (19)	66,7% (20)	40% (12)	16,7% (5)
Nada	56,7% (17)	96,7% (29)	30% (9)	20% (6)	50% (15)	66,7% (20)
PERCEPCIÓN/COGNICIÓN: -Sólo ejecuta una acción (celular o leer)	26,7% (8)	3,3% (1)	40% (12)	63,3% (19)	36,7% (11)	20% (6)
-Mira la ventana, afiches, lee o mira el celular	50% (15)	20% (6)	43,3% (13)	20% (6)	23,3%(7)	36,7% (11)
-Mira a la gente solamente	23,3% (7)	76,7% (23)	16,7% (5)	16,7% (5)	40% (12)	43,3% (13)

Figura 2. Focalización del espacio perceptivo Hospital Sótero del Río-Tobalaba.

**3. 2. Tipología de usuario**Hospital Sótero del Río / Tobalaba

ACTIVIDADES:	16-18		20-35		40-55	
	H	M	H	M	H	M
Leer	3,3% (1)	0%	6,7% (2)	13,3% (4)	10% (3)	16,7% (5)
Celular	40% (12)	3,3% (1)	63,3% (19)	66,7% (20)	40% (12)	16,7% (5)
Nada	56,7% (17)	96,7% (29)	30% (9)	20% (6)	50% (15)	66,7% (20)
PERCEPCIÓN/COGNICIÓN: -Sólo ejecuta una acción (celular o leer)	26,7% (8)	3,3% (1)	40% (12)	63,3% (19)	36,7% (11)	20% (6)
-Mira la ventana, afiches, lee o mira el celular	50% (15)	20% (6)	43,3% (13)	20% (6)	23,3%(7)	36,7% (11)
-Mira a la gente solamente	23,3% (7)	76,7% (23)	16,7% (5)	16,7% (5)	40% (12)	43,3% (13)

Figura 3. Tipología de usuario El Golf.

Estación Hospital Sótero del Río

TIPO DE USUARIO:	16-18		20-35		40-55		% Total
	H	M	H	M	H	M	
Sonámbulo	26.7% (8)	30% (9)	40% (12)	50% (15)	26.7% (8)	23.3% (7)	32.7% (59)
Agrimensor	20% (6)	20% (6)	6.7% (2)	0%	10% (3)	20% (6)	12.8% (23)
Dinámico	46.6% (14)	40% (12)	20% (6)	13.3% (4)	30% (9)	16.7% (5)	27.8% (50)
Vagabundo	6.7% (2)	10% (3)	33.3% (10)	36.7% (11)	33.3% (10)	40% (12)	26.7% (48)

Figura 4. Tipología de usuario Hospital Sótero del Río

Vemos que las tendencias son compartidas tanto en El Golf como en Estación Hospital Sótero del Río. En ambos sectores predomina el usuario Sonámbulo y Dinámico, incluso con diferencias similares entre cada grupo etario. Por ejemplo, en ambas estaciones los sonámbulos de 20-35 representan a un 15% (27 casos). En el caso de los dinámicos, el grupo de 20-35 de El Golf representa un 6,1% (11 casos), mientras que el segmento de la misma edad en Hospital Sótero del Río concentra el 5,6% (10 casos). En tanto que los dinámicos de 40-55 de El Golf representan el 7,2% (13 casos), y los de Hospital Sótero del Río, 7,8% (14 casos).

Sin embargo, al observar las cifras de ambos cuadros comparativos, resalta la cifra del grupo Vagabundo en Hospital Sótero del Río. Para ilustrar lo anterior debemos regresar por unos instantes a la explicación de la tipología de usuarios de Floch. Esta clasificación está basada en el Cuadro Semiótico (Greimas 1971). Sonámbulos y Dinámicos comparten una relación de “no realidad”, en el sentido de reducir al mínimo la interacción con el exterior en sus trayectos a través del metro (Sonámbulos se encuentran ensimismados en una actividad puntual y Dinámicos se mueven rápidamente para ubicarse en el andén y abordar el próximo vagón). Inversamente, Vagabundos y Agrimensores sí presentan esta relación con la “realidad”, pues ambos interactúan con el mundo externo. Vagabundos se detienen a observar cualquier acontecimiento inesperado y Agrimensores prefieren ubicarse y observar a los pasajeros que llegan, además de conocer los espacios de la estación. Pero la relación cruzada no se queda en la variable “realidad” / “no realidad”. También emerge la “estrategia”, que sí manifiestan Agrimensores y Dinámicos. Agrimensores porque evalúan dónde bajar o subir al vagón, dependiendo de la hora, por ejemplo, pues conocen la estación y sus capacidades; así como los Dinámicos, que saben qué lugares son convenientes para subir a un vagón más expedito, por lo general en los extremos. Mientras que Sonámbulos y Vagabundos presentan una denominada “no estrategia”, debido a que privilegian otras actividades mientras permanecen en el andén. Sonámbulos están ensimismados en sus celulares, escuchando música o leyendo; Vagabundos están observando pantallas, carteles o apreciando cualquier evento inesperado que pudiera suceder. De lo anterior se desprende la complejidad cognitiva asociada a los tipos de usuario. Es decir, Vagabundos y Agrimensores presentarían una complejidad cognitiva mayor si pensamos no sólo que se encuentran en contacto con el mundo externo, sino que por lo mismo están percibiendo mayores espacios perceptivo-cognitivos. A diferencia de Sonámbulos y Dinámicos, que se encuentran concentrados en menos espacios cognitivos, pues no observan el espacio externo, no hay mayor interacción.

Retomando el punto inicial de esta explicación, volvamos al grupo Vagabundo en Sótero del Río. Pese a no ser un grupo mayoritario, salta a la vista la cifra, casi teniendo la misma presencia que Dinámicos. Al observar que el mayor número está en el grupo de 40-55 años (22 casos),

da cuenta de una diferencia con el supuesto inicial con el que contamos a la hora de establecer los grupos etarios. Hasta el momento pensábamos que este grupo de 40-55 años debía tender a presentar una complejidad cognitiva menor, debido al comportamiento mostrado en estudios anteriores relacionados con navegación por internet. Al parecer en este contexto, los adultos presentan una forma distinta de percibir los espacios.

### 3.3 Contrastando la información: entrevistas aleatorias

Hasta el momento se han registrado tipos de focalización que hacen los usuarios del Metro de Santiago. Al mismo tiempo, se ha descrito el tipo de comportamiento desplegado. Corresponde ahora profundizar sobre cómo perciben los usuarios del Metro su realidad de uso. Es claro que la variable edad ha destacado, más allá de la descripción de un sector socioeconómico. Mientras, detectamos diferencias entre las edades 20-35 años, quienes ocupan más el celular dentro de los carros, y los adultos de 40-55 años, son quienes más observan a las personas. Los de 16-18 años, por la hora de observación, se movían en grupos y conversaban entre ellos. Por otra parte, es claro que el comportamiento de los jóvenes se identificó mayoritariamente con los grupos Sonámbulo y Dinámico. En tanto que al parecer privilegian más la acción que la observación. Luego, queda por esclarecer varias dimensiones que hacen necesaria la realización de las entrevistas: qué ligazón hay entre el hacer varias cosas a la vez (complejidad cognitiva) con el hecho de la adscripción a un tipo de categoría de comportamiento en el Metro. Se decidió entrevistar personas pertenecientes a los grupos 16-18 años y 40-55 años, debido a que representan los comportamientos más polarizados, dos mujeres y dos hombres de cada grupo etario, intentando plasmar la mayor diversidad posible en cuanto a niveles de complejidad cognitiva. Para conocer el nivel de complejidad cognitiva de los sujetos se aplicó previamente este pretest:

Instituto de la Comunicación e Imagen, Universidad de Chile			
Género	M	F	Edad: /
Nombre		Comuna	
1.- Cuando trabajas en el PC, ¿escuchas música?			
Nunca	A veces		X
Siempre	No sabe / no responde		
2.- ¿Acostumbas trabajar en el computador y chatear al mismo tiempo?			
Siempre	A veces	X	No
3.- Tienes problemas de atención en clases o en el trabajo cuando:			
Las instrucciones son demasiado obvias		No me interesa el tema	
Cuando las instrucciones son demasiado complejas		No tengo problemas de concentración	
4.- Comúnmente, ¿con cuántas personas puedes chatear al mismo tiempo? Al chatear ¿Cuántas conversaciones puedes mantener al mismo tiempo?			
3, 0, 2, ..... N° personas			
5.- ¿Qué es lo que más valoras en una obra audiovisual? Marque sólo una categoría			
1. el tema			X
2. los personajes			X
3. la música			X
4. la imagen			
5. los colores			
6. Un combinación de los anteriores			
7. Ninguna de las Anteriores			
6.- Qué te es más placentero cuando navegas (marca dos alternativas)			
Ver imágenes diferentes a las cotidianas (países, pinturas, etc.)		Ver imágenes impactantes	
Ver imágenes de hombres atractivos (cantantes, músicos, modelos, etc.)		Ver imágenes humorísticas	
Ver imágenes de mujeres atractivas		No sabe/ no responde	
Ver informaciones (noticias, reportajes, etc.)			
7.- Marca en cada línea la Alternativa que tú consideres que describe bien tu navegación por Internet:			
Cuándo navegas, ¿sacudes frecuentemente el mouse?		Si	No
¿Te ha sorprendido acercándote o alejándote de la pantalla al navegar o jugar en el computador?			X
¿Cambias rápidamente de una página a otra al navegar?		X	
¿Golpeas fuertemente el teclado?		X	
8.- ¿En qué te fijas más cuando navegas?. Marca sólo una alternativa			
-Las Fotos o imágenes			
-Los Títulos		X	
-El Texto Escrito			
No Sabe- No Responde			

Figura 5. Modelo pretest para entrevistas.

Luego de realizar las entrevistas, se infirió de las entrevistas al grupo más joven (16-18 años) que las personas de mayor complejidad cognitiva (que implica manejo de varios espacios paralelos, tales como escuchar música, los afiches, revisar el teléfono móvil) no tienen necesariamente un tipo de comportamiento de usuario del Metro. Esto es, pueden ser Agrimensores, donde evalúan su comportamiento a un análisis de la realidad de varias variables, lo que va junto con una focalización de tres objetos paralelos (música, chatear, afiches), pero al mismo tiempo algunos no manifiestan su complejidad cognitiva en analizar lo real, sino que se comportan como Sonámbulos y toda la complejidad cognitiva se reenvía al uso del celular. La complejidad media permite por lo menos dos o tres espacios cognitivos que a veces se transforman en un comportamiento Dinámico, consistente en evaluar un principio presupuesto de calidad óptima del Metro y sus afiches, es decir, desplazamiento eficiente y a menor tiempo. Al mismo tiempo esta complejidad media puede transformarse en un Agrimensor, consistente en análisis de la realidad y de los afiches del Metro. Por otra parte, la complejidad media permite a varios sujetos ver distintos espacios del Metro, sin embargo, siguen siendo Dinámicos, es decir, sin una evaluación del uso del Metro real. Lo importante es destacar la relación entre la complejidad cognitiva y lo que se realiza, y el descubrimiento de que la alta complejidad cognitiva puede desembocar en un comportamiento Agrimensor o Sonámbulo, según su focalización en lo real o en el celular. Incluso, en una de las entrevistas se encontró que la complejidad cognitiva tiene un correlato con la focalización de afiches, señaléticas, etc. (todo el espacio del Metro), pero el uso del Metro mismo es automático y funciona como un usuario Dinámico, es decir, un sólo espacio cognitivo. Por otra parte, todos los usuarios de 16-18 años focalizan varios espacios cognitivos (teléfono móvil, chatear, escuchar música, etc). O bien a través del uso del teléfono móvil, y desde allí se integra a varios espacios. En definitiva, en esta generación predomina una relación con el espacio que se puede situar en otro espacio, tal como lo plantea Marc Augé (2012): existe un lugar y un no-lugar al mismo tiempo.

En el caso del grupo 40-55 años, se debe reiterar que el instrumento referido a la simplicidad cognitiva empleado es eminentemente referido a los espacios de la navegación por internet. La mayoría de esos usuarios no son asiduos a estas redes. Los sujetos en apariencia resultan cognitivamente simples, pues algunos utilizan escasamente internet. Sin embargo, sí perciben la realidad externa y observan a los pasajeros del Metro, las obras de arte, y se comportan como Agrimensor. Si bien dentro de este grupo se encontraron variaciones respecto a la relación con las plataformas digitales, el grupo de 40-55 años se caracteriza por desarrollar varias actividades a la vez. Sin embargo, a diferencia del grupo más joven, estas actividades son realizadas en la realidad concreta.

Esto significa que la convergencia tecnológica es una forma de funcionamiento generalizada en la sociedad, sin embargo, no todos los consumidores la viven. La generación de 40-55 años está más en el lugar de la realidad que en el no lugar de internet, y como están en la realidad, pueden ser simples o complejos. A diferencia del grupo 16-18 años, todos tienen en común la presencia de un no lugar, de internet, del celular. Sin embargo, no se infiere de allí que todos tengan el mismo comportamiento. Algunos ven internet como la vida misma, y son Agrimensores. Otros ven internet en el teléfono móvil de forma compleja, pero se comportan como Dinámicos y simples con respecto a su operar en la vida cotidiana. Luego, debiésemos diferenciar a estos dos consumidores, teniendo en cuenta que resultan polarmente diferentes.

#### **4. A modo de conclusión**

De lo anterior se desprende la importancia de los pasajeros de tipo Vagabundo en estación Hospital Sótero del Río. Es decir, pasajeros adultos (40-55 años) que se esperaba que percibieran menor cantidad de espacios, sin embargo, estaban percibiendo toda la estación, a diferencia de los más jóvenes que estaban ensimismados.



Tal vez, la consideración más relevante de esta investigación sea que esta convergencia tecnológica nos hace vivir en medio de plataformas disímiles: afiches, señalética, etcétera; al mismo tiempo, whatsapp, redes sociales, teléfonos móviles. El uso de las generaciones hacia estas plataformas es distinto. Como se evidenció en las entrevistas, los adultos tienden a observar más la realidad, pero pueden ser simples o complejos. En cambio, los más jóvenes pueden situarse en espacios de no lugar, y ver algunos la realidad externa y otros no. Por lo tanto, no hay relación directa entre el comportamiento de los pasajeros y su nivel de complejidad cognitiva.

La observación de los pasajeros del Metro de Santiago de Chile nos ofrece pensar en la convergencia tecnológica actual desde otra perspectiva: la resignificación de los espacios, o de lo que hasta ahora se conoce como “no lugares” de Augé (2012). Se requiere profundizar en las transformaciones de los espacios, o, mejor dicho, nuestra percepción de los espacios, como consecuencia de la instalación de estas nuevas tecnologías. No sólo cabe preguntarse por esta modificación en la percepción de los espacios, sino también en esta división que continúa haciéndose respecto a lo “real” y lo “virtual”. Luego de observar la interacción de los pasajeros del Metro de Santiago, también es necesario cuestionar esta diferenciación. Los más jóvenes parecen Sonámbulos ensimismados en sus celulares, pero dentro de esos aparatos se encuentra un mundo, permite estar en numerosos espacios a la vez. A estas alturas cabe preguntarnos si esa forma de estar es virtual o real, pues pareciera que estos nuevos espacios tienen tantas implicancias en la vida de los sujetos como cualquier hecho que suceda fuera de Internet.

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**FROM THE SESSION  
“SEMIOTICS AND  
CONSUMPTION”**

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# BRAND SHAPING MECHANISMS: CAMPER AND MORITZ AS CASE STUDIES OF SIGNIFICATION ADVERTISING

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## **Abstract**

In today's advertising we are witnessing the inflation of the imaginary content in the semiotic production of brands. Such process needs to be understood in the framework of the evolution of signification advertising and the increasing virtualization process of late capitalism. The aim of this paper is to conceptualize and exemplify a renewed semiotic production of brands which uses different shaping mechanisms: a) the use of several typical and atypical media and interfaces of advertising, b) the brand's narrativization and c) the embodiment of the brand through consumers' activity. In this way — as we can notice by analyzing the relevant case studies of two well-known Spanish brands, Camper and Moritz — today's advertising goes beyond the screen, manages to create spaces and events and meets the need for materializing the imaginary content of the increasingly virtualized brands.

## **1. Introduction and aims**

A little over a decade ago, Ries and Ries (2002) predicted the fall and the end of advertising (and the rise of public relations) and Zyman (2002) pointed out the end of advertising, at least in the way it exists today. One year later, Cappel (2003) predicted that the escalating battle for consumers' attention would require a greater emphasis on below-the-line media.

In any case, at present, the Web 2.0 tools and Big Data foster building brand imagery through a plurality of media which have brought about major changes in the advertising formats and strategies. Currently the advertising activities used to build a brand include the use of microsites in social media, mobile marketing, digital signage, guerrilla marketing, event marketing and hybrid advertising techniques such as adver-games. For all these mechanisms, consumers have become a key element in building or co-creating brand value (brand equity).

Therefore, the data from advertising investment studies show that the current situation is characterized by changes in the distribution of advertising. Traditional media does not hold the

monopoly anymore, but quite the opposite. The increased investment in alternative media to traditional advertising and the Internet is giving rise to the emergence of a new multi-platform media ecosystem characterized by the search for new contact points between brands and consumers.

The aim of this paper is to conceptualize and exemplify the brand shaping mechanisms used by two popular Spanish brands such as Camper and Moritz, as these mechanisms can be considered exemplary models of the current tools for building brand imagery. The methodology used is that of case study, which means that the objective is not to analyse in detail the commercial or marketing policies of these brands, but rather to understand the practices illustrating what could be called “brand shaping mechanisms”.

## 2. A brief description of some brand imagery shaping mechanisms

In today's advertising we are witnessing the inflation of the imaginary content in the semiotic production of brands (Vidal 2012). Such a process needs to be understood in the framework of the evolution of signification advertising (Caro 1993, 1994, 2010; Vidal 2017) and the increasing virtualization process of late capitalism.

Therefore, the mainly informative and product-oriented referential advertising has given way to signification advertising, which focuses on building brands' imagery. At present this type of advertising has resulted in new forms of advertising which have minimized even more the material content of a product, maximizing the brand's imagery. Thus, in the new forms of signification advertising brand equity is created through a renewed semiotic production of brands which are increasingly virtualized and in which emotional and experiential factors play a predominant and specific role.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the product is irrelevant or that the brand is only a pipe dream, as one might imagine; on the contrary, this entails a new scenario in which the imaginary signification of a brand's imagery needs to be represented or materialized (Vidal 2015).

Consequently, virtualizing a brand means densifying it through a renewed semiotic production which uses different shaping mechanisms (Vidal 2016) — which are briefly described in this chapter by analyzing the relevant case studies of Camper and Moritz —, the essential points of which consist in: a) the use of several typical and atypical media and interfaces of advertising; b) the brand's narrativization; and c) the embodiment of the brand through consumers' activity.

As previously stated, these three shaping mechanisms seek to densify a brand through its materialization. In addition, they represent invisibility and non-recognition techniques which prevent consumers from identifying the way in which a brand's imagery has been built. Thus, these mechanisms are used to lead to communicative closure in order to maintain the referential illusion between the product and the brand. Therefore, the aim is to hide the logic behind the semiotic production of a brand from consumers and to conceal its constructive and fictional nature by getting around the fact that once a brand's imagery is dematerialized it refers to nothing but itself.

As the analysis of the case studies show, in order to fulfil the densification and invisibility tasks, the advertising activity focuses strategically on the development of techniques which allow consumers' active involvement in the semiotic production of a brand. The main strategy is to try to make consumers and brands become partners as a result of a projective activity, since this creates an experiential adhesion of the consumer to the brand's imaginary world.

Furthermore, in order to establish a relationship between a brand's imagery and its product which would foster, support and lead to an experiential adhesion, the shaping mechanisms that have been mentioned seek to create an experience as “genuine” as possible. Hence, the new developments in signification advertising, i.e. the new forms of advertising resulting from a renewed semiotic production of brands, do not only pursue the commercialization of experiences

but also the fulfilment of a more complex task. This task entails creating spaces and brand stories in order to foster consumers' involvement and densifying and hiding the nature of the semiotic production from consumers. This is carried out by creating "genuine" experiences for brands which are increasingly detached from the object they represent but which need to be linked to it.

In this way, today's advertising activity, which is precisely a development at the heart of signification advertising, which goes beyond the screen and manages to create spaces and events, meets the need for materializing the imaginary content of increasingly virtualized brands. This is done, in turn, by offering consumers a "genuine" experience which is ultimately an undeniable simulation of itself.

These shaping mechanisms intend to intensify the use of emotional and/or experiential elements in order to make up for the minimization of the product materiality which goes hand in hand with the maximization of the brand's imagery, characteristic of the brands' virtualization within late capitalism.

### 3. Introduction to the case studies

In order to exemplify the mechanisms described in the previous section what follows is the analysis of two brands: Moritz and Camper. In spite of the fact that the methodology used is the case study, the aim is not to analyse in detail the commercial or marketing policies of these brands, but rather to understand more deeply the practices illustrating at a general level — but taking into account the nuances each brand presents and which are described below — the three shaping mechanisms described in the previous section.

First of all, it is important to take into account that these three shaping mechanisms are not mutually exclusive, given that what they represent is precisely a taxonomy whose elements are mutually compatible and accumulative. In practice these mechanisms are not clearly differentiated and, therefore, it is common to find campaigns in which it is difficult to discern each of them. This is mainly due to the fact that Web 2.0 tools offer a wide range of possibilities but also because the 360-degree campaigns are becoming increasingly complex. Thus, although the case studies include these three brand shaping mechanisms, the present section has endeavoured to highlight the most significant feature which distinguishes each mechanism from the others.

In any case, the following cases exemplify how to shape a brand effectively. The analysed brands illustrate the so-called new developments in signification advertising, in which brand equity is not attached to the "intrinsic" features of a product anymore. It is attached to the brand imagery and has become a central and decisive element of the consumption experience — which is even based on it — regardless of the fact that the term experience might not be included in the advertising communication literature.

What stands out in both cases is the constructive function the advertising discourse has, as it charges the brands with signification, and the different forms it takes in the implementation of the different brand imagery shaping mechanisms.

Thus, as the case studies have shown, it can be stated that in the framework of signification advertising the process of brand building has taken a step further with its abstraction and, therefore, it is identified with the consumption experience. This experience, in turn, while becoming independent of the product materiality, has expanded and spread to different media and interfaces, other than the screen, in order to take shape through several brand shaping mechanisms.

#### 3.1. Moritz

In general, all above-mentioned shaping mechanisms are used by Moritz (<http://moritz.com/en>) in the process of brand building. However, the first one prevails and, therefore, the main mecha-

nism used consists of creating places which are used as physical anchors to the brand's imagery. These places are locations where consumers can have paradigmatic brand experiences. The most prominent location is the Fàbrica Moritz Barcelona (the Old Brewery), the brand's flagship, which was restored by the renowned French architect Jen Nouvel (<http://moritz.com/en/section/fbrica-moritz-barcelona>). The Fàbrica Moritz is a place representing experiences related to the brand, where presentations of cultural events are hosted and where there is a restaurant. The gastronomic director is Jordi Vilà, who was awarded a Michelin star, and the menu combines traditional and contemporary elements.

Moreover, Moritz organises many different events, such as a tour of Barcelona driving the vintage car Seat 600 and the Moritz Touring Bar, which consists of a tour of four places in Barcelona (the music festival Primavera Sound's shop, the Surf House in La Barceloneta, the tapas bar Lolita Tapería and the pub 33/45 in El Raval neighbourhood) and a dinner at the Brewery.

On the other hand, the second shaping mechanism is used by the brand in the following cases: first of all, the brand uses the story its founder's journey (<http://moritz.com/en/section/our-history>). In 1851 a twenty-year-old boy left his Alsatian hometown, Pfaffenhoffe, to travel to Barcelona, a city which was becoming industrially well-known. This young man, whose name was Louis Moritz Trautmann, soon started working with a small brewery in El Raval, which he would already own in 1856. In 1864 he inaugurated the first big brewery in Barcelona, located on the Ronda Sant Antoni.

Secondly, the second shaping mechanism is present in the refurbishment of the building, as many original elements were preserved and restored. This can be seen on the brand's website, in the pictures showing the old, first brewery.

Thirdly, the way in which the brewing process and characteristics are described on the website is another instance of the use of the second shaping mechanism. Similarly, Moritz' labels and old posters show the brand's communication history, which is used to exploit emotions of nostalgia as it is a sign of evolution.

Finally, another innovative tool for brand narrativization is the interactive multimedia book available on their website, which takes us on a "journey through the history of the human being and one of the most international beverage: the beer". This book relates the history of beer to universal history and includes a historical atlas which combines the 20<sup>th</sup> century milestones with the history of the brand.

The use of the third shaping mechanism is also clear, as consumers can participate in the events hosted at the Fàbrica Moritz live or via social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or Flickr. Furthermore, at the moment the brand's website is being updated and it promises new features.

### 3.2. Camper

Camper ([http://www.camper.com/en\\_US](http://www.camper.com/en_US)) is a design and innovation-focused brand which was awarded the Spanish National Design Award in 1998 and has managed to combine local values with a global perspective. The name of the brand means 'peasant', which highlights its rural origin, its rural production environment and the use of traditional techniques. In this sense, Camper combines rural and urban features and stands out because of its high quality and comfortable products with a handcrafted look.

Camper combines the use of the three shaping mechanisms. The second shaping mechanism is very significant on the brand's website, since a large part of it is devoted to the brand's history and origins ([http://www.camper.com/en\\_US/content/history](http://www.camper.com/en_US/content/history)), to their history of graphic communication, to present their designs throughout the history and to exhibit their communication campaigns.



The first shaping mechanism is represented by the product itself, given that it is perfectly recognisable, and by the relevance the design of their stores is given. Camper materialises its brand imagery by integrating the space and the brand into the stores' design in order to create multiple store formats which can be moved or extended to other spaces, such as hotels or restaurants, which in principle are not related to the brand.

To be more precise, Camper has different store formats ([http://www.camper.com/en\\_US/together](http://www.camper.com/en_US/together)). Camper Together is a model of collaboration with leading international designers (such as Campana Brothers, Marie Blaisse and Jasper Morrison among others) to create "exclusive products and unique stores", as stated on their website ([http://www.camper.com/en\\_US/together](http://www.camper.com/en_US/together)). It is about facing up to "a new international reality, which requires the ability of using designs to integrate different cultures and creative experiences into one project, and an enterprise which can communicate and launch exclusive initiatives targeted at a select global market".

On the other hand, the second and third shaping mechanisms prevail in "Walk in progress" and "Info-shop". The "Info-shop" concept, created by the designer Martí Guixé in 2003, makes it possible for the store to become a publication creating therefore an analogy between the store and a magazine. According to their website, "the idea behind this concept is that design elements can be used to send messages and that content is as valuable as design. Thus, information becomes decoration and decoration becomes information". Therefore, the content is found in the elements of their stores' interior design, such as the walls, the floor, graphic materials or furniture. The design of the London "Info-shop" focuses on the *somera*, the typical donkey from Mallorca, which is in danger of extinction. Thus, the idea is to raise awareness about a local issue, which relates the audience to the brand's origin.

The "Walk in progress" shops, in turn, represent the idea of creating temporary, provisional and interactive design which allows the store to open and trade before the definitive design and decoration are complete. The store is decorated with a central table made from shoe boxes. "The walls are painted white with a 'imagine a better world' title to invite the customers to write and draw their messages, ideas, dreams, impressions etc. emphasising the interactive nature of the 'Walk in progress' concept". As shown, "Walk in progress" is a type of store which allows the interaction between consumers and the brand, which proves the use of the first brand shaping mechanisms.

In short, the brand imagery is visible in different supports, such as the communication campaigns, the products and the stores. Moreover, the brand's hotels, called Casa Camper (<http://www.casacamper.com/default-en.html>), also show the use of the first shaping mechanism.

Finally, there are three events which exemplify the use of the third shaping mechanism: the "#WHEREISTAND" competition (<http://blog.camper.com/whereistand-your-own-camper-moments/>) and the "Camper walks" (<http://blog.camper.com/camper-walks/>) and "Camper Love Day" (<http://blog.camper.com/2nd-camper-loveday-celebration/>) events. The first one consisted in consumers sharing their Camper moments uploading pictures in which they are wearing Camper shoes. The winner was chosen according to the originality, creativity of the picture or how spectacular the location was. The second event consisted of a tour of different areas of London to get to know the design industry by visiting design studios and talking to designers. Lastly, the third event asks "Camper's fan", as the brand itself calls them, to bring objects which were inspired by Camper shoes to a previously specified store in order to be able to win a pair of shoes. Likewise, the competition continues on social media (Twitter, Instagram, Flickr or Facebook), where consumers can upload a photograph and the author of the most voted one wins a pair of shoes as well.

Thus, the idea is to create a recognition effect similar to the one created by Bench's campaign, Made Yourself, since consumers can somehow identify with users. Hence, as the home page of the "#WHEREISTAND" competition says: "Do you fancy doing it? Take a closer look at our

campaign pictures. There you go. Boys and girls like you wearing their new Camper shoes on the streets around the world”.

#### 4. Conclusions

Building brand imagery has become the central task of a kind of advertising which has extended to new types of media and supports. The construction of the brand imagery of Camper and Moritz — that is to say, the way that semiotic production of brand equity is carried out — is characterized by the use of multi-platform advertising practices synthesized in three shaping mechanisms: a) the use of distinct media and/or interfaces that may or may not be used for advertising; b) the use of narrative; and c) the embodiment of the brand through consumer activity.

Hence, we can see that both brands attach great importance to the design of a product — i.e. to its formal layout and to how it is advertised at the point of sale (first mechanism). In addition, the brand's storytelling is the core for both brands and so they make their story known through interviews to the designers, who explain the origin and creation of all the lamps they sell, and videos on YouTube or on specific sections of their websites (second mechanism). Likewise, both brands encourage consumers — usually using Web 2.0 — to generate communicative content or to customize the product they are going to buy.

It is true that, in practice, such mechanisms, which are based on increasingly complex 360° campaigns, are difficult to identify accurately. Nevertheless, they represent the way in which the most innovative brands are built and in which these mask a simulated dialogicity and consumers' engagement through push strategies.

In conclusion, the argument put forward in this paper is that brands are trying to systematically incorporate those mechanisms in order to adapt to a new scenario marked by the availability of tools and strategies characterized by the use of multi-platform advertising which have gained more importance than the media used in traditional advertising.

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# SEMIOTICS, BRANDING AND CONSUMPTION: STREET SIGNS AND DIVERSITY ON THE CATWALK

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## **Abstract**

The paper aims to explore the contact points between the areas of semiotics, the study of brands and consumption from the analysis of the Laboratório Fantasma brand fashion show during the São Paulo Fashion Week 2016. Considering the fact that the brand is owned by the Brazilian rapper Emicida, it represents aesthetic and discursive traits of rap as a cultural and media product, a fact previously unheard of in an event of such magnitude. The fashion show, in its costumes, scenographic and sound dimensions, carries sign elements present in the rapper's artistic production, linked to ethnic-social diversities and established patterns of beauty in the fashion world. The theoretical-methodological reference privileges both the Peircean semiotic in its dynamic vision of the process of signification and the Greimasian semiotics in its focus on the generative stracts of meaning, contemplating the understanding of brands as media (Trindade and Perez, 2014) and anthropological postulates that weave an approximation between culture and consumption (McCracken, 2003). With this, it intends to identify how the manifestations of the brand express trends of the contemporary fashion and culture, evidencing the importance of the consumption in the process of identities construction.

## **1. Introduction**

The current scene of Brazilian rap, represented by the so-called “new generation”, has aroused our interest in the recent phenomenon of groups and artists that began to manifest not only for their music and audiovisual content, but also through consumer goods. In recent years, these have gained space and started to compete with their own music in importance within rapper's

career development strategies, composing a range of (sub) products among which stand out clothing brands and accessories intended for their fan community. The consumption of these brands and its publicity strategies seem to favor a notion of belonging to a group among the fans, reinforcing the need to deepen our study on the cultural and identity mediation of consumption, from the understanding of brands as media (Trindade and Perez 2014) and the sense links between brands and their consumers (*idem*). The products, in some cases conceived under the direct interference of artists, indicate identity and symbolic dimensions as a possibility of perception of their cultural and media dynamics.

One of the greatest examples of the current rap scene to act commercially in this direction is the company Laboratório Fantasma, owned by rapper Emicida, who has invested in the production, marketing and advertising of its product independently. The magnitude of both company and brand growth, unprecedented in the Brazilian rap scene, was accompanied by the success of Emicida and the rise of the artist worldwide. In a certain extent, it confirms the transcendence in the categorization of rap only as a musical genre, as Teperman (2015: 57) suggests “Thinking rap as just a musical genre seems to be reducing it to just one of its dimensions. Certainly, it’s not the only style of music to play beyond music. Perhaps the peculiarity of rap is explicitly claiming the fact that “it is in the world”“.

For us, one of the most obvious ways rap is currently used to claim the fact of “being in the world” is through consumption. To this, in its different dimensions, other definitions and functions are assigned by the currents of scientific thought, whose approaches are necessary to better understand our object of study. From a socio-cultural perspective, which also contemplates an anthropological view, in the analysis undertaken here we propose a discussion about consumption in its link with the formation of the identities of groups and individuals in the context of postmodernity. Therefore, we use a referential that favors a conception of consumption as a creator of meanings, instead of reduce it to a disintegrating phenomenon.

Faced with the postmodern reality, exchanges that allow contact between groups and individuals who share different repertoires and systems of meanings among themselves are established, forming networks of meaning from the social and cultural universes.

We believe that the articulation between the theoretical bases of the three strands proposed here - semiotics, branding and consumption - is capable of broadly contemplate the characteristics of our research object. Thus, the idea of consumption as a producer of meanings permeates all the analysis and is supported by the contributions of material culture theorists who guide their investigations in the same direction. The centrality of consumption in the postmodern society is assumed based on anthropological notes and the study of the meaning of objects for groups and individuals, which guide relations of belonging-exclusion.

## **2. Consumption in the postmodernity**

Postmodernity has been shaped by the increase of consumption as a regulatory phenomenon of political and cultural actions, which composes a scenario where relations between consumers and consumer goods acquire peculiar traits. The material goods overload in contemporary metropolitan societies implies that new theoretical approaches are adopted on the meanings and symbologies involved in consumption activities. Since perspectives based on a logic that counterposes production and consumption are no longer much more profitable in the sense of explaining the mechanisms that lead people to consume the goods that are part of their daily lives.

Thus, it is necessary to overcome this logic of opposition through the theoretical articulation between some branches of the social sciences that allows an apprehension of the material world beyond the mereously objective factors that precedes the acquisition of products. Thus,

we intend to extend an analysis of consumption in its complexity by encompassing its potential as meaning producer instead of viewing it as a merely disaggregating process, evidencing how it can be used to communicate the subjectivity of individuals and groups.

Moreover, Baccega (2009), in his explanations about how the interrelationships involving communication and consumption in the cultural plot take place, highlight the role of the active subject, based on Marx's considerations about a complementarity between production and consumption to demonstrate that both "are two sides of the same coin" (p.113). For Marx, who is often mistakenly attributed a negative judgment on consumption, "The production is immediately consumption; consumption is immediately production. Each one is immediately its opposite" (Marx 1992: 8 *apud* Baccega 2009: 113). From this assertion, the author indicates that production constitutes the great mediator of consumption by creating materials that serve as raw material for the manufacture of the object, while, likewise, consumption is also the great mediator of production, since they are created for the products or subjects for which they are products. In order to clarify this interdependence between consumption and production, Baccega uses the concept of *sign* and the relationship of dependence that it establishes with the social life to materialize itself.

Two faces of the same coin, like the sign, the product only receives its finish in consumption, that is, the concretization, the meaning of the product is in consumption, just as the realization of the verbal sign - the word - lies in the dynamics of social life. Otherwise, the product is no more than itself, it is not effective within the social (2009: 114).

Miller (2007) provides us a valuable insight into the possibilities of viewing consumption from the perspective of contemporary material culture studies of anthropological roots. By extrapolating conceptions that frame consumption as the destruction of material culture, largely responsible for giving it an evil aura, the anthropological perspective shows in what degree consumption can be used to understand society.

Still in the cultural perspective, McCracken (2003), in his new approaches touching on the symbolic character of the goods and activities of consumption, assumes that it would be shaped, directed and constrained in all its aspects by cultural considerations. Drawing on the anthropological postulates of Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, the author weaves an approximation between culture and consumption that helps us to understand the importance of consumer objects to postmodern society.

Consumer objects are part of what Douglas and Isherwood called the "visible part" of culture (1978: 66). They help to give ideas of culture, which are by their very nature intangible, a certain concreteness. When the culture is realized in the form of consumer objects, it becomes more stable and consistent. It is removed, in Miles Richardson's words, from "whirlwind and flow of opinions, attitudes, and ideas" and is given to it a new substance and authority (1974: 4). In other words, goods create a kind of ballast that works against the cultural whirlwind (McCracken 2003: 137).

The author also indicates the existence of a traditional trajectory that guides the movement of meaning, starting with the culturally constituted world and being transferred to the good of consumption, which later moves away from the good of consumption and is transferred to the consumer. Thus, the mobile nature implies that both - consumers and consumer goods - are designated as intermediary stations of meaning.



In the same direction, Douglas and Isherwood (2006) emphasize the need for a metaphorical understanding that would help us come up with a more precise idea of the motives that drive consumers to buy goods. The authors affirm that it is fundamental to deny the reductionist logic of the idealizing economic theory of a rational individual, which in practice they consider an impossible abstraction of social life. The retraction of this logic reinforces the importance of the transformations that the individuals provoke when they share the consumption through the purchase and the use of the goods in their daily life. Consequently, it can be seen that although goods are neutral in themselves, they are social in their usage, which gives them the possibility of being used as “fences or bridges” (Douglas and Isherwood 2006: 34), their capacity to establish links and to play the role of mediators of social relations through their use as elements of distinction or belonging.

### 3. Branding, culture and identity

The brands seek to express values, identities and images of products through actions and manifestations. Such actions and manifestations can be presented in a variety of ways, for example in print media advertisements, audiovisual content, merchandising actions - such as shop showcases, shelves, among others - and, in our case, through a fashion parade. The common point is that all of them are aimed at generating positive bonds, pleasant associations and taking the potential consumer to the act of buying and using the product or service.

That said, in order for brands to convey their values, ideals and aspirations, brand managers need to anticipate the signals that society emanates - in other words, managers must be immersed in contemporary culture and trends. That is, they need to pay attention to the movements and values that society aspires to. Brands, through a well-coordinated management, need to anticipate the information and prepare its message, its communication, so that it meets its target audience. For this, it is necessary that such a message be result of what is sought so much and that the consumers seek the brand to its completeness.

Hall (2004) indicates that when consumers consume the same goods, they create “shared identities”, even though they are spatially and temporally distant from each other, a logic that we extend here to the dynamic involving brands and their target audiences. According to the author, this raises transformations in social life, but does not imply an absolute homogenization of identities, since the exaltation of difference instigates the search for alterity in local cultural and ethnic groups, articulating the global with the local, characteristics that are present in the Lab Yasuke collection, as we will explore later on.

The possible worlds of brands offer the individual organized, pertinent and attractive constructions of meaning. In this way, their relation with the brands is permeated by symbolic systems that helps to think the postmodern world, whose fragmented and multiple nature demands the construction of a coherent and unitarian world view by the subject facing discrepant and often contradictory experiences. Therefore, the brand stands out as an important element of social cohesion, fulfilling a very relevant role in the construction of individual and collective identity, as explained by Semprini (2006). The author lists some of the most relevant characteristics of contemporary brands, among which we highlight:

Its omnipresence in public space, its ability to mark the symbolic and the collective, its propensity to move public opinion and attract the attention of the media, its functions as identity intermediary or collective flag shift the mark of the only sphere of consumption and project at the very heart of social behaviors, the logics of exchange, the mechanisms of identity construction of individuals and groups (2006: 322).

Perez (2004) defines the brand as a symbolic and affective connection established between an organization, its material, intangible and aspirational supply and the people for whom it is intended, highlighting some characteristics that guide our analysis.

The brand is a kind of “machine” of producing meanings and, in this sense, operates in the construction of a particular social locus. By using and consuming a certain product of a certain brand, we are positioning ourselves socially, we are stating who we are, what we like, what we value, and so on. (2004: 15)

In order to show that the consumption of a product and a brand goes far beyond mere acquisition, Trindade and Perez (2014) adopt the term “sense links” to describe the relationships between consumers and brands based on the sense of belonging, pertinence and affectivity in people’s lives. The same authors also provide another important concept about a vision of the cultural and identity mediation of consumption from the understanding of brands as media and their natural relational, semiotic and evolutionary essence, proposing a theory of the sense links between brands and their consumers.

#### 4. Semiotics prints

The analysis of the LabYasuke collection parade will highlight both the traits of Peircian semiotics in its dynamic view of the signification process and those of Greimasian semiotics in its focus on the generative strata of meaning, in the attempt to map the set of meanings and the brand and its potential role in the construction of group identities. In the process, we will give special attention to the identification of street signs and diversity in order to fulfill the purpose of the article, which, however, prevents us from further analytical deepening when we consider the extent of the content and the restricted space that we have.

In this course, Peircean semiotics will have as aid the themes and figures of Greimasian semiotics. In identifying such representations, the signic potential that will be analyzed aims to verify, as already suggested, if the brand is inspired by the tendencies - understood as social values - and how the brand expresses the production of meaning through the signs generated by the themes and figures.

Santaella (2008) explains that the semiotic analysis of the Peircian line allows us to explore the interior of the messages in three aspects: first - qualities and sensoriality of their internal properties (colors, lines, shapes); second - message in its particularity, in its here and now, or in its context; third - to what the message has of general, conventional, cultural.

In the face of reference, semiotics allows us to understand what the messages indicate, what they refer to or apply to. Three aspects: first, suggestive, metaphorical; second, denotative power, ability to indicate something that is outside the message; third, to represent abstract and conventional, culturally shared ideas.

Finally, in the face of interpretation, in relation to the interpretant, the semiotic analysis enables us to examine the effects that the messages can awaken in the receiver. Three types: emotional, more or less defined feeling; second, reactive effects, the receiver is led to act on the message received; third, mental, when the message leads the receiver to reflect.

As for Greimasian semiotics, it presents the generative path of meaning that consists of three levels - the deep (or fundamental), the narrative and the discursive. The attention of our analysis will be focused on the latter, in order to identify themes and figures that act on the discourse, which will enable us to understand deeper meanings not apprehensible in a more superficial reading.

The thematic texts have the function of explaining a reality, establishing relations of semantic coherence, which lead us to an explanation. The figurativization, in turn, has to do with “figures of content that cover the abstract thematic paths and attribute to them traces of sensorial coating” (Barros 2008: 72). Thus, we will see how the figurative texts used in the Lab Yasuke’s parade pretend to create a reality effect in an attempt to recreate the world through their figures, that is, how they describe or represent actions.



Figure 1. The Lab Yasuke collection.

The themes and figures will be important in our analysis in the ones the themes represent the trends in which the brand is inspired to transmit the values of its identity to the consumers. The figures are the symbolic manifestations of these themes in their potentiality, which give concreteness to the abstract themes. It is in an attempt to represent trends on the catwalk that the figures emerge, enabling consumers to identify with what is communicated.

### 5. Lab Yasuke: Street signs and diversity on the catwalk

The imagery, costume and sound construction of the Lab Yasuke collection is very rich in the production of meaning when aligned with the repertoire of the consumers for which it is intended. By committing to the signs, fans of rapper Emicida and consumers of the brand can establish strong links between images, music, costumes, speech and the ideology of the rapper inspired by São Paulo cosmopolitan reality. Therefore, we propose the analysis of the signic manifestations present in the parade punctuating some elements that give force to the brand. In advance, we deem it pertinent to quote here the proposal of the event (<http://texbrasil.com.br/en/focus-of-42nd-spfw-is-transformation/>):

Transformation, transgression, transition. In its 42nd edition, São Paulo Fashion Week draws attention once again to the scenario of changes typical of the beginning of the century. They are new challenges, new ways of doing things, other opportunities. The prefix trans- translates the idea of going beyond. It serves to provoke us. Alone or in association with other words, it is the mark of this edition.

Closely linked to it, the concept of the Lab Yasuke collection is:

The prints in this collection were influenced by two sources: Japan and Africa. From Japan, we have brought graphics, fonts, geometry, clean strokes, contrast of black and white and minimalism of the applications of these images in the clothing parts. From Africa came the stylized prints from the pattern of the traditional fabrics of Angola, the Samakaka. We re-read fragments of Samakaka's drawing, creating new, unique and original designs that bring an African identity to our collection, in a modern and contemporary way.

Yasuke was a legendary black samurai from Africa who inspired Emicida and the creative director João Pimenta in the development of the collection. The character evokes the black person as a warrior, whose struggle is to overcome hardships such as racism, poverty and lack of opportunities. Such themes are recurrent in the artistic production of the rapper.

The generative stracts of meaning are based on the lyrics of the poem sung by Emicida during the parade, highlighting the themes and figures explored in his speech. The first Emicida verse says, "It was always a chain break, no kidding", brings as a figure the chains, referring to the theme of deprivation of liberty and slavery. The lack of black people's representativeness on television is presented as a theme in the verse "I know it's an unfair war, the screen frustrates", where the television (or the screen) represents an important means of identification, since the consumption of cultural products acts directly in the identity construction of subjects. Emicida talks about the remnants of slavery and places itself as a representative of the black people saying that "I saw loads of loads of centennial, daily, several cheating/ I want to tell you this 400 years ago". The theme of slavery is reinforced by the expression "400 years" which was the approximate duration of modern slavery in Brazil, the last country in the world to abolish it, period in which the blacks suffered numerous abuses.

When Emicida says, "Being free have it's price in a world where black people scares/ Wanna know? Since a long time I don't ask how much things costs", he wants to explain that being free is "expensive" for black people, but also says he has not cared about the cost of things since a long time. Despite of this, he is aware that his presence as a free man still frightens, suggesting that racism remains although his social ascension. Therefore, here we have again the theme of liberty, which is strongly related, with the possession of money, which means that Emicida reached a new social level.

The theme of the importance of collectivity as a way to fight against racism and prejudice is reiterated by the verses "People are like words/ They only make sense if together with the others". The comparison between the words of a text and the union of people around a common ideal fulfills the figurative function, thinking that both a word taken in isolation and a subject alone have less potential for expression and change than they would have if they were together with other.

Finally, in the last lines the rapper says that "I did with the catwalk what they did with the jail / and with the favela / I filled it with black people". Here we have the theme of freedom once again, since both the prison and the favela caused blacks deprivation of access to other spaces, evidencing the racial and social segregation caused by them. The context reveals a clear message to those who maintain racist attitudes, suggesting that black people who were previously thrown into slums and jails are now free and occupy the catwalk of one of the biggest events in world fashion, supposing a kind of elegant revenge. From this, once the main themes and figures have been identified by means of Greimasian semiotic notes, we will present some signs that help us to understand how the sense construction takes place, especially those related to diversity and the streets.





Figure 2. Plus size model wears a samurai kimono.



Figure 3. Model wears "I love quebrada" t-shirt.





**Figure 4.** Model wears “Ubuntu” t-shirt and cap.

The colors work as signs of ethnic diversity, considering that the Lab Yasuke’s collection colors are red, black and white. These colors form the Brazilian ethnic matrix: black (African), white (European) and red (Amerindian). In the song sung during the parade, the rapper claims to have gathered all the colors, from where a rainbow arose. Thus, the intention of giving an aura of ethnic diversity to the brand becomes even more evident. The rainbow is also a sign of the gender diversity all around the world. The red, associated with white, can refer to Japan’s flag colors. Red also represents the color of *Orixá Xangô* in Umbanda, an Afro-Brazilian religion, which is the *orixá* of justice and has the dominion of the fire and the thunder. In mythology, *Xangô* appears as the one who was born to reign, conquer and solidify. White is the color of *Oxalá*, which represents the *orixá* who created the world and the human specie, invoked when seeking support in difficulties.

The genderless notion appears as gender diversity signs, expressed by clothing historically attributed to the opposite sex in Brazil. It is the case of the model who wears a samurai kimono - a figure usually represented by a man - and the famous singer and Brazilian actor Seu Jorge, who wears a pleated skirt. With this, the parade evokes the genderless idea, something noticed in the latest world fashion trends.

Signs of fashion aesthetic standards breaking are one of the highlights of the parade, represented by plus size models, which were cheered by the audience. The choice raises the question of the aesthetic standards in the fashion world, which usually favors only extremely thin models. The option extends to the of the brand sizes catalog, which starts to sell extra-large pieces of clothing directed to this public.

Besides the streetwear clothes themselves, other street signs are present in some prints that bring the idea of the street as a habitat of cultural expression. These phrases reinforce the affective bond between the brand and its potential consumers, since these live the urban culture daily. For example, we have the phrases “I love quebrada” (“I love ghetto”) and “A rua é nóiz” (“The street is us”). In this last one, the word us (“nós”), in its colloquial form “nóiz”, can be interpreted in two ways: as a reference to a collective of people (the pronom “us” or “we”), or, as also proposed by the rapper, as “knots” (substantive). Both words have the same pronounce and suggest a strong sense of unity, appearing in Emicida’s songs.

Some musical signs were indentified in the music that accompanies the rapper verses, which is cathartic, mixing samples of organic instruments with the beats and electronic dissonances. The rhythms carry references of Candomble religion and Japanese music, emphasizing the importance of culture in establishing affective links through the recognition of popular music. The religious syncretism between Afro-Brazilian religions and Catholicism is present in the chorus “Blessed, be praised”, repeated many times throughout the music. Someway, music atmosphere refers to the chaotic environment of metropolises such as São Paulo.

We have also identified some philosophies of life signs in the prints, as the expression “ubuntu”, which refers to “A way of living, a possibility of existing together with other people in an unselfish way, an antiracist and polycentric community existence” (Noguera 2012: 147-148). The print of a black Buddha evokes a philosophy of life that helps people to perceive the impermanence of everything that exists and thus to deal better with transformations, illnesses and losses.



Figure 5. Ubuntu”, “black Buddha” and “I love quebrada” t-shirts.

The Japan, country, which strongly influenced the collection, represents the opposite extreme of Brazil, suggesting the idea of crossing the world, reaffirmed by the Japanese tour that Emicida made after the parade. Japan is also called “the land of the rising sun”, which exposes a notion of prosperity. Other possible interpretations concern equal opportunities, as in the expressions “the sun was rised for all” and “seek a place in the sun”. The idea is complemented by imagi-

nary references to Liberdade<sup>1</sup> neighborhood, where most Japanese descendants are based in São Paulo, the largest colony in the world outside Japan.

## 6. Final considerations

Despite the difficulty to analyze such extensive material – the video lasts almost ten minutes - in a few pages, we hope to have offered a panorama able to demonstrate the strong presence of street signs and diversity in the expressions of the Laboratório Fantasma brand and the Lab Yasuke. Nevertheless, since the parade in question will be the object of an analysis of a master's thesis, we believe that we have at least identified the most relevant points, which will be fully developed. In the course, we will focus on a more detailed analysis, mainly in relation to the application of the methods of Peircian and Greimasian semiotics in any aspects not contemplated here.

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1 Means "freedom".

# SIGN SYSTEMS, IT SYSTEMS, TRANSLATION PROCESSES

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## **Abstract**

Sign systems can be categorised in many ways, one of them is the division in social sign systems and formal sign systems. In the former, full semiosis is possible, in the latter the interpretation of signs is determined by formal rules. IT systems are based on formal sign systems, and users of IT systems are continuously translating between social and formal sign systems. Implementing a new IT system will have an impact on this behaviour, and not only in ways managers and IT consultants are prepared and planning for. The core of this problem lies in the conventional approaches to developing IT systems, where the conditions for good translations between the IT world and the world of the customers often are not satisfied.

For a semiotically sound way of developing and implementing IT systems, the direction of thinking should be reversed. Information processing issues should be analysed from the full range of sign systems involved, taking into account different types of translation processes: (1) in automation, social and/or physical processes are translated into formal models; (2) in working with information systems, the user is translating between social and formal sign systems. In this paper I will analyse the various sign systems, as well as the intersemiotic translation processes involved.

## **1. Introduction**

Working with computers has an impact on the semiosphere of the users. This is due in part to the use of new signs (smileys), in part to the shift of meaning of familiar words (file, dictionary), and in part to the nature of the formal sign systems as medium for computer software. In business information systems, the impact of the latter is largely underestimated and the unnoticed changes and disruptions in the semiosphere of its users is a major cause of disappointing results of IT projects.

At first sight, business processes in general and more specifically industrial production processes seem to be a good and 'easy' field for automation. In the past decades rationalisations of processes and increases in scale have brought about much standardisation and formalisation, making the processes suited to automation. This is the popular view especially with managers

and IT consultants. However, this is not the full story. Each and every day people are adjusting their behaviour in business processes according to their interpretation of circumstances and their weighing of norms. And exactly this is the kind of information where IT systems have problems, because of the rigidity and meaninglessness of their formal rules. When the semiosphere of the user is incompatible with the information processed by IT systems, either the IT systems takes over and the user is degraded to an extension of the IT system, or the user neglects what the IT system is doing and develops methods to keep the IT system satisfied. Both situations are to be avoided, but how?

Mazzoni describes in his Theory of the Novel human beings as "... individual, particular beings, thrown into time, located in a world, and placed among others" (Mazzoni 2017:13). This characterisation of the nature of human being is not only true for humans at leisure, but also for humans at work. Human beings must continuously act in concrete situations, working with multiple social and formal sign systems solving problems, mutually adjusting to each other and dealing with all kinds of information and interpretation. Dealing with contingencies on the job is what makes the job worthwhile.

In this paper, the role of different sign systems in the semiosphere will be briefly assessed, followed by a discussion of different kinds of translation. Next is a description of IT systems as formal sign systems, and an analysis of what this implies (1) for meaninglessness in IT systems and (2) attribution of meaning in working with IT systems. This section is closed by a discussion of the kind of translations involved in the conventional approach to developing IT systems, and the problems that arise here. The penultimate section proposes an alternative approach to the development of IT systems, an approach that translates the projected new semiosphere into operational practices of the users. This approach focuses on the semiosphere of the users and the two "source texts" of (1) existing semiosphere and (2) stated project goals into one coherent "target text" of the new semiosphere of the users. A short discussion of translation and complexity concludes the paper.

## 2. Sign systems

In daily life, people use a broad variety of sign systems. Natural language is the most obvious sign system, and a sign language such as American Sign Language is an example for a variant of natural language where hand shapes, orientation and movements take the place of spoken words. Within a natural language, dialects and sociolects can be discerned. Professional disciplines have their own jargon, sometimes using specific terms, and sometimes using more general terms but with a specific meaning. Then there are pictographic languages such as traffic signs, often in combination with texts in natural language. Chess has its own base sign system, with many different physical and diagrammatic expressions of each of the pieces. Talking about chess in turn has its own sign system, designating abstract concepts and patterns on the chessboard. Sign systems are probably as difficult to describe as the language games of Wittgenstein.

Meaning is generated by semiosis, in using signs in a social context. People new to the sign system, will learn to use it in practice. Meaning will develop in practice as social contexts are shifting. Meeting a married couple some decades ago implied meeting man and wife; nowadays it implies just meeting a couple of people. The meaning of 'weekend' is Saturday and Sunday in Europe, and Friday and Saturday in Arab countries. If the average height of the population is changing over time, so will the meaning of tall and short people if this meaning is expressed in a measurement. However, if the meaning is expressed as longer or shorter than average, then the meaning does not change. However, someone who was considered 'tall' in her youth 40 years ago, might now be considered of average length.



Apart from factual meaning, people use natural languages in a social context to express mood and tense (think of Comey reporting Trump as saying: “I hope you can let this go”). In a natural language its users have a great flexibility to refer to a something (or group of somethings), to indicate vague or indeterminate situations, and to communicate by metaphor.

Formal sign systems are defined by formal rules for manipulating variables. Examples are the sign systems of mathematics and logic. Formal sign systems are constituted by primitives and formulae for manipulating the primitives. There is only syntax and no semantics or pragmatics in a formal sign system. However, people using formal sign systems may read meaning into the variables. In reading the formula a user from the field of physics will read distance, velocity, acceleration and time in the four variables  $x$ ,  $v$ ,  $a$  and  $t$ . And he will know which units of measurements to use in order to calculate with the formula successfully.

In chess, a whole variety of sign systems is on display. Firstly, the rules of the game constitute a formal sign system. The primitives are defined (the chessboard, the chessmen with their initial position on the chessboard), a set of allowable moves is defined, and the criteria for the end of a game are defined (as a win or as a draw). Secondly, there are diagrammatic sign systems for representing the chessboard and the chess pieces, both two-dimensional on paper or on screen and three dimensional for playing chess as a physical game. Thirdly, there are semi-formal notational sign systems for both representing and annotating the moves, and for evaluating positions. Fourthly, there are social sign systems denoting gestures for offering a draw or admitting defeat. Fifthly, in chess literature a variety of social sign systems is in use for discussing theory, notably opening theory, where terms denote patterns of play such as “the Pirc”. Finally, there are social sign systems in use for people talking about chess, chess tournaments, chess players, chess culture, and so on. The kernel of the chess game, however, is about the formal system with the constitutive rules of the game and a very limited social sign system needed for people to start, play and end a game of chess. Playing chess is taking part in both the formal sign system that specifies the constitutive rules of the game, and the social sign system specifying behaviour at the chessboard. Being a chess player is taking part in the chess culture with its many social sign systems about opening theory, behaviour at tournaments, discussing chess games, revering the great players and the great games, and so on.

As an example of the essential differences between social sign systems and formal sign systems, imagine a customer asking his meat supplier to deliver by the end of next week about 3000 kg trimmings, not too fat. People will have not a problem to work on this information. A formal sign system, however, will need precise information: delivery date Friday the 7<sup>th</sup>, item code 370023, and amount ordered 3000kg. By translating from the social assign system into the formal sign system, meaningful information about leeway is lost.

### 3. Translation

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) gives for ‘translation’ several different meanings, the most relevant of which are: (1) “The action or process of expressing the sense of a word, passage, etc., in a different language. Also, the product of this” and (2) “The expression or rendering of something in another medium, form, or mode of expression. Also, the result of this”. Furthermore, the OED gives as ‘now rare’ another meaning that is relevant for this paper: (3) “Transformation, alteration, change; changing or adapting to another use; renovation” (OED 1991). Roman Jakobson distinguishes three types of translation in his article *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*: “it may be translated into other signs of the same language, into another language, or into another, nonverbal system of symbols” (Jakobson 1959:233). He labels this as respectively the intralingual, the interlingual and the intersemiotic kind of translation. The first OED meaning corresponds with interlingual translation of Jakobson, and the second meaning with intra-

lingual (rephrasing) or intersemiotic (in another medium). The third OED meaning is more about a transfer from a ‘source situation’ to a ‘target situation’ than about textual translation.

On the interpretation issues in translating Jakobson refers to Bertrand Russell, who has stated that nobody could grasp the meaning of the word ‘cheese’ without actually having had “nonlinguistic acquaintance with cheese”. In addition to Russell, Jakobson states that nobody can grasp the meaning of the word “cheese” without “acquaintance with the meaning assigned to this word in the lexical code of English” (Jakobson 1959:232). Words derive their meaning from their place in encompassing linguistics structures. Different natural languages have created different structures of meaning, and as the well-known example given by Hjelmslev shows (Figure 1), it is not always possible to find one-to-one relationships between words in different languages.

<i>træ</i>	<i>Baum</i>	<i>arbre</i>
	<i>Holz</i>	<i>bois</i>
<i>skov</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>forêt</i>

Figure 1. Correspondences between Danish, German and French (From Hjelmslev [1943] 1969:54).

In the course of time, thinking about translation has shifted from an orientation on the meaning of the source text via the intention of the source text towards the pragmatic dimension of the effects of the target text, and from a focus on translating literary texts (novels and poetry) towards translating of prosaic texts in institutional contexts (e.g. political and legal texts in the European Union). Christiane Nord analyses in her book (1997) *Translating as a Purposeful Activity* the functionalist approach to translation. Equivalence of source text and target text has long been a prime criterion for translations. The functionalist approach adds the criterion of adequacy and puts this criterion in first place. Nord writes she has a problem with the universality of the so-called Skopos model of functional translating, because it does not analyse the culture-specificity of translational models. Another issue she discusses is the relationship between the translator and the source text author. These two concerns lead to her addition of a third criterion: translation as a purposeful activity requires loyalty of the translator to both the source and the target side of the translation process. Although Nord does not mention him, this third criterion seems to have a close relationship with the maxims of Grice for conversations. People who engage in communication are assumed to be committed to the principle of cooperation, and the translator should be committed to cooperation with both the source and the target side. In the glossary of Nord’s book the three criteria are formulated as follows (Nord 1997:137):

1. ‘Equivalence’: A relationship of equal communicative value or function between a source text and a target text, or, on lower ranks, between words, phrases, sentences, syntactic structures etc. of a source and a target language.
2. ‘Adequacy’: In terms of functional approaches to translation, ‘adequacy’ is used to describe the appropriateness of a translated text for the communicative purpose defined in the translation brief.
3. ‘Loyalty’: The responsibility the translators have towards their partners in translational interaction. Loyalty commits the translator bilaterally to the source and target sides, taking account of the difference between culture-specific concepts of translation prevailing in the two cultures involved.

## 4. IT systems

### 4.1. IT systems are formal sign systems without meaning

Essentially, IT systems are formal sign systems defined by a combination of a vocabulary of primitives and a set of derivation rules. As Tanenbaum points out in his fundamental book *Structured Computer Organization*, a computer system can be thought of as composed of layers. The innermost layer has the processors programmed in low level programming code, and each next layer can be considered as a virtual machine consisting of a vocabulary and an instruction set, to be interpreted by the lower layer. An example of such a virtual machine is the Pascal programming language, as specified by Niklaus Wirth in 1968/1969. He developed this language because he needed a compact, clean and well-defined programming language for his university courses. The language is specified in the Extended Backus-Naur Form, “a collection of rules or productions collectively called a “grammar” that describe the formation of sentences in the language” (Jensen and Wirth [1974] 1985:213). The formal specification is eight pages in text, and ten pages with the specification expressed in diagrams. Such a programming language provides a virtual machine for the software developer, his software program provides a virtual machine for the software customizer, and the configured software provides a virtual machine for the business user.

IT systems as virtual machines do not have (or “know about”) meaning. As formulated above in the specification of the Extended Backus-Naur Form, computers blindly apply rules on variables. There is only syntax, no semantics. In practice, IT systems do suggest meaning, because of the meaningful texts on screens and because of the meaningful variable names chosen by the programmer. However, these choices of texts here do not impact the working of the software, they are just mnemonics for the user. Instead of “customer”, “street”, “house number”, “postal code” and “town” the screen could also have displayed: “Cst”, “Str”, “Nr”, “PC”, “T” or “A1”, “A2” “A3” “A4” “A5”. The IT system will not behave differently when the labels on the screen are changed. The same applies for the choice of variable names in the software: the software is fully indifferent to the chosen names.

### 4.2. IT systems and user pragmatics

In using IT systems the user is implicitly or explicitly doing intersemiotic translations, because he is translating from social sign systems into formal sign systems and vice versa. However, the user will have the impression of an intralingual translation (or no translation at all), because the formal sign system is hidden behind conventional texts on the screen.

An IT consultant or a programmer might also not recognize the translational aspect here, he might be thinking inputting data into the IT system is just recording what is given in the outside world, and well-designed output of the IT system should not need any interpretation. However, when information in the outside world does not match the formal sign system, the user must make a choice. For “end of the week” he must choose between Thursday and Friday. And perhaps he will develop a convention to code “end of the week” as Saturday, and being aware in working with the system what an order date on Saturday actually means (for him).

An example of user pragmatics from the work floor: suppose a checkpoint in a production line. The operator has two buttons coding for irregularity A and irregularity B. When he pushes A, a warning signal will be activated, pushing button B will stop the production line. A responsible user will use his knowledge of the effect of pushing A or B in his behaviour. In effect, he will not use A or B according to their intended representation of an occurrence of A or B, but according to his evaluation of the situation and the appropriate action: “warning signal” or “stop the line”. At the

same time, the IT system will report to management about the frequency of irregularities A and B. The result: divergent translation for different users of the same information in the IT system.

### **4.3. Translations in development of IT systems**

In developing a new IT-based information system, three essential translation stages can be distinguished: (1) in translating existing and projected business processes into descriptions and models in the preparation of the new IT system; (2) in translating the descriptions and models into a configuration of the IT system, and (3) in translating the configured IT system back into the world of the actual business processes and actual users. In the first stage, the 'source texts' are the existing day-to-day routine practices in combination with the ideas about the processes-to-be as intended in the project. The result will be a document with models of business processes, for the representation of the models a combination will be used of descriptions in natural language and schematic representations with annotations. In the second stage, the models will be translated into the formal sign system of the configuration parameters of the IT system, possibly into software code. In the third stage, the configured IT system will be translated into the social sign system of the future users by choosing meaningful labels on screen and reports, and by instruction documents for the users.

In such a development of a new system, groups of people with very different backgrounds are involved. The most prominent groups are: (1A) the people that are actually 'doing' the processes, (1B) the customer as commissioner and guardian of the project, (1C) representatives of the customer who combine process knowledge with IT knowledge, (2A) the IT contractor as such, (2B) the business consultants at the IT contractor, and (3) the technical consultants at the IT contractor. Decision-making and management of the project is a high-level responsibility for customer and contractor, the internal and external consultants with knowledge of processes and IT are responsible for the business translations in the project, and the technical consultants are responsible for the technical translations.

### **4.4. Translational problems in development of IT systems**

As described above in development of IT systems we can distinguish three essential stages of translation, we have the three criteria for translations as formulated by Christiane Nord, and we have the three types of translation as defined by Roman Jakobson. Because a full discussion of translations in IT development would require much more space than is available in this paper, I will restrict myself to the most salient issues. In the three stages of translation in the development of an IT system different types of translation are involved. In analysing and modelling business processes the translation type is primarily intralingual. Both source text(s) and target text are based on social sign systems. This is also the case when schematic representations are used, because interpretation of schemas in this context is based on social conventions and informal interpretation. It would be different when the IT system would be generated directly from the business processes as modelled, but despite decades of work on tools in this area, this approach still has little practical value. The second translation stage is primarily intersemiotic, because the descriptions and models from the social sign systems of the first stage are translated into the formal sign systems of the software configurations. The third translation stage, where the configured computer system is translated back into the social sign systems of the users, is a mix of intralingual and intersemiotic translation. It is intersemiotic because the formal sign system of the IT systems is translated into the social world of the users, and it is intralingual because the descriptions and models of the first stage are used in giving meaning to the formal sign system.

As mentioned above, Nord has formulated three criteria for translations: equivalence, adequacy and loyalty. The first criterion requires the translator to be proficient in both source and target language and culture. External consultants often have problems here: they are outsiders to the language and culture of the customer, they are (much) more used to abstract forms of model-based-thinking than to the concrete details of real-world execution of business processes. This can create a major misfit and non-equivalence between the clean models as formulated by the external consultant and the processes as experienced by the users. Next, clean models are adequate for the translation of the model into system parameters, but are inadequate for translating the systems back into the user-world. Too many relevant process-details are lost in the translation of 'dirty' processes into 'clean' models. Summarising: differences in semiosphere (culture, language, habits, ...) between IT and customer give rise to non-equivalent and inadequate translations in the development of IT systems, and as a consequence disappointed customers and users. An additional problem can be the loyalty of the external business and technical consultants. Do they have enough sensitivity and commitment for all cultures involved, and are they capable of bridging the gaps? Generally, only consultants that are working for and with the same customer over a longer period will develop this kind of loyalty. The conclusion of this paragraph is that it is not very probable that the criteria for good translations are met in IT projects.

### **5. System development as translation from source to target semiosphere**

Doing an IT project implies changing or even disrupting the semiosphere of the future users of the IT system. Conventional development methods as discussed in the previous section are not suited for preparing the users for their new semiosphere. This is a major cause for friction and failure in IT projects. However, users will always adapt to new situations and new systems. The issue is, their adaptations will be partly ungoverned and might be detrimental to the effectiveness and efficiency of the business processes.

As a preliminary for introducing an alternative approach it is good to be aware that two basic informational questions for each and every business process are: (1) "which information is required to do a proper job?" and (2) "which information is required to be generated from the process for properly fulfilling the jobs in business processes downstream?". The information referred to in these two basic questions might be in any sign system in the semiosphere of the user, and much of the information will belong to the realm of tacit knowledge. Another important issue is the consistency across sign systems: how to match a reference in one sign system to a reference in another sign system ("The early morning flight to Aberdeen" or "Flight LM0031" or "That crate over there").

In the alternative approach, the focus is on the semiosphere of the user. As a preliminary, at the start of the IT project the project objectives are to be translated into a high-level, coherent and full description of the "new world" as the intended result of the project (this will be a challenge in many projects!). This high-level description is subsequently translated into the operational world of the people executing the business processes in the new situation. In doing this translation (with many different stakeholders involved) the users are transferred from their existing to the new semiosphere, thereby (1) checking the viability of the information flows via the new IT system, (2) explicitly adapting other sign systems to the new situation. In doing this, the two informational questions formulated above ("which information is required ...") are central and the discussion is about the best way the new IT system can contribute to the semiosphere of the users in answering these questions. The outcome of this process must be used to manage the development of the IT system as such, and must have an influence on the three translation stages identified in the conventional approach.



## 6. Complexity and translation

This brings us to the final consideration of this paper. Conventional translation studies are mostly dealing with rather static, linguistic, demarcated and homogeneous source and target texts (which is not to say that the intentions of the source author and the effects on the target audience(s) are always clearly demarcated and homogeneous). I have identified three kinds of translation in the conventional IT project approach and added two additional kinds of translation in the alternative approach. In each of these five translations the broader semiosphere with all kinds of language practices, patterns, perceptual competences and categorisations are involved. Source and target texts are not clearly demarcated and homogeneous. In the alternative approach the translation of the project aims and ambitions (often formulated in vague language but to be realised in formal and rigid IT systems) into new concrete operational practices is key. It is the translation from existing work practices into new or modified work practices, which involves all aspects of the semiosphere. Source and target of all these translations are not static: doing the translations implies bringing about changes in the semiosphere of the people involved. Furthermore, a whole network of business processes with many formal and informal mutual adjustment mechanisms is involved, which makes our social world of business processes a complex system.

Kobus Marais has written about translation theory in a much wider sense than the traditional focus on texts and linguistic aspects (grammatical, semantical, and pragmatic). He wants to conceptualise translation as “both a complex adaptive system constituted by complex adaptive subsystems and a complex adaptive subsystem that co-constitutes a number of complex adaptive systems, or social reality as a complex adaptive supra-system” (Marais 2014:44). Marais elaborates his approach with analysing his experiences with translation in the context of development studies in South Africa, taking into account the cultures and life-worlds of all the participants involved. In the discussion of the alternative approach to the development of IT systems important elements of the conceptualisation of Marais can be discerned: the translational activities are not regulated by a set of static and rigid rules, but are continuously adapted to the social and technical context. At the same time, participants are changing their views and experiences of their social world as a direct consequence of the translational activities, thereby changing the social world itself.

## 7. Conclusion

To summarise the argument in this paper: in the development of IT systems a number of different translations are involved. In the conventional approach, three consecutive translation stages can be identified. It is highly improbable or even impossible that the general criteria for good translations are met in an IT project because of the lack of background of the translator, and because of the failure to appreciate the differences between social and formal sign systems. The first problem leads to wrong translations due to misunderstandings, the second problem leads to reductionist translations and loss of information in developing the IT system. Therefore, translations do not meet the criteria of equivalence and adequacy. Loyalty can be compromised as a result of commercial and organisational forces, which adds to the problems. In an alternative approach, the primary focus is on the semiosphere of the users and not on the IT system. The aim of this approach is to guide the user from the existing to the new semiosphere, and to verify the operational conditions for the new IT system. In this approach, the complexity and adaptiveness of the participants are not only recognised but the starting point of the translational activities. As Marais writes about translation as “carrying over” and emphasizes that “there are many more

carryings over to be studied” than just of the linguistic and literary type (Marais 2014:207), I think that in the semiosphere of the future users in IT projects many more carryings over must be studied than just the information about to be processed by the IT system.

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**FROM THE SESSION “SEMIOTICS  
OF POP CULTURE IN THE 21ST  
CENTURY OF JAPAN”**

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# ON SEMIOSIS IN THE POP CULTURE WORLD

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## **Abstract**

Pop culture was born by the capitalist society of the 20th century. Each genre was produced by the mass media like newspaper, television, publisher and film company. Now, since the appearance of the Internet, the environment of such pop-culture has been drastically changing.

Pop culture in the 21st century gained a completely different dimension from the past and it seems to be showing the new aspects unknown. In short, by the advent of distributed personal media such as the Internet, the “location” of pop culture itself had moved to a variety of live events and diverse communication places in a wider range of media environment. In the spread of such new media, the connection between the sender and recipient of pop culture became much closer. Thus, there appeared a new direct relationship of author and recipient by not passing the mass media. We call such environment the Pop Culture World (PCW).

The “PCW” is the world=environment including the huge complex of the recipients that are tied each other by the Internet. In such a condition, recipients are not the passive audience now, but they are directly intervening or interfering in the process of the production system of pop-culture itself.

We will develop this idea of the PCW in the semiotic perspectives.

## **1. Introduction**

In round table “Semiotics of Pop Culture in the 21st. Century of Japan”, five Japanese researchers discussed about pop culture from the various points of view.

Our research group was organized in 2013 for studying the contemporary pop culture including comics, animation, video game, idol, costume play (*Kos-play*), photography and movie etc. I would like to propose the perspectives and the theoretical frameworks of our research.

In the modern aesthetics and art theory, the artworks and literature of modern Western Europe have been considered as the standard. Of course, there were also artworks of the other regions and times to study, but even in those cases, as an implicit assumption, it has been thought that the modern Western art research is to be the absolute standard.

In such a historical context, we will encounter with the various difficulties when we start considering about the aspects of current pop culture. Of course, it is not just a problem of pop culture. Whenever we try to deal with the issues outside of modern Western European art -- for example, African or Oceanian crafts, Indian miniatures Japanese *Ukiyo-e* or whatever a variety of video and music files exchanged on the Internet – we will encounter the similar problems. Simply speaking, in the framework of “modern art theories”, we cannot capture these cultural phenomena outside of that very well.

## 2. What is pop culture?

I would like to distinguish at first what the pop culture is. Here the most important is that the popular culture or pop culture was born with the appearance of mass information transmission system in the industrial society, so to say that it was impossible without the mass media.

Before the appearance of the mass media, there were authoritarian and official cultures in the dynasties and churches. On the other hand, there were folk or traditional cultures which were spontaneously born among people.

Then, there appeared the civic culture or bourgeois culture in the 18th century. By taking over the aristocratic culture, it accompanied behavior like collecting oil painting or go to the theater or opera frequently, and the bourgeoisie obtained their satisfaction. Such a style of bourgeois life was called “snobbism”.

At last, with the birth of mass society, so-called *Popular culture* or *Mass culture* appeared. It was very different from either of the previous official culture and folk culture, because it was based on the Mass media based on printing technology and photography.

It was strongly linked with the production style of factory system machinery industry. Therefore, it was very different from the previous folk culture and bourgeois culture.

It is important that the cultural commodities were born by the appearance of media technologies like printing technology or photography and the reproduction of culture spread out in a large scale. With the appearance of the record, movie and digital technology further, these forms of culture have been extended more and more.

Movie creates a complex entertainment industry with a huge worldwide network and CD or record has created a huge music business market that sells tens of millions of copies worldwide. Digital technology is becoming producer of the license business called content industry.

In short, new cultural industry was born by the maturation of the industrial society that enabled mass production and mass distribution.

It provides many cultural commodities towards people with an unprecedented wide range. Observing its contents, it looks like very similar to the previous popular culture like a freak show, circus or Panorama in urban areas, but it is very different in its overwhelming quantity of the distribution amount. Hundreds of thousands of consumers and hundreds of thousands of cultural commodities appeared in the media technologies like newspaper, photos, posters, telegraph, telephone, movie and Internet.

## 3. The Art was also born with the mass media

Here I want to emphasize one thing. That is, the development of such mass media not only made the pop culture. At the same time, it also made enlargement of the modern art and literature as civic culture.

It is no exaggeration to say that modern art and literature were not possible without mass media like photo reproductions, art book, and exhibition catalog or paperback.



If there were no invention of the photograph, masterpieces of Louvre and Orsay museums would not have been known so much to people all over the world. Alternatively, if there were no printing technology, only a few people would know the name of Flaubert and Kafka.

Therefore, modern art, modern literature or classic music would never exist without mass media. Before mass media appeared, only a small number of people knew those activities. Even if museums were open to the public or even if concerts were very popular, without the articles of newspapers or magazines, only few people would have known those existences.

After all, art and literature have been treated as the position of products and commodity in the cultural industry. Art market has steadily swelled along with the process of globalization of the market. Moreover, it has become a huge scale for the investment now.

Therefore, surprisingly, modern art was born with the advent of mass media. Unquestionably it crossed the borders and became to be known around the world by the mass media. It came to be considered as product or commodity to be a long seller for upper class who has the enough cultural capital.

The aesthetics of autonomy made for the modern art in 19th century and the Romanticism aesthetics which regards the work of art as an “expression” of the “author” were also became the strong standard for pop culture. Paintings and posters, novels and popular literature or comics, modern poetry and pop song lyrics, opera and musicals, theater and movie have a very similar style in each.

Because, pop culture as a product must have been packaged in an appropriate length and time. Pop culture is distributed by the name of the author, and the movie is set to the length of about two hours and record or a CD set to the length of the concert. That is, it was sold as “work of art”.

#### 4. Four phases of media

Mass media has been increasing the amount of the flow of information and changing their forms.

In the first phase, the newspapers, magazines and photos were the major media. Then records, movies, radio and television have appeared and the visualized pop culture and the recorded music became the mainstream of pop culture since 1920s. We can say this stage the second phase.

The third phase, due to the spread of satellite broadcasting and international network, would include the era of internationalization of pop culture. Since the mid-1960s, the mass media through a multi-channel of the international network and television broadcasting, has gained a global reach. Dependent on the economic forces, it was accompanied by a diffusion into the world of the culture of English-speaking countries, including the United States, which has an overwhelming economic power and information transmission force.

With the third phases, Coca-Cola and McDonald began to spread all over the world, and the music such as The Beatles and Michael Jackson had flown all over the world. Everyone began to wear T-shirts and jeans and to watch Hollywood movies. Disneyland destroyed all local amusement parks in the world and the art magazines published in New York have governed the art market of the world.

Let us consider the situation of art and literature in each phase.

The first phase, which was the era of modernism. Along with the expansion of popular culture, art and literature have gained the special commercial values as the superior culture made from the ingenious individuals. However, their spread remained regional and local.

The second phase is the era of the avant-garde. Along with the spread of the replication technique, the art also goes out to the world market. Among them, the cutting-edge consumers began to have much interest in the most advanced culture in developed countries. The avant-garde consumers were few, but they had received a social respect as innovators of a new culture.

The third phase is the era of post modernistic “Pop Art” and “conceptual art” after the modernism has ended.

In the late capitalist society, pop culture is flooding around us, and the cultural memory of the people cannot exist apart from the pop images no longer.

Therefore, art and literature as cutting-edge cultural activities also will not be independent of this pop image.

Now we are facing the completely different the phase of the pop culture. This is the fourth phase.

In response to the wave of consumer society of up to excess in developed countries since the 1980s, communications media became more and more diverse. Information has been more and more fragmented. Since the Internet emerged in the 1990s, the cultural flow has been continuing to transfigure into something entirely different from the past.

Until the third phase, cultural products had been distributed and exchanged by the forms of substance and package. However, at present all the information is distributed as a binary code digitized. Movies and TV programs are both reduced to a category of “moving picture”. Photos and illustrations will also be reduced to the pixel images. Music is now distributed as data files. In other words, information is a ceaseless enormous flow without the beginning and the end, and it needs no more packaging.

With those changes, there occurred a significantly great turn in the cultural products and media.

Information communication media such as the Internet is not mass media but it is a two-way network media. Information is not supplied as a fixed package in it. The participants can also engage the information making process. Alternatively, you can collect only favorite information, and edit it yourself or in some cases, you can make the secondary or tertiary creation, as is said make the “N-order creation”. In other words, in the place of unilateral information flows in the direction from the author to the recipient, the circuit of interactive communication was born with it.

Of course, even in the third phase, you could personalize information by using personal media, such as a tape recorder or video recorder. However, after the digital media were appeared, the degree of freedom has been further increased rapidly.

In addition, in the fourth stage because they do not have to depend on the substance, it may not have to worry about the amount and length of the content.

And it will also affect the conventional art. Art is also becoming free from the form of fixed artwork. For example, many museums started publishing high-resolution images of their collections on the Internet. It is threatening the existence value of complete works and catalogs in the form of books.

## **5. How can we approach to pop culture again?**

Therefore, to understand the pop culture of the fourth phase and later, we cannot use the theoretical framework of the conventional literature research and artistic research.

In the modern theory of aesthetics, the scheme of Author - Works - Recipient (reader) was indispensable.

There is an “author” and this “author” is the most important as the originator of the work, so the author studies have always been the center of the art research since the 19th century.

In the 20th century, the “studies of works” appeared, which were disconnected from the author. Though the concepts like “text” or “structure” were introduced there, the dominant studies had not much changed and the author studies remained major.

In addition, in the late 20th century, the flow of “reception aesthetics” of Konstanz School (Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser) appeared. However, except for some sociological studies, it has not been continued.

Pop culture until the third phase was produced in the same communication structure as mass media. Popular literature, movies, cartoons, anime, such as TV drama, expanded with the development of mass media. Pop culture has also been considered in the framework of “author”, “work” and “recipient”.

For example, in the film review, the director is considered as an author of a certain film. Popular literature, manga and anime have been taken same framework as the literary text. It is because both the modern art and pop culture belong to the same structure of mass communication.

However, the pop culture with the fourth phase got an entirely different dimension.

In short, by the advent of discrete personal media such as the Internet, the place of pop culture is no longer in mass media, and it seems that they are moving towards a more diverse and widespread media environment.

These signs appeared in the late 20th century. For example, Comic Market (Komike) which was born in the late 1970s increased the number of participants with each decade, and now has come to gather the more than 600,000 participants.

In addition, a variety of similar events like animation festival or fan events such as cosplay events appeared. In addition, various active communities of the N-order creations and related goods, are going to be formed.

The acceleration of such movements came from the characteristics of the new media environment represented by the Internet. The spread of new media accelerates largely the recipient mutual ties and as a result, a new creation linking between the sender and the recipient was born.

Inspired by Arthur Danto’s concept of the “Art world” (1964), I would like to name this new media environment “Pop Culture World”.

Danto’s “Art world” means a social and cultural context around the art with the prominent artists, critics, curators, gallerists, collectors and art journalism. As such, “Pop culture world” is the environment with the advertising agency, the production company, and media like television or publishers. However, not only with these, “Pop culture world” has a huge community on the internet and a diverse connection, which ties the producer and recipients in a complex manner.

Therefore, there is a huge endless process of semiosis in the pop culture world. Unlike the conventional art world, the fixed framework as “author - work – recipient” as a fictional environment will be dismantled in the pop culture world. Among other things, the recipient here is not only accepting products passively, but they are involved as active agent=actor who is the co-producer in the pop culture world. For example, the cosplay performers or N-order creators are actively participating in the making process itself of pop culture. They are clearly participating in the making system of the fictional environment of the production such as character making or building the framework or setting of the fictional world.

We should turn our main concern into such concept of “pop culture world” now.

In the past pop studies, there remained strongly the concept of “author” and “work”. In contrast, without the concept of “pop culture world”, we cannot explain a phenomenon that, for example, millions of people prefer to participate in idol group live concert than buying their CD, or that live tickets of the voice actor of anime are sold out, or some application is sold out with almost no advertising, etc.

In the future, we want to develop further studies on pop culture from this point of view.

# YOSAKOI SORAN AS A SITE OF RE-LOCALIZATION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO JAPANESE POP CULTURE<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The Yosakoi Soran is a dance festival that was first held in Sapporo in 1992. Since then, it has spread throughout Japan. During the dance festival, each participating team conveys the local culture to which the team belongs within 4 minutes and 30 seconds. I analyze the multilayered semiotic process of Yosakoi Soran especially regarding the process of de-localization and re-localization, and make clear its relationship with Japanese pop culture. Finally, I suggest the defining characteristic of re-localization at Yosakoi Soran, which is localization freed from authenticity.

## 1. Introduction

The Yosakoi Soran is a dance festival that was first held in Sapporo in 1992 by a Hokkaido University student who was inspired by the *Yosakoi* festival in Kochi, Shikoku. The word *Yosakoi* originally means “come at night”; *Soran* is a folk song originating in Hokkaido. Since 1992, Yosakoi Soran has spread throughout Japan and is now enjoyed in more than 200 locations. During the dance festival, each participating team conveys the music’s dramatic theme — often the team’s local area’s culture — within a given time (4 minutes and 30 seconds).

Previous research on Yosakoi Soran has explored the role it plays in local revitalization (Osaka 2007: 21), the unique Japanese style related to “Yankee” culture (Saito et al. 2014: 190-193), and dance style (Hirata 2010: 126). This paper aims to use concrete examples to clarify the multilayered semiotic process of Yosakoi Soran, the changes that it has undergone during the process of de-localization and re-localization, and its relationship to Japanese pop culture.

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## 2. Basic elements of Yosakoi Soran and the semiotic process

Yosakoi Soran inherits its basic elements from Yosakoi in Kochi. The most basic of these are *naruko* (a musical instrument similar to castanets that was originally used to drive birds out of farmland) and music. In general, for a dance to be classifiable as a Yosakoi Soran dance, it should satisfy the following two conditions (Hirata 2010: 117): first, there should be a dance that incorporates *naruko*; and second, the music should contain parts of local folk songs. Originally, Yosakoi Soran included a part of the Soran, a folk song originating in Hokkaido.

What is distinctive about this rule is that there are almost no requirements on the style of dance, which is another basic element of Yosakoi Soran. Therefore, any kind of dance team can participate in this festival. This loose regulation therefore promoted the explosive popularization of Yosakoi Soran (Matsudaira 2008). Additional basic elements include dancing, costumes, an MC (master of ceremonies), singers, *jikata-sha* (cars equipped with mobile sound systems), and venues (streets or stages). Below, I explain the basic significance of some of these.

### 2.1. Naruko and folk songs

The use of *naruko* and folk songs forms the most basic semiotic process instructing people to ensure that every movement, costume, and piece of music satisfies this requirement of belonging to Yosakoi Soran. The *naruko* itself gains a secondary meaning as a musical instrument that produces a rhythm, additional to its first meaning as a tool that emits sound and drives birds out of farmland. Likewise, folk songs themselves transform from their primary meaning of a song associated with a particular local group or group of professionals to a secondary meaning of merely symbolizing a local area.

### 2.2. Costume

Yosakoi Soran participants usually wear a *happi* coat. Therefore, similar to *Naruko* and folk songs, the *happi* coat, which is primarily a costume of specific local residents or professional groups, gains a secondary meaning as a festival costume. It is worth noting that although the *happi* coat has become the predominant clothing choice among festival participants, there is no specific costume requirement, and in principal it is possible to wear any costume, not only the *happi* coat.

### 2.3. Dance

As mentioned previously, because few provisions exist regarding style of dance, in principle any kind of dance is possible at Yosakoi Soran. Initially, the Yosakoi Soran dance imitated the movement of waves and fishermen's bodies in response to these. Currently, very few dances are based on such imitation. For example, dances imitating the movement of a rushing wave have largely been replaced by those dedicated to the flowering of cherry blossoms, and a secondary symbolic meaning is derived. However, such imitative dances have decreased in frequency. As the imitative value of each movement diminishes, the meaning of each dance must be explained by an MC, and supplemented by costumes and props. I will describe this change in more detail later.

### 2.4. Expansion of Yosakoi Soran

The relaxed requirements promoted the participation of people outside the traditional local community, such as university students. Dancing in the Yosakoi Soran made it possible to create a new community that is not a traditional community. Additionally, as Yosakoi Soran changes from a parade-centered street festival to a stage-centered dance competition, victory in the competition becomes participants' main goal. Consequently, costumes and dance techniques



became increasingly sophisticated; dance practices increased in intensity; costume production, choreography, and music production were outsourced, and a large amount of funds will be spent there. The popularity of Yosakoi Soran increased because of such changes, and it became an event that attracted a large audience.

Local government and television stations noticed the economic impact of Yosakoi Soran because dance teams, basically amateurs, participate in the competition using their own funds without any financial support from local administration, while the audience attracted by the dance teams often spends a large sum of money. Therefore, local government and television stations began to actively support the competition. This in turn encouraged visitors who saw the success of the competition to organize their own team in subsequent years. Residents in local areas without competitions began to organize their own competitions. Other local governments and media outlets who saw the success of these competitions in neighboring areas therefore supported holding the competition in their own area. Consequently, it spread across Japan.

Through this process, code 1 (the code of traditional community), which was implemented when Yosakoi Soran originated, was modified into code 2 (the code of Yosakoi Soran) and further stratified into code 3 (the code of new community) and code 4 (the code of tourism and revitalization of local areas) as a result of the expansion of Yosakoi Soran.

This process is the result of de-localization and re-localization. By examining this, the relationship between Yosakoi Soran and Japanese pop culture will become clearer.

### 3. Changes in Yosakoi Soran

#### 3.1. De-localization and re-localization

As mentioned above, Yosakoi Soran was established by repurposing agricultural tools as musical instruments, and folk songs as mere symbols. In other words, it was delocalized from the beginning. At the same time, by always including part of Hokkaido's Soran folk song in its music, it re-localizes itself as a Hokkaido festival. The process of de-localization and re-localization can be found in each of Yosakoi Soran's basic elements. I will explain this in more detail below.

#### 3.2. Dance

One of the classic movements in Yosakoi Soran choreography was the imitation of the movement of waves where fishing is carried out. It can be argued that this was to de-localize Kochi's Yosakoi and re-localize it as a Hokkaido dance. A 1996 performance of *Nan-chu Soran* performed by students of Wakkanai Minami Junior High School is an example of this (Executive Committee of the Yosakoi Soran Festival in Sapporo 2016). During the performance, light music based on the folk song Soran is played throughout in a constant beat, while imitative actions of pulling, drawing, carrying the net, and movements like a wave splash are repeated.

However, because Yosakoi Soran has almost no requirements for dance style, the choreography naturally deviates over time from dances about Hokkaido. This process is de-localization. As this happens, it becomes increasingly difficult to communicate the meaning previously supported by imitations. Movements that once imitated the movement of waves are diverted to other things, such as cherry blossoms blooming and burning flames, and are separated from their original meaning. Separation and diversion between movement and semantic content make it difficult for the viewer to understand the meaning of the dance from the movement alone. This can be seen when viewing recordings of current Yosakoi Soran dances without sound, which are almost impossible to understand. The direct linkage between dance and meaning from specific local areas was lost.

However, dances at Yoskaoi Soran have changed from a dance performed according to music based on Hokkaido folk songs to musical dramas that convey various stories based on local cultures. It must effectively convey complicated narrative content in a short time. Therefore, Yosakoi Soran has been transferring its role to convey local stories through elements other than dance, such as explanations by an MC or costume changes according to the musical setting. De-localization from themes specific to Hokkaido caused re-localization to local cultures across Japan as the themes of performance. Elements other than dance, such as MCs, music, props, and costumes, are used to enable this re-localization.

### 3.3. Costume

Happi is a standard costume for festivals. However, in many traditional festivals, only people who live in certain areas can wear happi and participate in festivals. Additionally, the pattern on the coat is dictated by the area, and not any pattern can be worn (see, for example, Happi at Hakata Gion Yamakasa Festival in Fukuoka). In contrast, at Yosakoi Soran, each dance team (following the provision of Kochi's Yosakoi) can wear any costume, not limited to traditional ones. In this sense, the costume of Yosakoi Soran has been de-localized.

As this de-localization happens, the costume is also re-localized. There are two major types of re-localization on costumes. One is a direct re-localization, that is, the characteristics of the area in which the team is based are taken directly into costumes. For example, a team comprising members belonging to the Brazilian community may join Yosakoi Soran to dance Samba with costumes similar to those worn at the Rio Carnival. In this case, costumes are directly linked to the participants' identity, so it is normal to not change during the performance. The other is to re-localize costumes caused by the de-localization of dance. In this case, the costume does not directly represent the identity of the area like a national costume. Although the Yosakoi Soran dance teams usually wear Japanese-style costumes, the various patterns used have lost almost all meaning (as derived from the strict code traditionally used for kimono) and are now used purely for decoration. In one performance, multiple costumes may be used. Costume changes explain the regional culture and contribute to the realization of re-localization.

Color changes are a clear example of this. For example, a dance team from an area famous for both cherry blossoms and autumn leaves may change their costumes from cherry blossom color to autumnal colors to represent changes from spring (cherry blossom) to autumn (autumn leaves). Similarly, a dance team based in a district famous for samurai may change their costumes from white to flame color to indicate a situation in which the samurai's situation changed from peace to wartime, and so on.

However, there are many cases in which it is difficult to understand the meaning of a color change or the cultural meaning of the area to the audience using only costumes. It is the MC's words that determine their meaning.

### 3.4. MC

The role of the MC has also changed over time. The MC is now supposed to provide most of the explanation of the story, such as the theme, situation, or scene changes, in addition to encouraging the audience to participate (such as clapping along). For example, in the previously-mentioned case of the *Nan-chu Soran* performance, the dances were composed of imitative movements and there is no MC because there is no need to explain the performance (see above 3.2). Conversely, at the Cherry Blossom Festival in Okazaki, Aichi Prefecture on April 9, 2017, the performance titled *Geten* (human society) by the dance team *Kagura* (meaning Shinto music

and dance) included an MC who played various roles. These roles are described with the contents of the performance. The letters A to I represent each scene, while content in parentheses describes the role played by the MC during each scene.

#### A. Introduction

1. Before the dance begins, the MC greets the audience and introduces the area from which the team comes (here, the MC acts as a representative of the team).
2. The MC explains that the theme of the dance comes from the local area, and that the performance is strongly tied with the area. In this performance, the theme is the lifetime of a samurai (Nobunaga Oda) who was born in the dance team's local area. Although this samurai was a famous warrior, he was also a noted for his cultural pursuits such as Noh. Nobunaga was betrayed by his subordinate and killed himself shortly before achieving his goal of unifying Japan. The story of Nobunaga's life is quite well-known in Japan.
3. Before the performance begins, the MC asks the audience to encourage the performance by clapping their hands.

#### B. Preparation for the performance

1. The MC shouts "Ha!" and the team adopt a dancing posture (here, he acts as a conductor).

#### C. Performance (Part 1: Peacetime)

2. He tells the story of the performance using storytelling skills (acting as a narrator).

#### D. Actual start of music and dance

1. The MC acts the main character's self-introduction (acting as a voice actor).
2. He shouts "Ha, ha, ha, ha" and "Sei-ya sah" at a certain speed to regulate the rhythm (acting as a conductor).
3. He calls "Oh sei-ha", and the dancers answer "Sei-ha". The MC urges the audience to respond by repeating the call & response (acting as a conductor).
4. He expresses the main character's love for Noh by singing "Yoooooo", which is commonly used in Noh (acting as a voice actor).

#### E. Performance (Part 2: Wartime)

1. The MC represents the scream of the enemy (the hero's subordinate) that instructs enemy soldiers to attack the main character (acting as a voice actor).
2. He explains how the samurai is prepared for his own death, but that he did not give up and continued to fight (acting as a voice actor).
3. As the fighting becomes fiercer, he screams repeatedly (acting as a voice actor).

#### F. Performance (Part 3: Ending)

1. The MC screams again (acting as a voice actor).
2. He shouts the words of the protagonist, who has reached the end of his life (acting as a voice actor).

#### G. Unlock the acting position

1. The MC says "Ha!" and unlocks the acting position (acting as a conductor).

#### H. Closing remarks

1. The MC thanks the audience from his heart (acting as a team representative).

#### I. Order of withdrawal

1. He says "Ha!" again and lets the team withdraw (acting as a conductor).

In this way, the MC is not merely saying “Ha”. The MC plays an extremely important role in clarifying the relationship between the ambiguous meanings of dances and regional culture through its various acts. The MC is not only the moderator who explains the dance theme before the performance, but also repeatedly enters in and leaves the performance as it continues. Sometimes he will explain the meaning of the performance from a position outside the dance team. Sometimes he will interact directly with the team, not as a performer, but rather as a conductor who regulates the dancers. In some cases, the MC acts as a voice actor to convey characters’ feelings. By doing so, the performance’s meaning and story are conveyed to the audience.

### 3.5. Music and Song

Music plays an important role in conveying the content of performance, but such role itself is common to all accompaniment music, not unique to music of Yosakoi Soran. However, the performance style of Yosakoi Soran extends beyond mere dance to become a musical drama that expresses a local area’s story using many scene transitions. Consequently, it is almost impossible to continue playing the same folk song throughout the performance in a monotonous beat. Instead, it is becoming increasingly common that different music is used depending on the scene. Therefore, the musical accompaniment at Yosakoi Soran is also changing.

It is noteworthy that, as mentioned previously, there is no more detailed provision than that local music should be included in that passage; in principle, any music is acceptable.

Another important factor about the music is the role of songs. In the performance of *Geten* mentioned previously, while role of MC is performed by a man, the singing is performed by women. This song by female voice, if using the scene sign used in 2.4, is sung in parts E and F, that is, in the climax of the performance. However, its content is surprising. The subject of the song is not the story’s hero (Nobunaga), but the team members, who dance as powerfully as they can. The song is sung during the re-localization process, but it is not related to the local hero. Why is this? I will answer this in section 4. Before that, I will discuss the relationship between Yosakoi Soran and Japanese pop culture, another factor that makes re-localization possible during these performances.

## 4. Points of contact with Japanese pop culture

In general, mass media are currently the main distributors of Japanese pop culture. Various cultural items are produced through different cultural industries (animation, video games, idols, tourism, and so on) and released through online and offline routes. As co-creators of culture, people rebuild such items into their own products and bring them into various real sites. For example, they may enjoy cosplaying at events, or going on pilgrimages to sacred sites. They exchange their products with each other and comment on others’ photos and videos on social media. Anything that is placed in such a flow is a pop culture artifact, even though it is already out of fashion in a genre of cultural industry.

Yosakoi Soran is also such a site of cultural co-creation, and many similarities exist between Japanese pop culture such as video games, idols, tourism, and costumes and Yosakoi Soran. To fulfill the semiotic process necessary for the realization of re-localization, that is, to share the local culture with the audience, the semiosis in Japanese pop culture not directly related to the local culture is utilized.

### 4.1. Relationship with video games

I have previously discussed how the Yosakoi Soran team decided on the theme of local culture as their own basis for re-localization. Through the process of this re-localization, a relationship with video games, one of the artifacts of Japanese pop culture, appears.

In the previous section, I introduced the dance team *Kagura*, based in Aichi Prefecture, who danced the story of the life and death of a local samurai hero. The similarities with video games lie in the style of the hero's costume. The hero is a samurai, Nobunaga Oda, who is connected with Gifu and Aichi prefectures. In an official portrait, he is depicted in a figure wearing *kamishimo*, a samurai costume. However, the costume the dancer playing Nobunaga wears on the stage is not the costume of this portrait. Instead, his costume is extremely close to the costume that the Nobunaga character has worn in Japanese video games based on the Sengoku period, such as *Nobunaga no Yabou* (The Ambition of Nobunaga) since 1983. In these games Nobunaga wears a long Western-style cloak, with a high collar and ornate fringe. Of course, we cannot say the style is completely fictional. Luis Frois, a missionary of the Society of Jesus noted in his *History of Japan* that some aristocrats or citizens gave Nobunaga a scarlet cloak as a gift (Matsuda and Kawasaki 1973: 28). However, no official portrait exists depicting Nobunaga in this style. Nevertheless, it is used not only in video games but also in manga and anime. In other words, this style is an established image of Nobunaga that has widely penetrated pop culture. Therefore, it can be understood by anyone. The audience also shares that image, which further establishes it in pop culture. To convey the culture of their local area in the short time allocated to the dance teams, the image of Nobunaga established in video games is the most effective.

#### 4.2. Relationship to local idol and tourism groups

The image of Nobunaga perpetuated in pop culture is also shared in local idol and tourism groups. Although it has disbanded, there was a local idol group in Gifu Prefecture called *Tenka Fubu*. *Tenka Fubu* was Nobunaga's political slogan, and stood for unifying Japan with seven virtues and bringing peace. Members of *Tenka Fubu* also dressed and danced in costumes with colorful collars. Local tourist groups used clothing in a similar manner. There are several sight-seeing guide groups in Aichi and Gifu prefectures that use Nobunaga as a mascot. Although they are not idols, they are usually a group of *ikemen* (handsome young men); they are recognized as being equivalent to idols, and also earn enthusiastic fans. As in video games, these groups display Nobunaga as wearing a Western-style cloak.

#### 4.3. Relationship with pop culture as seen from costume matrix

We have explored the relationship between a samurai's costume and Japanese pop culture, but here again I analyze the costume from a different perspective, that is, from the perspective of the "costume matrix". A costume matrix is an idea proposed by various textbooks that teach how to efficiently depict various manga and anime characters (Mizunami and Mizuma 2014). It is a matrix comprising various items such as "uniforms, military uniforms, casual, goths, kimono, ethnic costumes, plants, animals, mechanics, attributes, four seasons"; by combining some of these items we can create a new character. For example, "kimono × mecha", "ethnic costume × four seasons", and so on. The advantage of this method is that it not only allows the user to easily create new characters with unusual combinations, but also that the characteristics of these characters can be easily recognized through the appearance of the combined costumes. This allows two things that are not usually compatible — novelty and familiarity — to be realized simultaneously.

Such a semiotic process is most common as a database consumption peculiar to Japanese culture (Azuma 2001: 71), but *Yosakoi Soran*'s costumes are also determined in the same way by selecting symbolized items from a costume matrix. As discussed previously, it is necessary to change costumes many times during *Yosakoi Soran* performances according to the story progression. Therefore, dancers' costumes must be easy to put on and take off and should be revers-



ible. In addition, they must contribute greatly to viewers' impression of the whole performance. To that end, there is a special costume production company that creates garments that meet these requirements. On their website, as with the costume matrix, various combinations of items are proposed. Not all teams use these production companies and their matrix, but the idea of selecting and combining items is shared by many Yosakoi Soran teams. Such costume matrices are widely used when teams are considering new costumes for performances on different themes. As if these stage plays were based on video games such as *Ansanburu Staazu!* (Ensemble Stars!) or *Touken Ranbu* (Sword Dance), various real-world items such as kimono, swords, military costumes, and so on, are combined to create new characters. The idea of choosing and combining items, and creating a fresh yet familiar combination, makes it possible to effectively convey the story of new performances at Yosakoi Soran.

#### 4.4. MC and music

In section 3.4, I described the various roles that the MC performs. The MC's shouting style seems to show some influence from the narrative style in anime tailors performed by the voice actor Shigeru Chiba. Because almost any musical style is accepted at Yosakoi Soran, various elements found in music from pop culture often appear. In the performance *Geten*, the female vocal at the climax of the performance clearly shows the influence of the vocal style of many female vocalists from the early 2000s. Although the performance refers to a centuries-old story, the manner in which it is told is firmly rooted in the world of pop culture.

#### 4.5. Localization freed from authenticity

However, the use of a costume matrix and modern musical styles urge us to reconsider the idea of re-localization. Each team expresses their regional culture. However, the subject changes every year, and the theme danced one year is abandoned for the following year. Each time, costume selection and combination from the matrix also changes. Whenever a new theme is chosen, new costumes are made. Themes and costumes are not shackled by requirements of authenticity. In this sense, the re-localization process at Yosakoi Soran is, as it were, a re-localization freed from authenticity.

The same phenomenon can also be seen in musical style. For example, the lyrics of the song sung at the climax of *Geten* do not concern the main character, but address those who are performing. This contrasts the MC's role of conveying the story to the audience. At the climax of the story, the male voice (MC) honoring the hero and the female voice (singer) praising the dancers intersect. There, the hero who survived as long as possible, and those who danced as possible, overlap. This further suggests the characteristics of re-localization at Yosakoi Soran, which is localization freed from authenticity.

### 5. Concluding remarks

I have identified and analyzed the multilayered semiotic process of Yosakoi Soran and its relationship with Japanese pop culture, especially regarding de-localization and re-localization. Consequently, it was possible to suggest the defining characteristic of re-localization at Yosakoi Soran, which is localization freed from authenticity. This research will serve as the basis for future studies that will investigate a wider range of cultural artifacts at Yosakoi Soran. It will also allow for a deeper analysis of its political implications, such as why fake historical elements are so rampant at Yosakoi Soran.

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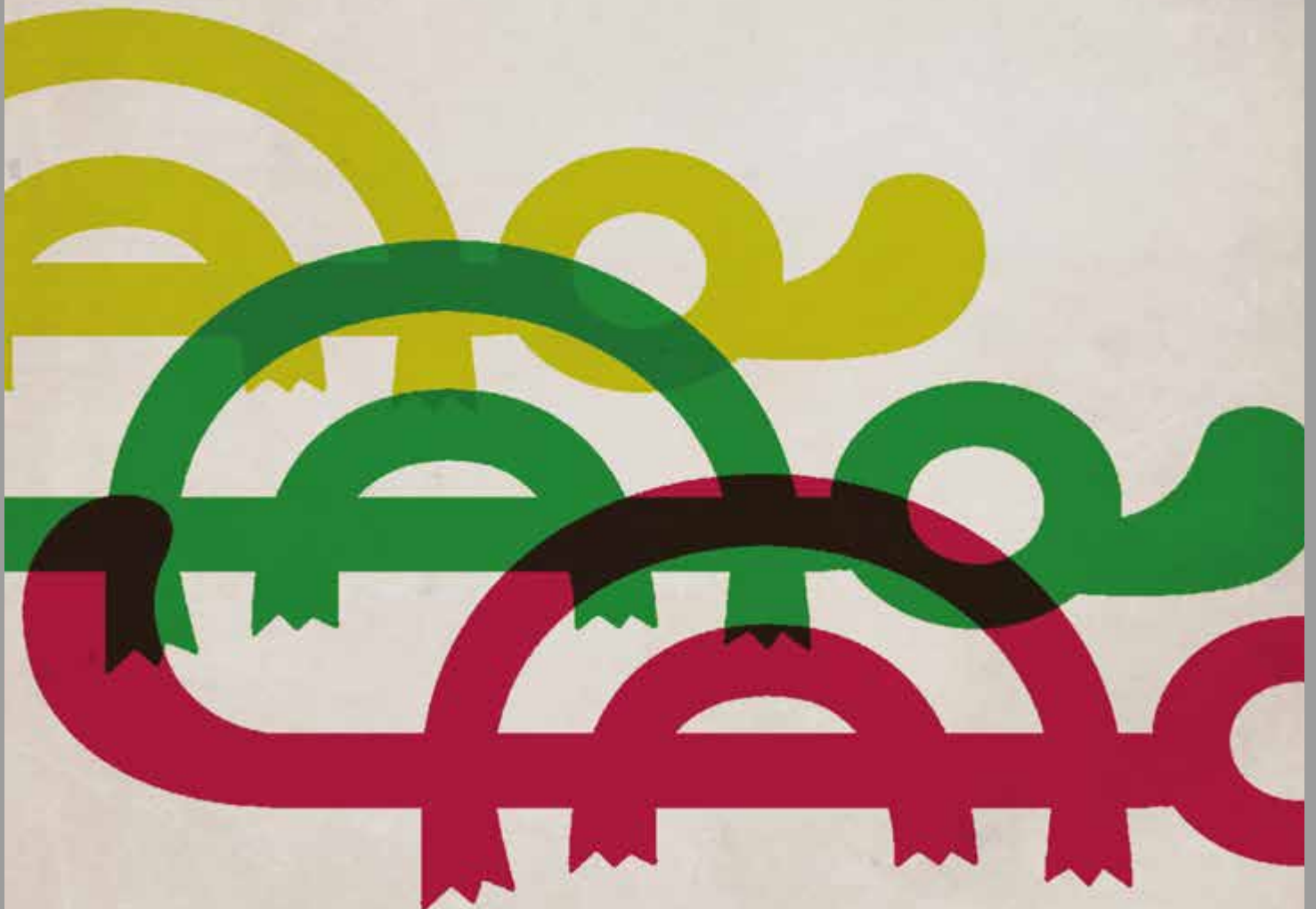
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# SOCIETY, CULTURE, POLITICS

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**FROM THE SESSION “(LA)  
PRODUCCIÓN CIRCULACIÓN Y CONSUMO DE LA  
SEMIÓTICA EN AMÉRICA  
LATINA Y ESPAÑA”**

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# ESCENOSFERA

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## **Abstract**

Esta investigación nace con la intención de encontrar una manera de estudiar y comprender el teatro en el siglo XXI, con el objetivo de aplicarlo en la formación de actores; el mejor apoyo es lo da la semiótica, como dice Pavis: “la semiología teatral es un método de análisis del texto y / o la representación”. Este estudio se basa en los estudios de Kowzan, que plantea que el teatro se puede estudiar en dos grandes áreas: lo que se ve y lo que se escucha, esto nos sitúa para nuestro estudio, desde la isóptica del espectador, quien percibe la dramaturgia escénica. Boves, aludiendo a Kowzan, refiere en el libro *Teatro y Semiología*: la clasificación de todos estos lenguajes o sistemas por “la intercambiabilidad de los signos de diferentes sistemas, su ambigüedad, la posibilidad de la expresión simultánea sobre la escena de algunos signos de diferentes sistemas, frente a la sucesividad que impone el signo verbal; e insiste en los problemas de la percepción e interpretación del signo dramático, por la falta de codificación y por la posibilidad de ofrecer varios significantes para un único significado” ; la multiplicidad de lenguajes y signos, la posibilidad polisémica entre cada uno de ellos, permite que veamos a todos ellos como los que conforman el universo al que llamaremos *Escenosfera*. En este ensayo puntualizaremos sobre uno de los sistemas que existen en la escenosfera, el actor y su proceso creativo para la creación del personaje.

## **1. Escenosfera**

El presente ensayo es parte de un proceso de disertación que tiene la intención de encontrar una manera de estudiar y comprender el teatro en el siglo XXI, con el objetivo de aplicarlo en la formación de actores. El mejor apoyo es lo da la semiótica, como dice P. Pavis: la semiología teatral es un método de análisis del texto y/o la representación. Más precisamente nos basamos en los estudios de Kowzan (1997), quien plantea que el teatro se puede estudiar en dos grandes áreas: lo que se ve y lo que se escucha — esto nos sitúa desde la isóptica del espectador. Boves, aludiendo a Kowzan, refiere en el libro *Teatro y Semiología*, la clasificación de todos estos lenguajes o sistemas por:

La intercambiabilidad de los signos de diferentes sistemas, su ambigüedad, la posibilidad de la expresión simultánea sobre la escena de algunos signos de diferentes sistemas, frente a la sucesividad que impone el signo verbal; e insiste en los problemas de la percepción e interpretación del signo dramático, por la falta de codificación y por la posibilidad de ofrecer varios significantes para un único significado (Bobes Naves 2004: 504).

La multiplicidad de lenguajes y signos, la posibilidad polisémica entre cada uno de ellos, permite que los veamos como el universo al que llamaremos *Escenosfera*; ellos generan el vasto universo material y simbólico que toma vida en el espacio escénico, los cuales, a su vez, crearán las fronteras, como señala Kowzan, refiriéndose a los conjuntos de signos que se generan en cada uno de los sistemas escénicos:

Lo que verdaderamente nos interesa son los conjuntos de signos de diferentes orígenes, sus articulaciones internas y externas, sus encadenamientos, el aspecto heterosemiótico (o heterosémico) del fenómeno teatral, de la textura del espectáculo”; así, empezamos a conceptualizar los límites y fronteras de la escenosfera, como señala Lotman sobre las características de la semiosfera: “necesita de un entorno exterior “no organizado” y se lo construye en caso de ausencia de éste (Kowzan 1997).

Nuestro espacio exterior será el espectador, quien es el motivo de todo el fenómeno teatral y, al ser el último receptor, estará encargado del proceso de decodificación y recodificación del mensaje que se transmite.

Es clara la gran variedad de lenguajes que conforman la dramaturgia escénica, la gran multiplicidad de signos, códigos y convenciones y, como estos, se potencian o multiplican en el momento de la representación; en todo el proceso, existen múltiples instantes de codificación-decodificación y de significación, al pasar por cada uno de los receptores, dígame: dramaturgo, director, actor, público o lector. Los límites y fronteras de la escenosfera serán los diferentes lenguajes escénicos-teatrales, ellos generan el vasto universo material y simbólico que toma vida en la representación, el espacio exterior, estará limitado por el espectador, quien es el motivo de todo el fenómeno escénico.

La escenosfera estará conformada por: el edificio teatral, el espacio escénico, la escenografía, la utilería, el vestuario, los peinados, el maquillaje, la iluminación, el actor-personaje, el texto escrito, el texto pronunciado, la música, los efectos sonoros y, como ya comentamos, el público o espectador. En todos estos lenguajes y sistemas existen diferentes niveles de percepción y lectura; a continuación veremos uno de ellos: el proceso de creación del actor al construir el personaje.

## 2. Del actor a la creación del personaje

El *actor* es el que ejecuta las acciones e integra todo en la escenosfera; estas y el manejo de sus herramientas expresivas (voz, cuerpo y emociones) le permiten lograr de manera veraz su fin: crear e interpretar — actuar — un personaje.

El punto de partida está en el texto dramático, material que recibe el actor para estudiar y analizar en el trabajo de mesa y desempeñar su trabajo; el arte dramático lleva a escena un texto con todos sus elementos y convenciones, poniendo de manifiesto los signos de manera implícita y/o explícita para que sean vistos y decodificados por el espectador en el tiempo de la representación, “El tiempo dramático se da en presente, y el tiempo de un drama puede ser medido en tres niveles: El de las acciones o situaciones (historia); El de las palabras (discurso); y el de La Representación, que suma a las palabras los signos no – verbales del texto espectacular que se realizarán en escena” (Bobes Naves 1991). El actor aplica el material recogido en el trabajo de mesa, en el análisis del texto, con las indicaciones que dé el director, para llevar a cabo su trabajo en la creación del personaje a través de las improvisaciones en los ensayos.

¿Qué es interpretar, representar?, Aristóteles lo planteaba como *mimesis*, “imitación”, y creía que imitar es algo natural del hombre y que todos los hombres sienten placer en la imitación. El capítulo II determina el objeto de la imitación, es decir, se imita a sujetos que obran, que actúan y éstos han de ser por su carácter o buenos o malos, lo que se distingue por sus costumbres, que éstas sean por la virtud y por el vicio. El capítulo III recuerda de forma concisa las diferentes maneras de imitar, refiriéndose a las cualidades del poeta y su manera de estructurar los sucesos en la fábula, nos aclara que en estos sucesos se *desarrollan las acciones* y éstas son *determinadas por las costumbres y la manera de pensar de los personajes*. Los sucesos dentro de la fábula tienen un principio, un desarrollo y un fin, y tienen que suscitar acciones veraces, que sean probables en tiempo y lugar (las tres unidades); todas estas acciones tienen que originar un reconocimiento y éste causará lástima o espanto (el justo medio).

El vestuario, el maquillaje, los decorados, los accesorios, la iluminación, la música y los efectos especiales, todos ellos parte de la escenasfera, se usan para ayudar a crear una ilusión de lugares, tiempos, personajes, o para enfatizar una cualidad especial de la representación y diferenciarla de la experiencia cotidiana, siempre sirviendo de apoyo y respaldo al trabajo del actor, siendo su misión: interpretar el personaje, ejecutarlo y recrearlo mediante *acciones* que denoten el *carácter del personaje*, sus antecedentes, sus consecuentes, sus *emociones*, sus *motivos*, sus *objetivos*, todo dentro de una estructura que cuenta con un lugar de acción, un tiempo en el que suceden los acontecimientos y con todos los elementos que rodean a la representación para que se generen (codifiquen) y sean leídos (decodifiquen) los *signos* de la manera en que se ha decidido contar la historia en la dramaturgia escénica.

Por lo tanto, podemos decir que la imitación es la reproducción de ciertos fenómenos, como una postura, un gesto o un acto; la mayoría de las conductas y comportamientos sociales, como la educación, las tradiciones y costumbres, o la moda, se basan en la imitación.

Cuando vemos que un hombre camina por una habitación, abre cajones, mira debajo de las revistas, etc., podemos describir su conducta en términos totalmente objetivos. Ahora está en determinada parte de la habitación; ha tomado un libro entre el pulgar y el índice de su mano derecha; levanta el libro e inclina la cabeza de tal manera que puede ver cualquier objeto que esté debajo. También podemos interpretar su conducta, o “leer un significado en ella”, si decimos que “está buscando algo” o, más específicamente, que “está buscando sus gafas”. Lo que hemos añadido no es una descripción más completa de su conducta, sino una inferencia sobre las variables que la causan. Esto es así, aunque preguntemos qué hace y él responda: “busco mis gafas”. Esto no es una descripción más completa de su conducta, sino de “las variables de las cuales su conducta es una función” (Fadiman y Frager 1979).

La imitación del personaje o máscara es compleja, porque exige transmitir en signos visuales-corporales la conducta, las costumbres, las actitudes, la manera de hablar, los movimientos, los ritmos, dejando ver el carácter y el temperamento. Como comenta César Oliva refiriéndose a la máscara con los griegos: “Podríamos decir que la máscara opera la transmutación del actor en personaje o, mejor dicho, la ocultación de los rasgos que individualizan al actor; a fin de que éste deje manifiestos los rasgos del personaje reflejados en la máscara” (Oliva 1990).

¿Cómo lograr que un actor imite perfectamente, más allá de sus cualidades histriónicas, de su inspiración o de su talento? Primero está la formación profesional que tenga y la práctica escénica o las tablas; todo aquel que tenga la osadía de pisar un escenario debe tener una formación profesional, tiene que haber estudiado *técnicas interpretativas*, tener una *formación corporal* rigurosa, tener una *preparación vocal* adecuada y tiene que haber desarrollado la habilidad de aplicar todas esas técnicas sobre el material que recibe, el texto dramático, para lo cual, tiene que tener una preparación en el *estudio y análisis del texto*, tener una buena *cultura general*.

Se han planteado diferentes elementos a considerar en el momento de estudiar el personaje y a recrear en el proceso de construirlo; la mayoría de estos rasgos y características pertenecen al actor como individuo, pero tendrá que adaptarlas, modificarlas o ignorarlas para adecuar su *yo* a las características de la personalidad del personaje. Las *tipologías* o *tipos* son sistemas de clasificación de la personalidad de los individuos que se basan en cuatro características: constitución física, temperamento, inteligencia y carácter.

- *Constitución física*: el correcto desarrollo corporal permite una mejor integración social y las deficiencias físicas condicionan el trato social y la misma autoestima del individuo, llevándolo a una intro o extroversión. Algunos subrayan elementos de la morfología corporal *biotipos*, los cuales se supone determinan no sólo el aspecto físico; sino también el comportamiento psíquico. De estas tendencias es de donde evolucionan algunas técnicas o escuelas de interpretación, donde el trabajo básico del actor en su formación es lo que denominamos la *Biomecánica* de Meyerhold.
- *Temperamento*: son los fenómenos característicos de la naturaleza emocional de un individuo, incluyendo susceptibilidad emocional, estado de humor; es el aspecto emotivo de la personalidad. Desde la antigüedad y en el campo de la medicina, Hipócrates ya había definido los temperamentos, acercándose o partiendo de los elementos de la naturaleza y de los humores.

Elementos	Humores	Temperamentos
Aire	Sangre	Sanguíneo
Tierra	Bilis Negra	Melancólico
Fuego	Bilis Amarilla	Colérico
Agua	Flema	Flemático

Jung dice que existen dos líneas dentro de los temperamentos: *extroversión*, centrado en el mundo, es espontáneo, abierto y la *introversión*, centrado en su *yo*; también nos habla de cuatro *funciones* que son las maneras de lidiar con el mundo ya seas intro o extrovertido.

Sensaciones: obtener información a través de los significados de los sentidos; es una función racional, comprende más a las percepciones que al juicio de la información.

Pensamiento: evaluar la información o las ideas de forma racional y lógica, es una función racional.

Intuición: modelo de percepción que funciona fuera de los procesos conscientes típicos, es una función irracional, “es como ver alrededor de las esquinas”.

Sentimientos: sentir, como pensar, es una evaluación de la información, es una función racional (Fordham 1968: 64).

Eysenck, amplía las líneas del temperamento de Jung a cuatro:

Extroversión: activo, optimista, impulsivo, voluble, sociable, hablador

Introversión: tranquilo, poco sociable, reservado, pesimista, reflexivo.

Estable: activo, ecuanimidad, calma, control, despreocupado, dinámico.

Inestable: susceptible, agitado, agresivo, excitable, ansioso (Jourad y Landsman 1987: 123).

Emoción es un término empleado frecuentemente como sinónimo de sentimientos y que en psicología se emplea para denominar una reacción que implica determinados cambios fisiológicos, tales como: la aceleración o la disminución del ritmo del pulso; la disminución o el

incremento de la actividad de ciertas glándulas, o un cambio de la temperatura corporal. Todo ello estimula al individuo, o alguna parte de su organismo, para aumentar su actividad: “Las tres reacciones primarias de este tipo son la ira, el amor y el miedo, que brotan como respuesta inmediata a un estímulo externo, o son el resultado de un proceso subjetivo, como la memoria, la asociación o la introspección” (Jourard, S y Landsman, T. 1987).

Veamos lo que dicen tres expertos sobre las emociones y cómo afectan en nuestra integración social, en el desarrollo de nuestros deseos para el alcance de metas y objetivos, y cómo son estimuladas por diferentes glándulas.

Jung nos habla sobre la importancia de las emociones: “La emoción es la fuente principal de la conciencia” (Jung, 1970: 69). Mientras que Alfred Adler profundiza sobre ellas y cómo afectan a nuestra integración social:

Habla de dos tipos de emociones: las emociones socialmente disyuntivas, que están relacionadas con el logro individual de las metas, y las emociones socialmente conjuntivas, que propenden a fomentar la interacción social. Las emociones disyuntivas, como la ira, el temor o el disgusto, tratan de producir un cambio sustitutivo en la situación de vida del individuo, a que a veces sea a expensas de los demás. Surgen de una sensación de fracaso o inadaptación y sirven para movilizar la fuerza del individuo, para realizar nuevos esfuerzos. Las emociones conjuntivas tratan de estar socialmente orientadas, como sucede con el deseo de compartir la alegría, la risa con los demás. La emoción de simpatía es “la expresión más pura de interés social” y revela hasta dónde podemos relacionarlas con otras (Fadiman y Frager 1979: 80).

Para Frederick S. Perls:

Las emociones son la fuerza que da energía a todas las acciones”. Las emociones son la expresión de nuestra excitación fundamental, “las formas y los medios para expresar nuestras elecciones y satisfacer nuestras necesidades”. La emoción es distinta según las diferentes situaciones; por ejemplo, “es diferente la de las glándulas suprarrenales de la ira y el temor en comparación a la de las glándulas sexuales en la libido. La excitación emocional moviliza el sistema muscular. Si evitamos la expresión muscular de la emoción, provocamos la ansiedad, que es el embotellamiento de la excitación (Fadiman y Frager 1979: 187).

Se puede concluir que: las emociones son la energía de las acciones, reguladas por nuestra relación-reacción al entorno, provocando diferentes sentimientos que son dados por cambios o reacciones fisiológicas, dicho sea: son los patrones de conducta y estos regulan nuestros hábitos.

Al momento de estudiar el papel y construir el personaje es de vital importancia tener en cuenta todos los patrones de conducta que observemos en el personaje, ya que a partir de estos patrones podremos estructurar y crear la partitura de acción del personaje. Como dice B. F. Skinner: “La personalidad es como una colección de patrones de conducta” (Fadiman y Frager 1979: 258). ¿Qué es la conducta? Es todo aquello que un organismo, en nuestro caso un personaje, *hace y puede ser observado...* Es aquella parte del funcionamiento de un organismo que está empeñada en actuar o tener trato con el mundo exterior.

Según Skinner:

La conducta es el reflejo de algún estímulo y éste puede ser condicionado, ya sea por la voluntad de un tercero, o se va condicionando el individuo por medio de los estímulos que su entorno social le da, por experiencias previas y por su historia genética; generando así, acciones y reacciones que moldean la personalidad del individuo (Fadiman y Frager 1979: 269).

Cada uno de estos estímulos generará una respuesta en el individuo, a esto es a lo que Skinner llama *condicionamiento operante*: la conducta operante se fortalece o se debilita por medio



de los eventos que siguen a la respuesta. Él pone de ejemplo cuando quería enseñar a nadar a su hija, que tenía miedo de meter la cabeza al agua y hacer burbujas mientras estaba sumergida; para romper ese miedo buscó condicionar la respuesta de su hija con un estímulo: si se mojaba la cabeza le daba un chocolate — esto es, cambiar el miedo por un estímulo placentero.

De la misma manera en la vida diaria, si hacemos algo y el resultado es positivo, compensa el esfuerzo realizado; de esta forma, si en alguna otra ocasión se plantea una situación similar ya tendremos la experiencia para ejecutar una acción igual o similar con más confianza, es parte del aprendizaje de la vida. Todo lo contrario pasa si el resultado en la experiencia es negativo, ya que no tendremos el ánimo y no habremos generado el hábito para enfrentarnos al estímulo. Para lograr superar esa etapa de negación o de indecisión entre hacer algo o no, pese a la experiencia, tenemos que tener o vivir una etapa de:

Reforzamiento: cualquier estímulo que aumenta la probabilidad de una respuesta. Existen dos tipos de reforzadores, los positivos y los negativos; los primeros hacen que ocurra una conducta o una respuesta deseada y los segundos, produce la respuesta deseada mediante un estímulo aversivo, en el sentido de que son las cosas de las cuales nos apartamos. Están también los: Reforzadores primarios, que son las recompensas físicas directas, y los secundarios son los estímulos neutrales que se han asociado con los reforzadores primarios, de modo que a su vez actúan como recompensas. El dinero es un ejemplo de reforzador secundario (Fadiman y Frager 1979: 260).

Seguimos sumando elementos que nos son útiles en la creación del personaje, tenemos que saber observar el ambiente en el que se desarrolla la acción, los antecedentes históricos y de relación, a lo que llamamos las circunstancias dadas, ya que como hemos visto, éstas determinarán *las emociones, la conducta, los hábitos y la personalidad*.

Todos los *estímulos* que recibimos, son el motor para alcanzar los *objetivos del personaje* en la historia, y que los *reforzadores* son los generadores de *los conflictos*, la lucha de fuerzas; estos reforzadores obligan *a tomar decisiones para ejecutar una acción* en pos del objetivo, en esta toma de decisión intervienen: la experiencia de vida, la experiencia emotiva, los recuerdos, los conocimientos adquiridos, es decir, las circunstancias dadas, (tanto del personaje como del actor.)

La energía, la fuerza y la seguridad con que ejecute las acciones nuestro personaje, dependerán de su madurez emotiva, esto es, de su actitud, siendo ésta la disposición que se tiene para responder de manera favorable o desfavorable hacia algún estímulo.

Las actitudes están integradas por opiniones (ideas que se tiene sobre algo, no siempre de manera objetiva), creencias, sentimientos (reacción emocional sobre algún estímulo), conductas (tendencia a comportarse según opinión y sentimiento propio), no sólo *la actitud* determina la respuesta; depende *del carácter, de la personalidad, del temperamento*, son parte del todo que llamamos *ser humano*, no se pueden considerar de manera aislada.

- *Inteligencia*: es la capacidad que tenemos para resolver problemas y adaptarnos al continuo cambio de nuestro entorno; la inteligencia se clasifica de diferentes maneras según como captamos y asimilemos este entorno, tendiendo más a las imágenes, al raciocinio, a la emotividad, etc. *Tipos de Inteligencia*: comprensiva, inventiva, crítica, espacial o concreta y abstracta.
- *Carácter*: determina nuestra forma de actuar, de comportarnos de una manera constante y deja ver nuestros rasgos o patrones de conductas morales y éticas y sociales. Distingue inconfundiblemente a un individuo. El carácter tiene matices, como son: *a)* rasgos morales y éticos y *b)* Determina formas constantes y típicas de actuar. La importancia del carácter radica en que demuestra los valores que vive el individuo, la forma de tomar y llevar a cabo las decisiones y de conducirse conscientemente con los demás.

### 3. La caracterización del personaje

Después de tratar los aspectos sobre el carácter, el temperamento, los hábitos, las emociones y todos los detalles que indican la personalidad, podemos hablar sobre la *caracterización*. En el mundo de la interpretación se habla de la *caracterización*, ésta se puede trabajar en dos líneas: la primera, para crear el personaje desde sus *características* físicas (caracterización externa); la segunda, para crear un personaje desde su psicología, desde su *carácter*, desde su personalidad (caracterización interna). Hablar de la construcción del carácter de un personaje no es tarea fácil por la gran cantidad de variables que involucra; la asimilación y aplicación de las variables se complica cuando se pretende utilizarlas para interpretar o recrear la vida de un personaje, implica el esfuerzo que conlleva al actor poder adaptar todas estas variables a su propia personalidad y romper con sus patrones de conducta.

En cuanto a la construcción de las *características* físicas, es otra tarea que debe desarrollar el actor a la hora de construir su personaje en los ensayos, la construcción física consiste en volcar de manera convincente todos los movimientos y acciones que ejecuta el personaje para obtener sus objetivos dentro de la línea de acción de manera armónica con su carácter.

El carácter, o los caracteres, se ha estudiado mucho y desde muy diversos puntos de vista; ha sido una preocupación, o más bien, la ocupación de los filósofos desde los tiempos de Platón y Aristóteles, uno de los discípulos de éste, Teofrasto, nos ha brindado un estudio sobre los caracteres, al mismo tiempo nos deja ver y conocer el perfil de diferentes comportamientos de los individuos de su época. Teofrasto escribe su tratado sobre los caracteres, donde analiza los distintos temperamentos como respuesta a su interés por el hecho cómico, en su poética, habla sobre un género antagónico a la tragedia, donde subraya la importancia de la imitación de personas inferiores.

Para conseguir una semejanza con la realidad, es preciso reproducir los hechos de la vida cotidiana y el lenguaje natural que se emplea en tales circunstancias, ya que, en ambos niveles — la situación y la elocución —, es donde puede desencadenarse el mecanismo psíquico de la risa... La obra que comentamos es una mimesis de los defectos — que no de los vicios — que aquejan frecuentemente a la gente mediocre y carente de formación (Teofrasto 1988: 20).

La forma en que plantea sus observaciones sobre los defectos y diferentes perfiles psicológicos en seres cotidianos nos da un material riquísimo para nuestro trabajo actoral, también nos da un ejemplo de cómo podemos ver, observar y analizar a nuestros congéneres, para enriquecer nuestra memoria emotiva, sensitiva, de patrones de conducta y en general toda la información, que a su tiempo, podemos utilizar en el proceso de construcción de personaje, ya que nos da: “una serie de rasgos diferenciadores y paradigmáticos en cada caso. La observación directa de los seres y de la naturaleza en general debió ser determinante. Todas estas orientaciones tienden a un mejor conocimiento del hombre en tanto individuo” (Teofrasto 1988: 27).

Hay que tener en cuenta estos cuatro puntos: constitución física, temperamento, inteligencia y carácter cuando construimos a nuestro personaje; tenemos que considerar también, las reacciones orgánicas que se generan en cualquier momento de la vida de nuestro personaje, el que vamos a representar, como por ejemplo: los estados emotivos generan un ritmo respiratorio y cardíaco específico, diferente a un estado de reposo, el estado de estrés o tensión corporal no es el mismo en una situación de acecho si se es la víctima o el victimario; la sudoración o deshidratación que se puede generar con relación al lugar y época en la que se desarrolle la acción; estas diferentes variables físicas producto de los estados anímicos, generan reacciones orgánicas diferentes en nuestro personaje, lograr representarlas o no por parte del actor dependerá de la técnica o metodología de trabajo que haya aprendido y utilice en su proceso creativo; también,

del estilo de la obra y de las exigencias del director para realizar su dramaturgia escénica, pero, sin importar cuáles sean las variables que el actor enfrente y tenga que superar, deberá sumar e incluir en su trabajo creativo todo el proceso de búsqueda y análisis, pretendiendo siempre que su acción sea: veraz, orgánica y ética.

Al analizar el texto dramático es necesario tener en cuenta todo lo contemplado, de los rasgos más sutiles o de las pequeñas insinuaciones o pistas que el dramaturgo nos dé en el texto dramático, tendremos que obtener toda la información que necesitamos para construir nuestro personaje.

Stanislavsky hace una síntesis de todos los procesos para la construcción del personaje:

Una obra y sus roles poseen diversos planos, por donde fluye su vida:

- “Primero, existe el plano externo de los hechos, lo que ocurre, la trama, su forma. Es contiguo al plano de la situación social, subdividido en clase, nacionalidad y ubicación histórica.
- Hay un plano literario, que comprende las ideas, su estilo y otros aspectos.
- Hay un plano estético, al que concierne todo lo que es específicamente teatral, artístico, que tiene que ver con la puesta en escena y la producción.
- Hay un plano psicológico de la línea interna de acción y sentimientos y caracterización interna.
- El plano físico cuyas leyes fundamentales son: naturaleza, objetivos y acciones físicas y la caracterización externa.
- Finalmente, existe el plano personal de sentimientos creativos que pertenecen al actor.”
- “Cuanto mejor conozca el actor la psicología del alma y la naturaleza humana, cuanto más la estudie en sus momentos libres, más profundamente podrá penetrar en la escénica espiritual de la pasión humana, y por lo tanto más detallada, compleja y variada será la partitura de cualquier papel que haga” (Stanislavsky 1984).

Queda mucho por hacer, por decir, por compartir y, sobre todo, por recibir de todos los investigadores y estudiosos de esta área.

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# LAS FUNCIONES DOCUMENTALES. ESTRATEGIAS DE USO DE LOS DOCUMENTOS EN EL CÓMIC DOCUMENTAL<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract**

En los últimos años se han originado claras tendencias enfocadas hacia la conservación y el almacenamiento de datos, lo cual se ha visto reflejado en numerosas prácticas culturales que podrían resumirse con la perífrasis *inflación documental*. Estas tendencias han tenido como respuesta una serie de prácticas, fundamentalmente narrativas, que pretenden dar inteligibilidad a esos datos. El cómic no es ajeno a estas tendencias, sobre todo en publicaciones recientes, donde se estrecha el vínculo entre la narración y los hechos reales.

A partir de los reportajes más cercanos al periodismo, pasando por proyectos biográficos hasta trabajos menos etiquetables dentro del cómic, nuestro objetivo es elaborar un modelo semiótico que dé cuenta de los posibles usos de los documentos en aquellos textos cómic que podríamos llamar documentales.

El corpus quedará articulado en una tipología de las distintas funciones documentales que pueden cumplir los documentos dentro de estos textos: referencial-veridictiva, sistémica, narrativa y reveladora. A cada una de ellas le corresponderán distintas estrategias textuales que determinarán en última instancia diferentes actitudes de lectura de la realidad que se pretende conocer o describir.

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## 1. Introducción

Parece un diagnóstico incuestionable el hecho de que vivimos en un presente obstinado por la documentación, que tiene su correlato en la incesante producción de información en numerosos campos: el histórico, el burocrático, el comercial y el científico. Esta coyuntura ha sido bien resumida por la socióloga Nathalie Heinich (2009) con la expresión “inflación documental”.

Entre otras consecuencias, este espíritu del tiempo ha provocado que el género documental se encuentre en uno de sus momentos de mayor auge. Especialmente a partir de los años noventa las narraciones de no ficción se abrieron paso en las plataformas más dispares, apareciendo entre los géneros periodísticos nuevas formas de relato de gran formato que utilizan todo tipo de soportes y de estrategias narrativas.

Actualmente las narraciones de hechos reales ocupan una posición importante en la semiósfera mediática: desde los tradicionales medios televisivo y cinematográfico hasta territorios que, históricamente, han sido ocupados principalmente por los géneros de ficción. Entre ellos, el cómic, dominio por excelencia de aventuras fantásticas, ha visto aparecer recientemente en sus páginas siempre más relatos que pretenden dar fe de la realidad.

Precisamente el caso del cómic nos servirá para examinar nuestra pequeña hipótesis sobre el funcionamiento global del género documental. Para ello, y como paso previo, nos resulta necesario aclarar algunas cuestiones teóricas y metodológicas respecto a nuestro trabajo.

Una de las cuestiones principales sobre la que gira nuestro trabajo es la descripción de las formas o los modos posibles en que se podría dividir las relaciones entre los textos documentales y los documentos mismos. Lo que se observa aquí es un doble proceso de traducción: primero los documentos traducen los hechos reales o la realidad; y luego los textos documentales traducen los documentos de nuevo a determinadas formas que permiten el acceso a esa misma realidad.

Dentro de esta problemática es necesario ocuparse también del “valor documental”. Con ello entendemos una propiedad subyacente a los textos que ambicionan dar cuenta de una determinada realidad. Intentaremos identificar este rasgo general, que, además, no se circunscribe exclusivamente al género documental, sino que se puede hallar también en otros tipos de relato.

Es necesario especificar también que este valor depende de una sanción cultural, es decir, cada cultura establece cuáles son los rasgos pertinentes que determinan que un texto posea o no un valor documental. Con el fin de aclarar este cierto relativismo conceptual de partida, nos serviremos de un ejemplo de Umberto Eco (2012), quien recordaba que, para los griegos, la *Iliada* era un texto histórico y mantuvo su valor de historicidad hasta que los estoicos lo sancionaran como leyenda, privilegiando una lectura alegórica y excluyendo, por tanto, una lectura histórica o factual.

Asimismo, también es necesario tener presente que el valor de cada texto dentro de una cultura se correlaciona con una determinada función que aquel posee en el sistema. Iuri Lotman y Alexander Piatigorski lo expresan de forma muy clara: “la función del texto es definida como su papel social, su capacidad de dar servicio a determinadas necesidades de la colectividad” (1998: 163).

Por tanto, si aceptamos esta premisa, aceptaremos igualmente que, en nuestra cultura contemporánea, la función documental está estrechamente relacionada con el uso de los documentos que se hace en ciertos textos. De este modo, el objetivo de este trabajo es articular una breve tipología en la que puedan inscribirse las distintas estrategias textuales que rigen los usos de los documentos, a partir de las posibles funciones que tales estrategias otorgan a los documentos.

Por último, es oportuno establecer que, desde nuestra perspectiva metodológica, todo texto puede poseer una función documental. Partimos, como consecuencia, del presupuesto teórico de que todo objeto de conocimiento es, de algún modo, construido, y que el mismo acto mediante el

cual lo modelamos, hace relevantes ciertas pertinencias a expensas de otras. O, dicho de otra forma, es posible proyectar el concepto de documento sobre cualquier colección de datos y de textos.

A todo esto se añade la circunstancia que, a pesar de la existencia de una disciplina enteramente dedicada a este objeto de estudio, no se ha alcanzado una definición suficientemente precisa del concepto de documento. En efecto, las definiciones clásicas en el campo de la documentación, que remiten esencialmente a las obras de Paul Otlet (1934) y de Suzanne Briet (1951), consideran documento todo aquel objeto que cumpla el papel de prueba de un hecho. La clave de estas definiciones se encuentra en el valor de mediación y en la sanción que permita a un objeto desempeñar la función de documento. En este sentido, todo objeto de la realidad adquiere el valor de documento a través de un proceso de documentación, que, desde una perspectiva semiótica, viene a coincidir con un proceso de textualización. En esta línea, vale la pena rescatar las palabras de Roger Collingwood, escuetas y esclarecedoras: “cualquier cosa en el mundo es documento potencial de algo” (1952: 280).

Tras este preámbulo, reflexionaremos a propósito de las funciones documentales tomando como referencia el caso del cómic. En los últimos veinte años han germinado en este medio numerosas publicaciones que, más allá de sus formas y aproximaciones particulares, pertenecen a la tendencia creciente que se podría definir como “cómic documental”. El origen de esta tradición se puede situar en 1996, cuando el reportero gráfico Joe Sacco publicó *Palestina*, obra que describe la vida cotidiana en los Territorios Ocupados de Cisjordania y de la Franja de Gaza. Desde este momento, son numerosos los autores de cómics que se han dedicado a las narraciones documentalistas, etiqueta amplia en la que caben tanto publicaciones de corte periodístico como también histórico.

Aparte del propio Sacco, que ha continuado su trabajo con obras como *Gorazde*, *El mediador*, *Notas al pie de Gaza* o *El final de la guerra*, entre los autores más significativos encontramos al canadiense Guy Delisle (*Shenzhen*, *Pyongyang*, *Crónicas birmanas*, *Crónicas de Jerusalén*, *Escapar*) y a la estadounidense Sarah Glidden (*Una judía americana perdida en Israel*, *Oscuridades programadas*). Además, en Europa son varios los autores que han hecho incursiones puntuales dentro de este género. Entre los casos más sobresalientes hallamos: el interesante experimento, a caballo entre el cómic y la serie fotográfica, de *El fotógrafo* de Emmanuel Guibert, Didier Lefèvre y Frédéric Lemercier; el apasionado reportaje *Kobane Calling* de ZeroCalcare, sobre la actual situación en la zona del Kurdistán sirio; el recientemente publicado *La grieta* de Carlos Spottorno y Guillermo Abril, un fotorreportaje sobre las fronteras europeas que adquiere la forma de cómic; y la trilogía biográfica *Doctor Uriel* de Sento, que traduce en cómic los cuadernos de un médico aragonés durante la Guerra Civil.

Apuntamos, por último, los dos cómics del italiano Igort, *Cuadernos ucranianos* y *Cuadernos rusos*, díptico dedicado a la herencia soviética que tomaremos como fuente principal de nuestros ejemplos. En palabras del mismo autor estos cuadernos representa una obra única, que relata su viaje en Ucrania y en Rusia, donde se afincó durante más de dos años para conocer la realidad actual y la herencia de los tiempos de la Unión Soviética en el presente.

En el primer volumen, *Cuadernos ucranianos. Memorias de los tiempos de la URSS*, Igort compila una colección de historias de vida y de informes de la policía secreta soviética con el fin prioritario de documentar el Holodomor, la hambruna sufrida en Ucrania en el invierno entre 1932 y 1933 y presuntamente orquestada por el gobierno moscovita.

El segundo libro, *Cuadernos rusos*, en la traducción española lleva por subtítulo *La guerra olvidada del Cáucaso*, lo cual indica su intención de documentar el conflicto ruso-checheno.

Pero, más en concreto, se trata de una investigación de Igot sobre la obra de la periodista rusa Anna Politkovskaya, como está señalado en el subtítulo original italiano: “*Sulle tracce di Anna Politkovskaya*” (“Tras las huellas de Anna Politkovskaya”).

Estos textos representan solo una selección de la producción documentalista de los últimos años. De ella, además, hemos excluido las publicaciones más enfocadas a lo noticioso (como los interesantes casos de la página web holandesa *Drawing the Times*, de la web italiana *Graphic News* y de la revista francesa *La Revue Dessinée*), hecho que habría multiplicado los ejemplos sin proporcionar elementos significativos con respecto a nuestra propuesta analítica. Como resultado del análisis de estos cómics, hemos intentado distinguir cuáles son las funciones documentales que puede desempeñar un texto y creemos que es posible reducirlas a cuatro. Se trata de una pequeña tipología cuya característica clave es la ausencia de exclusividad: como en el caso de las funciones del lenguaje descritas por Roman Jakobson (1988), todas pueden (o no) estar presentes al mismo tiempo, pero cada texto establece un orden jerárquico y pone en primer plano una(s) de ellas.

## 2. Función referencial-veridictiva

La primera función la llamaremos referencial-veridictiva. Con ella entendemos una estrategia textual que otorga a determinados documentos el valor de prueba o de indicio de un hecho. El texto sugiere una lectura indicial de los documentos, nos propone considerarlos como una huella de la realidad.

Así pues, los informes policiales desclasificados y los testimonios recopilados por Igot cumplen una función referencial, ya que son tratados como indicios del Holodomor en Ucrania y de los horrores de la guerra en Chechenia. Y obviamente, en los cómics que utilizan la fotografía, como *El fotógrafo* y *La grieta*, el efecto referencial se construye precisamente a partir del valor indicial de la imagen fotográfica, de la creencia socialmente aceptada según la cual la fotografía es testimonio de que algo ha estado ahí, delante de la cámara (Barthes 1990).

Esta función también puede suponer un cambio de sanción cultural con respecto a unos hechos pasados. Algo que se consideraba verdadero pasa a ser considerado como falso, o viceversa. En ella se establece la necesidad de decir la verdad sobre uno o varios hechos del pasado, lo cual determina también una acusación hacia los datos y los relatos existentes, que formarían parte de una “historia oficial” o de una “enciclopedia” hasta entonces incuestionables. Por tanto, el texto documental sugiere una nueva interpretación de los documentos y de los datos del pasado con el objetivo de encontrar contradicciones e incoherencias; otra posibilidad es que nuevos documentos aporten nueva información que haga emerger discordancias en los datos. En ambos casos, la consecuencia es una determinada reorganización del discurso sobre los hechos.

En este sentido, Igot denuncia de manera clara los dos acontecimientos que describe como genocidios y utiliza los documentos para apoyar esta interpretación. De esta forma se establece una tensión constante entre, por un lado, los informes de la Checa y las memorias de los testigos, y, por otro, la historia oficial, que permanece implícita durante toda la obra, aunque mencionada al inicio de *Cuadernos ucranianos*. De hecho, *Pagine nomadi*, obra publicada en 2012 que sirve de comentario sobre el proceso de creación de ambos *Cuadernos*, lleva un subtítulo que explicita esta polémica: “historias no oficiales de la Unión Soviética”. En la misma dirección se mueven las *Notas al pie de Gaza* de Joe Sacco, que él mismo presenta como acotaciones al margen de la historia, relatos sobre la cuestión palestina que nos muestran un conflicto distinto del que aparece en la narración oficial.

### 3. Función sistémica

A la segunda función le daremos el nombre de sistémica. En este punto podríamos remontarnos incluso a una observación de Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), quien recordaba que la reconstrucción del sistema de cada lengua es una operación que depende de la colección de documentos que se posee y que se selecciona. Podríamos decir, por tanto, que, mediante esta función, el texto otorga a los documentos un valor ejemplar con respecto a un sistema cultural o a un determinado lenguaje. Es decir, los documentos son tomados como manifestaciones especialmente significativas de un sistema de reglas; o de varios, ya que un mismo documento, por ejemplo, puede tener simultáneamente valor de ejemplaridad con respecto a una lengua natural y a un sistema literario. Más sencillamente, la función sistémica tiene que ver con el uso que se hace de los documentos para dar inteligibilidad a un determinado sistema cultural.

En *Cuadernos ucranianos* los testimonios que Igort recopila durante su proceso de inmersión en esa cultura que le es ajena le permiten entender mejor su funcionamiento como sistema, un procedimiento desplegado igualmente por ZeroCalcare en su viaje en los territorios del Kurdistán. Volviendo a la obra de Igort, podemos observar también cómo los testimonios del Holodomor constituyen una reconstrucción de un hecho histórico mediante su valor de ejemplaridad: las historias recopiladas por el autor italiano representan el acontecimiento por sinécdoque y por significatividad. Una operación análoga es la que lleva a cabo Guy Delisle, aunque de forma más superficial, cuando, observando las distintas indumentarias que llevan las comunidades hebreas en Jerusalén, describe sus hábitos, sus prácticas sociales y sus sistemas de creencias.

### 4. Función narrativa

Otro caso es el de la función narrativa. Aquí el texto pone los documentos al servicio del relato. Es decir, se establece un uso narrativo de los documentos, donde son las estructuras narrativas - con su memoria de género y el sistema de expectativas que de ella deriva, con sus propios ritmos, con sus propias necesidades - la que determinará la selección de datos, la inclusión y la exclusión de aquellos documentos que servirán de fuente.

Igort lo dice claramente en *Pagine nomadi*: “algunos relatos fueron descartados no porque fueran menos interesantes [...], sino porque estaban caracterizados por un particular ritmo narrativo. Como en la música: te das un ritmo y sobre él comienzas a componer la melodía” (2012: 29). De forma más prosaica, una idea análoga es expresada por Sarah Glidden en la introducción de su *Oscuridades programadas*: “las conversaciones transcritas han pasado por una fase de edición y condensación con el fin de que se transformaran en el guion de un cómic legible” (2017: XX).

En otras palabras, se podría decir que te das una estructura narrativa y sobre ella organizas datos y documentos. De alguna forma, además, esta función es intrínseca al propio proceso de disposición narrativa de los documentos, ya que inevitablemente la narración obliga a una determinada selección. Precisamente, escribir la historia implica hacer relevante un documento mediante la narración. Y es esta relevancia la que otorgará al documento un determinado valor histórico.

Además, hay que tener presente que el simple acto de marcar un inicio y un final significa imponer una estructura narrativa sobre los acontecimientos, aunque fuere mínima. Una historia, por verídica que sea, no es simplemente lo que ha acontecido. Siguiendo las indicaciones de Gregory Bateson (1976) y Iuri Lotman (1996) sobre el marco, podemos resaltar que la acción simbólica fundamental de encuadrar un conjunto de hechos dentro de un principio y un final es una operación poderosa a la par que sencilla. De esta manera, cualquier elemento incluido significa no solo por sí mismo, sino por la relación narrativa que mantiene con el resto de los elementos. El acto de trazar unas fronteras tiene por efecto la transformación de los elementos



dentro de su espacio, de manera que la inclusión de un documento en una narración implica que aquel adquiera una significación ulterior, añadida a la ya existente.

Aquí merece la pena señalar que en el nivel discursivo los documentos pueden cumplir diferentes funciones dentro del programa narrativo de cualquier texto, tanto en el plano sintáctico como en el semántico. Primeramente, en la dimensión sintáctica un documento puede estar actorializado, de manera que desempeñe alguna de las funciones actanciales que le están asignadas en el recorrido generativo del discurso.

Por ejemplo, en el trabajo de Igort algunos documentos cumplen el rol actancial de ayudante, es decir, aporta al sujeto la ayuda necesaria para la conjunción con su objeto de valor, que en el caso que hemos analizado es “convertirse en ruso”. Las entrevistas que Igort realiza, las publicaciones de Anna Politkovskaya, los informes de los servicios secretos soviéticos y demás documentos usados sirven a Igort para adquirir las competencias necesarias para la realización de su programa narrativo.

El documento puede desempeñar también los roles de objeto y de oponente. Por ejemplo, en algunos textos el documento aparece como un objeto a descubrir por parte del sujeto o también puede obstaculizar la realización del programa narrativo del sujeto, como ocurre en los casos de documentos falsos o encriptados.

También puede darse que el documento tematice el texto: en este caso estaríamos en la dimensión semántica del nivel discursivo. Esto se puede observar en el informe de la ONU sobre la matanza de Khan Younis que tematiza la obra de Joe Sacco *Notas al pie de Gaza*.

## 5. Función reveladora

El último caso de nuestra tipología podríamos denominarlo función reveladora, retomando una expresión que Siegfried Kracauer (1989) ha acuñado a propósito del cine. Esta función aparece cuando un texto hace dialogar a varios documentos, mediante una técnica que podríamos denominar de montaje. Es entonces posible que, por el mero hecho de estar en contacto o en relación, se revelan elementos que, pese a estar presentes en los documentos, sin este diálogo no podrían ser descubiertos. La relación sobre el que se fundamenta esta función establece un mecanismo semejante al que Walter Benjamin (2005) define como imagen dialéctica, donde, merced a una operación de montaje de fragmentos, se elabora una imagen conceptual que hace que pasado y futuro se iluminen recíprocamente desde el presente.

Esto lo podemos observar en un paso de los *Cuadernos* de Igort, cuando en el epílogo se hace dialogar a dos informes policiales sobre el exterminio de los *kulaks* y a la obra *Filocalia* del místico ucraniano Paisio Velichkovski. Las privaciones y los sufrimientos descritos en los informes se proyectan en una dimensión temporal y existencial más amplia, ya que, puestos en relación con el credo ortodoxo, se descifra en ellos el alma rusa y, en definitiva, toda su historia.

## 6. Conclusiones

Esperamos que nuestras consideraciones encuentren una futura confirmación en las evoluciones de esta forma. Con todo, tenemos la impresión de que la pequeña tipología que hemos delineado puede hallar su aplicabilidad también más allá de los territorios del cómic y confiamos que ayude a la inteligibilidad del papel de los documentos en todo tipo de relato documental. Quedaría por ver si estas cuatro funciones pueden ser refinadas o ampliadas a través de ulteriores análisis, tanto sobre el cómic como lo audiovisual o el medio escrito.

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**FROM THE SESSION  
“SOCIOSEMIÓTICA,  
INTERDISCIPLINA Y  
TRANSDISCIPLINA”**

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# INTERDISCURSIVIDAD SOCIO-SEMIÓTICA

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## **Abstract**

Este trabajo propone examinar la productividad del concepto sociológico de *campo* para los estudios del discurso. En ese sentido, resume primero las formas más elaboradas de transposición de la noción — el *campo discursivo* en la teoría del discurso social de Marc Angenot y el *tipo de discurso* propuesto por Eliseo Verón — para desarrollar luego las propuestas emanadas de mi propio trabajo de investigación; ya que, además de ofrecer un ingreso al *espesor* de lo social, la conflictividad de los campos y, fundamentalmente, la modificación de la posición que ocupan en la distribución de la tarea discursiva preludian, como trataré de mostrar, transformaciones generalizadas en la discursividad social.

## **1. La noción y sus interpretantes**

En términos de Pierre Bourdieu, el campo es “una red o configuración de relaciones objetivas entre posiciones”, cuya estructura se define por la relación de fuerza entre los participantes y cuyo límites “se encuentran en el punto en el cual terminan los efectos de campo”. Las fuerzas activas en el campo, sostiene Bourdieu, son las que definen el *capital específico*, que confiere un poder sobre “los instrumentos materializados o incorporados de producción o reproducción” y sobre “las reglas que definen el funcionamiento ordinario del campo” (Bourdieu y Wacquant [1992] 1995: 64-67).

Aunque no hay referencias explícitas, es posible relevar las resonancias de este planteo en el trabajo de Eliseo Verón. Como se recordará, Verón desarrolla, a partir del paradigma ternario de Peirce, una construcción relacional de los objetos del análisis del discurso (1993: 128), donde el recorte extrae del *continuum* de la actividad empírica del *discurrir* fragmentos discursivos — i.e. *estados* o *productos* (124) — en relación triádica con sus *condiciones de producción y reconocimiento*:

Las condiciones productivas de los discursos sociales tienen que ver, ya sea con las determinaciones que dan cuenta de las restricciones de generación de un discurso o de un tipo de discurso, ya sea con las determina-

ciones que definen las restricciones de su recepción. Llamamos a las primeras *condiciones de producción* y, a las segundas, *condiciones de reconocimiento*. Generados bajo condiciones determinadas, que producen sus efectos bajo condiciones también determinadas, es entre estos dos conjuntos de condiciones que circulan los discursos sociales” (Verón [1988] 1993: 127).

Entre las condiciones que determinan la producción de sentido — y dejan huellas en la superficie textual de los productos — ocupan un lugar fundamental otros discursos; pero también las relaciones, las prácticas y las instituciones que estructuran la vida social. El análisis de un corpus extendido permite así despejar el conjunto de reglas (la *gramática de producción*) que modelizan “el engendramiento de un tipo o de un género-P [género producto]” (Verón [1988] 2004: 201). Si bien Verón pone el énfasis en el dispositivo de enunciación, las estructuras institucionales y el esquema relacional son fundamentales en la definición de lo que llama *tipo de discurso* (periodístico, político, religioso, ...):

En lo que se refiere a la noción de “tipo” de discurso, me parece esencial asociarla, por un lado, a estructuras institucionales complejas que constituyen sus soportes organizacionales y, por el otro, a relaciones sociales cristalizadas de ofertas/expectativas que son los correlatos de estas estructuras institucionales. Por supuesto, estas estructuras institucionales y estas configuraciones de ofertas/expectativas, [...] son inseparables de los sistemas de representaciones que, en producción, estructuran el imaginario donde se construyen las figuras de los emisores y de los receptores de los discursos (Verón [1988] 2004: 195).

Más ambiciosa, seguramente, la noción de *campo discursivo* propuesta por Marc Angenot permite sistematizar de manera más compleja las condiciones de producción de los discursos sociales — entre ellas, las relaciones que sostienen con otras formaciones discursivas. Para poner en foco la operatividad de la noción, e incluso discutir los desarrollos posibles, es necesario, sin embargo, retener el marco conceptual en el cual aparece. Como se sabe, Angenot propone el sintagma *discurso social* — en singular — para designar un “objeto compuesto, formado por una serie de sub-conjuntos interactivos, de elementos migrantes metafóricos, donde operan las tendencias hegemónicas y las leyes tácitas” (1989: 16)<sup>1</sup>. Esto implica la posibilidad de identificar, más allá del todo cacofónico y empírico, del vasto rumor de los discursos sociales, de la infinita variedad de lenguajes, prácticas significantes, estilos y opiniones, una dominancia global a la cual llama, siguiendo a Gramsci, *hegemonía discursiva*: “La hegemonía es, fundamentalmente, un conjunto de mecanismos unificadores y reguladores que aseguran a la vez la división del trabajo discursivo y un grado de homogeneización de las retóricas, las tópicas y las doxa transdiscursivas” (1989: 22).

En unas coordenadas sociohistóricas determinadas, este conjunto de dispositivos prefigura los límites de lo decible y lo pensable, no como una reproducción mecánica, sino como un equilibrio inestable de fuerzas centrífugas y centrípetas, sostenido mediante desplazamientos y reciclajes; por cooptaciones, incorporaciones y banalizaciones de las novedades “verdaderas” (*contradiscursos*).

Al enumerar los componentes — indisociables — del “hecho hegemónico” (1989: 27-35), Angenot destaca seis elementos unificadores: la lengua legítima, tópica y gnoseología, fetiches y tabúes, egocentrismo/etnocentrismo, temáticas y visión de mundo, dominantes de pathos.

En tanto estos seis componentes explican las regularidades y semejanzas que atraviesan y cohesionan la variedad de la discursividad social en una época dada; el séptimo, el *sistema topológico*, da cuenta de la división de la tarea discursiva en *campos* trazados por las distintas formaciones, que Angenot define como “[...] el conjunto de elementos que hacen institucional-

1 Todas las traducciones de 1889 *Un état du discours social* son mías.



mente posible la formación, el control y la legitimación de un subsistema de discurso, y confieren un estatuto de reconocimiento a los agentes que en él operan, constituyendo una camaradería conflictiva en torno a las apuestas (enjeux) comunes” (1989: 93).

Los discursos reunidos en cada campo comparten rasgos pragmáticos, retóricos y temáticos, cumplen funciones conexas, y tienen una doctrina legitimante (una ideología del campo) que configura el objeto propio, determina los participantes reconocidos y permite la homologación de los productos. Visto desde afuera, dice Angenot, “todo campo es un dispositivo de rarefacción y de censura” (1989: 93).

El reconocimiento de estas particularidades no redundaría, sin embargo, en una naturalización de su autonomía, de su clausura o de su ahistoricidad. Por el contrario, Angenot sostiene que los campos, los géneros, los estilos son “formas reguladas de la disimilación de los discursos”, entre las cuales circulan, más o menos subrepticamente, las fórmulas y temas comunes que “refuerzan el efecto global de la hegemonía” (1989: 91).

No se trata, por supuesto, de que el autor desconozca las luchas que tensionan el discurso social (cf. 1989: 1081) o los cambios que se operan en el tiempo (cf. 2005: 28). Como se dijo, los campos no son colectividades “armoniosas”, sino espacios de confrontación. Más allá de la migración de ideologemas o de las sobredeterminaciones, esta conflictividad interna se reduplica *en la relación entre los campos*: hay fronteras imprecisas y porosas, zonas en litigio y “tierras de nadie”, guerras de independencia disciplinares y luchas por posicionarse en el centro del espacio simbólico. La topología de los discursos, desde el canon a los márgenes, es por definición inestable e histórica; pero el enfoque de la teoría del discurso social privilegia la capacidad totalizadora de la hegemonía discursiva en una sincronía en tiempo real; esto es, en un estado de discurso.

## 2. Campos y semiosis

Para una perspectiva sociosemiótica más interesada por el cambio (por el devenir de la semiosis), así se considere entre estados de discurso, los avatares de los campos discursivos y las modificaciones en la distribución de la tarea discursiva son fundamentales para comprender ciertas transformaciones generalizadas y concurrentes en las dominancias y el régimen de aceptabilidad hegemónicas. Es necesario, creo, pensar la conflictividad de los campos canónicos como el dispositivo que garantiza (paradoja aparente), la reformulación cíclica y la preservación de la hegemonía.

En ese sentido, el tránsito entre dos estados de discurso supone una crisis de la hegemonía discursiva y su superación mediante un nuevo *régimen signifiante* (Deleuze y Guattari [1980] 1987: 112) capaz de restaurar el /un/ equilibrio que neutralice y absorba las perturbaciones en el discurso social global.

A mi entender, las crisis de la hegemonía discursiva son postulables a partir de la multiplicación de enunciados que ponen en cuestión el régimen signifiante que estabilizaba un estado de discurso. Esa multiplicidad, “espontánea” y heterogénea, de la que no se puede predicar un objetivo “claro y distinto”, indicaría, según Žižek ([1987] 1992), la irrupción de *lo real* en el campo del signifiante. En cualquier caso y aun, como lo muestra la experiencia, en las revoluciones “verdaderas”, la crisis no implica la subversión total del sentido del mundo (para eso está la hegemonía de larga duración), sino brechas, zonas de riesgo, que vuelven *parcialmente* visible la inconmensurabilidad de las palabras y las cosas. En las crisis de envergadura, los enfrentamientos atraviesan los campos discursivos y desestabilizan la topología. Cualquiera sea el sector que logre imponerse — y esto se aplica tanto a la topología global como a los campos restringidos —, la superación de la crisis es un *trabajo* (de conservación o de transformación). Si el discurso dominante desafiado logra recomponer su predominio ideológico, el impulso conservador de

ratificación de su régimen signifiante no implicará un retorno de lo idéntico, sino que mostrará las huellas de la incorporación, banalización, resemantización, de formulaciones antagónicas (cf. Williams [1977]1997: 135).

A su vez, un sector que se postule como innovador deberá trabajar doblemente. Por una parte, para instalar su propio régimen signifiante, *interpelar a sus sujetos*; esto es, instaurar sujetos según sus propios dispositivos de identificación, y *articular el mundo* (el tiempo y el espacio) de manera diferencial. Por otra, para equilibrar tradición e innovación en su construcción del pasado y, sobre todo, para desviar la mirada de las *continuidades* con el régimen signifiante anterior.

Son necesarias, sin embargo, algunas precisiones acerca de la noción deleuzeana de *régimen signifiante*. En esta, así como en la de *campo ideológico* en Žižek (1992: 125), el signifiante amo (el *point de capiton*) que articula la red simbólica, fija los significados e inviste de valor a las oposiciones semánticas, es, lacanianamente, un signifiante vacío. No obstante, desde un punto de vista semiótico, parece excesivo hacer derivar de la arbitrariedad del signo (una noción lingüística), la arbitrariedad azarosa de la hegemonía. Si bien no es novedad que los signos no son motivados, no hay significantes *socialmente* “puros” o “vacíos” (cf. Voloshinov [c.1929] 1992: 48, y también Verón 1974: 26) y no cualquier signifiante puede “acolchar” una hegemonía, cuyo efecto de real depende de su capacidad de poner en relación un conjunto de *topoi* preexistentes, de tradiciones reciclables, de memorias y expectativas y también de resentimientos difusos, *en las condiciones de producción adecuadas*. Y esto incluye, generalmente, la crisis o agotamiento de un ciclo (político, económico, social...).

A modo de ilustración: “democracia” es indudablemente una noción perpetuamente conflictiva y rigurosamente indefinible (eso lo dice muy bien Rosanvallon (2003: 20-24)); sin embargo, su potencialidad como *point de capiton* en la Argentina de 1983 es infinitamente superior a la de cualquier otro signifiante, dado que tiene como condición de producción el descrédito del discurso militar.

Esto introduce otra restricción: el discurso social, agente del consenso, como dice Fossaert (1983: 119), no excluye la coerción, sino que forma con ésta combinaciones históricas particulares. De allí que, aunque las versiones más sofisticadas de hegemonía discursiva se correspondan generalmente con el funcionamiento democrático (cf. Gramsci [1931-1932] 1997: 264) ninguna forma de ejercicio del poder puede prescindir de ella. Para dar un ejemplo cercano, conviene recordar el consenso inicial (difuso, restringido, resignado) que acompañó los últimos golpes militares en Argentina, oscilando en el componente tímico entre el deseo de orden y el temor al caos. Conviene recordarlo, sobre todo, porque esta aceptabilidad se ha vuelto imposible en 1989, cuando el putsch financiero hizo su ingreso en la vida política argentina. El final apresurado del gobierno alfonsinista es indicial, a su vez, del agotamiento de un régimen signifiante articulado por la forma de gobierno:

Vamos a vivir en libertad. [...] los argentinos hemos aprendido, a la luz de las trágicas experiencias de los años recientes, que la democracia es un valor aún más alto que el de una mera forma de legitimidad del poder, porque con la democracia no sólo se vota, sino que también se come, se educa y se cura (Discurso de investidura de R. R. Alfonsín (1983), en Graglia y Specchia 2009: 34).

Pero el gobierno de Alfonsín no pudo — o no supo — superar la problemática de la economía argentina [...] La crisis vivió sus momentos más dramáticos en febrero de 1989 cuando en palabras del propio Presidente “la economía nos explotó en las manos” (Graglia y Specchia 2009: 27).

En este caso, el descrédito del discurso político alentado por la recesión económica y el “desorden” social no favorece a los sectores militares — desacreditados a su vez por *el saber sobre el*

*terrorismo de Estado* que la democracia ha propiciado —, sino a un sector “impolítico y experto”, los economistas, que a partir de la asunción de Carlos Menem a la Presidencia van a ocupar el lugar de *producción de la verdad*.

Conviene aclarar que cuando hablamos de *producir la verdad*, no nos referimos a verdades filosóficas (desnudas o no), sino más bien a estrategias discursivas orientadas a producir en reconocimiento un *efecto de verdad* (Paolo Fabbri, en Ruiz Collantes 2003: 75), *efecto de real*, por su adecuación a un estado de relaciones (Bourdieu y Wacquant 1995: 64). Como hemos podido ver en este breve recorrido, tres sectores dirigentes, pertenecientes a tres campos discursivos canónicos (el militar, el político y el económico), han logrado, en diferentes momentos, hegemonizar el espacio simbólico a partir de diferentes *points de capiton* — seguridad nacional, democracia, mercado global — sin subvertir la hegemonía de larga duración.

### 3. En suma...

Considerar la operatividad de los campos en el discurso social implica, por una parte, atender a la gramática de producción propia de cada formación, sus vínculos institucionales, sus tradiciones y apuestas, y su relación con alguna clase de poder — en los términos clásicos: político, económico o ideológico (cf. Norberto Bobbio, en Bobbio *et al.* [1991] 2000: 1216) —, diferencias todas que constituyen su especificidad y prefiguran los límites de su producción; pero sin perder de vista que todos los campos aparecen tensionados por antagonismos internos que a menudo remiten a enfrentamientos transversales y muestran la permeación de las fronteras por el discurso global. En ese sentido, la operación de los dispositivos hegemónicos puede inferirse a partir de las migraciones, las recurrencias, los presupuestos y temáticas comunes; pero también de las maneras en que las manifestaciones de los diversos campos adecuan (deben adecuar) sus propias restricciones para garantizar su aceptabilidad; esto es, para competir por el público.

A su vez, es necesario retener el rol fundamental de los campos en las transformaciones de mediana duración; ya que esto permite apreciar en su justa medida, por ejemplo, la hegemonización del espacio simbólico (y de la episteme, diría Foucault) operada en las últimas décadas por el discurso tecnocrático.

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# MEMORIAS DE LA GUERRA: APUNTES SOBRE LO HUMORISTICO EN EL CINE DE MALVINAS

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## **Abstract**

En el campo de la producción cultural argentina postdictadura, el número de obras audiovisuales que tematizan la guerra de Malvinas ha sido muy importante. Esta producción audiovisual presenta vínculos estrechos con otros campos de la producción memorística de la época y se visibiliza particularmente en el espacio mediático en los tiempos de las conmemoraciones.

Así, a partir de la recuperación de conceptualizaciones del campo del análisis del discurso y la sociosemiótica en torno a las relaciones intertextuales e interdiscursivas que constituyen las memorias, nos proponemos caracterizar los sentidos dados a Malvinas en las obras producidas en Argentina en el marco de la conmemoración de los treinta años de la guerra. Nos detendremos en la exploración de los cortometrajes nucleados bajo el título *Malvinas. 30 miradas* (2014), a fin de interrogarnos sobre el lugar de lo humorístico como estrategia de representación de acontecimientos traumáticos.

## **1. Introducción**

En el contexto amplio de las conmemoraciones realizadas en Argentina en el primer lustro de la década actual, en las que se destacaron tanto los festejos del Bicentenario de la Revolución de Mayo (2010) — un hito de los procesos independentistas de las por entonces colonias españolas en América — como los actos conmemorativos en torno a la guerra de Malvinas en el Atlántico Sur (1982) y los 30 años de restitución de la democracia en el país (1983), los discursos audiovisuales se constituyeron en espacios privilegiados de expresión de memorias en el marco de una sociedad en la que los medios, a través de diferentes pantallas, ocupan un rol central en la construcción de colectivos e intervienen fuertemente en las representaciones sociales del mundo.

Por memorias aludimos aquí, desde una mirada sociosemiótica, a los dispositivos de saber/poder que retoman y organizan lo que puede ser enunciado y visibilizado sobre determinados



acontecimientos del pasado de una comunidad, desde ciertos posicionamientos ideológicos, proveyendo una interpretación de la temporalidad histórica; ellas nos permiten comprender cómo el presente se constituye a partir de la recuperación de lo ya enunciado/visibilizado, puesto que toda producción discursiva repite, transforma o deniega discursos ya formulados. Esta caracterización se apoya tanto en la teoría del enunciado bajtiniana sobre el dialogismo (Bajtín 2003) y sus reformulaciones en el campo del Análisis del Discurso (Courtine 1981) en términos de memorias discursivas, como en los planteos de Voloshinov (2009), para quien todo signo es siempre ideológico. Asimismo, este modo de conceptualizar la/s memoria/s se articula con la semiótica de Peirce (1987) y su proceso de reenvíos significantes, en tanto un signo es siempre interpretante de otro en una cadena de remisiones infinitas. En ese sentido, los procesos de memoria son inherentes a los procesos de construcción de la semiosis y dialógicos por naturaleza.

En ese espacio/tiempo signado por la recordación de hitos ligados a los procesos que marcaron la construcción de la nación, la guerra de Malvinas emergió en los discursos públicos argentinos de la época como uno de los temas de la agenda política a revisar: un tema complejo, atravesado por los tiempos y las necesidades históricas de interpretar lo ocurrido en el pasado según las urgencias de ese presente y con las posibilidades que abren los años transcurridos de aquel suceso traumático. El cambio en las condiciones de producción y reconocimiento discursivo (Verón, 1987) permitiría, entre otros aspectos distintivos de la filmografía estudiada, el uso de recursos ligados al humor, novedosos en los relatos de la única guerra en la que Argentina participó a lo largo del siglo XX.

## 2. La producción audiovisual sobre Malvinas

El número de obras audiovisuales que tematizan la guerra de Malvinas resulta significativo en el campo de la producción cultural argentina postdictadura, y su difusión se acrecienta en las grillas televisivas durante el mes de abril<sup>1</sup> de cada año en el marco de los eventos conmemorativos.

Hemos relevado la producción y circulación, entre 1982 y el año 2017, de al menos 19 documentales y 16 filmes ficcionales, además de series televisivas y propuestas didácticas audiovisuales. La mayor parte de estas producciones es del periodo 2003-2015, en coincidencia con una gestión de gobierno nacional que hizo de la revisión de la dictadura una política estatal, recuperando y potenciando las acciones de diversas organizaciones de la sociedad civil: esa producción audiovisual podría así entenderse como el efecto de diversas acciones de construcción de una memoria oficial con vínculos estrechos con otros campos de la producción memorística de la época ligada a políticas activas de reivindicación de derechos, siendo este fue uno de los ejes de las estrategias de interpelación subjetiva (Althusser 1988) que caracterizó la discursividad de la llamada década kirchnerista<sup>2</sup>.

En las producciones audiovisuales cinematográficas y televisivas sobre Malvinas realizadas en este nuevo siglo/milenio se destaca el creciente cuestionamiento hacia el rol de la sociedad y particularmente hacia el Estado argentino en la posguerra, tópicos recurrentes en los discursos de la última década, así como la inscripción de esa guerra en los discursos de la memoria en torno a la dictadura desde la perspectiva de los derechos humanos, hecho que resulta novedoso en relación a la manera en que la sociedad argentina en general ha categorizado ese acontecimiento traumático de la historia reciente.

Esta hipótesis interpretativa ha orientado nuestra reflexión sobre el filme *Malvinas. 30 miradas*, presentado en el año 2014 como parte de las conmemoraciones. Esa obra está constituida por 30 cortometrajes de unos 10 minutos cada uno, dirigidos por diferentes cineastas

1 Creado por la ley nacional n° 25.370 del año 2000, el 2 de abril se conmemora en Argentina el día de los Veteranos y Caídos en la guerra de Malvinas, tomando como fecha a recordar el desembarco argentino en las islas en 1982.

latinoamericanos, la mayoría de ellos argentinos<sup>3</sup>. Una producción colectiva en la cual, más allá de la diversidad de narrativas y estilos que allí se expresan, se observan huellas de las políticas de visibilización, revisión y reparación del Estado en relación a la dictadura, incluyendo en ellas la cuestión Malvinas, arrancándolo del olvido de los procesos sociales de memoria que caracterizaron las políticas estatales de los ochenta y los noventa.

En *Malvinas. 30 miradas*, así como en otras obras audiovisuales sobre el tema, y en paralelo a lo ocurrido en otras zonas del discurso social (Angenot 2010), se observa la multiplicación de miradas y voces que participan en la disputa por la imposición del sentido de la guerra y la posguerra y se delinea una nueva lectura epocal que invierte la clave que dominó su interpretación durante años: de la guerra como un acontecimiento construido por fuera de la violación de derechos ocurridos en el marco de la dictadura y, dados sus actores, sus motivaciones y la derrota sufrida, un suceso a olvidar, a una persistente búsqueda de recordación y una revisión de esa historia, a través de la inscripción de Malvinas en el marco de las políticas de violencia ejercidas por la última dictadura militar a la población argentina (1976-1983), que involucra también una crítica a la propia posición de la sociedad con respecto a los procesos de dominación y violencia, en sus múltiples formas. En el filme analizado, esas condiciones de producción y de reconocimiento dejan su huella en los cortometrajes.

Más allá de la cacofonía, como diría Angenot (2010), hay líneas de sentido que atraviesan la heterogeneidad de los relatos presentes en *Malvinas. 30 miradas* — con la diversidad de historias y miradas que proponen — y nos hablan de una política discursiva que evoca y articula el acontecimiento Malvinas con el proceso de desaparición y muerte implementado por el terrorismo de estado en el país durante la década del setenta y comienzos de la década del ochenta<sup>4</sup>.

Entre los cortometrajes en los que esta relación se hace evidente figuran los titulados: *Entrevista*, *La tumba sin nombre* y *CP 9409*<sup>5</sup>. En este último caso, particularmente, el relato comienza con el acto del por entonces presidente de la nación Néstor Kirchner en el que se descuelgan los cuadros de los militares<sup>6</sup>, lo que da inicio a un proceso de búsqueda, recordación y reparación, en el que la protagonista entrega a sus originales destinatarios las cartas salvadas de la destrucción y guardadas por años, que fueron escritas para los soldados de Malvinas en el periodo de la guerra, proceso similar al encarado por la sociedad argentina posdictadura y, en especial, por la construcción que de sí hace el enunciador presidencial. Ese cortometraje es así una suerte de construcción metafórica que alude al proceso iniciado en la Argentina luego de la dictadura y se potencia con el kirchnerismo.

### 3. Trauma y humor

En los cortometrajes que integran el filme analizado, Malvinas es el nombre propio que alude a una experiencia traumática. Para la Real Academia, el trauma es un vocablo que proviene del griego y significa herida. Tiene varias acepciones que aluden a una lesión que persiste en el tiempo<sup>7</sup>.

Un trauma es el resultado de la irrupción de algún tipo de violencia que perdura más allá del suceso, sobre todo cuando no se logra resolver porque no puede acceder al orden del discurso:

3 El filme fue realizado por el Centro de Producción e Investigación Audiovisual (CePIA) del Ministerio de Cultura de la Nación, junto con el Consejo Asesor de la Televisión Digital Terrestre en colaboración con la Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero.

4 La guerra de Malvinas fue el punto de giro de ese proceso ya que la derrota bélica, entre otros aspectos, acrecentó el descontento y sentó las bases para la vuelta a la democracia.

5 El título del cortometraje alude al código postal de las islas Malvinas.

6 El 24 de marzo de 2004 el presidente tomó una decisión que haría historia: ordenó el retiro de los cuadros de Jorge Rafael Videla y Reynaldo Bignone (jefes de las juntas militares en diferentes momentos de la dictadura iniciada en 1976), que estaban colgados en una de las galerías del Colegio Militar.

7 Trauma: "1. m. Lesión duradera producida por un agente mecánico, generalmente externo. 2. m. Choque emocional que produce un daño duradero en el inconsciente. 3. m. Emoción o impresión negativa, fuerte y duradera" (Real Academia Española 2001).

esto es lo sucedido con aquellos que de alguna manera u otra participaron de la guerra, como resultado de un complejo conjunto de factores que podríamos incluir en lo que algunos llamarían una política del olvido, que también es un hecho de memoria.

En este marco, ¿puede el humor exorcizar el trauma? ¿hay lugar para lo risible en los procesos de representación en torno a Malvinas?

En el caso de lo audiovisual, son muy escasas las producciones cinematográficas que emplean estrategias discursivas que generan este efecto. En *Malvinas. 30 miradas*, el filme que analizamos en este trabajo, hay varios ejemplos que emplean la distancia humorística para lograrlo, en general vía la parodia<sup>8</sup>.

Para Freud “el humor produce una actitud — siempre construida por el lenguaje — que toma distancia de la respuesta sumisa, complaciente o temerosa previsible” (1969: 27), y justamente esta toma de distancia a la que aquí se alude se asienta en la posibilidad que la propia distancia temporal y las transformaciones del discurso social argentino de estos últimos años habilitan para referirse a la guerra de Malvinas. Ejemplos del uso de esta estrategia en el filme de autoría colectiva *Malvinas. 30 miradas* son los cortometrajes: *Para muestra basta un botón* (Montalbano 2014), *¿Qué hacemos?* (Bowen 2014) y *En la colonia* (Martínez 2014), mientras otros cortos presentan algunos procedimientos paródicos que introducen segmentos de lo risible vía lo “ridículo”. En este caso mediante la exageración de rasgos comportamentales de los personajes, inserto en situaciones fuertemente dramáticas: por ejemplo, en los cortometrajes que también integran esta obra, *Entrevista* (Bellotti 2014) y en *Apto* (Grande 2014), que supone a su vez un destinatario cómplice.

El sentido de todos estos cortos mencionados se juega en las competencias que movilizan, esto es, en la complicidad y capacidad de relacionar lo que se dice/muestra en el texto audiovisual con otros discursos, activando relaciones intertextuales e interdiscursivas, a partir del supuesto de que el destinatario es competente para participar en el juego irónico propuesto. Esto supone el reconocimiento de discursos previos, en una relación dialógica que también supone la intersubjetividad con una finalidad crítica de ciertos valores establecidos, poniendo al revés el discurso evocado y, en ese gesto, señalando sus inconsistencias, sus debilidades y sus tensiones.

#### 4. Malvinas/Argentina: una mirada sobre la colonización

Nos detendremos particularmente en uno de los cortometrajes ya mencionados: *En la colonia* (Martínez 2014), con la finalidad de ilustrar algunas de las ideas anteriores.

Según la sinopsis empleada para la difusión, ese relato narra una situación presentada en términos desopilantes: “En la cima de una colina de las islas Malvinas, dos niños de unos 10 años están terminando la guardia y pronto serán relevados por sus propias madres; ambas integrantes de la Comisión de Festejos de las Falkland Islands”.

Así, el corto se inicia con la ubicación espacial de los personajes, mientras oímos en off una risa bufonesca. Se desarrolla en un territorio que sugiere la presencia de los pozos de zorro en un espacio rural malvinense, que identificamos por remisión interdiscursiva y la desambiguación producida por el anclaje lingüístico de un cartel que dice: “Welcome cuin Elizabeth. Comité

8 Un antecedente de esta estrategia es otro cortometraje: *Guariso, los olvidados* (Stagnaro 1995), que integra *Historias breves 1*, una compilación de producciones de los ganadores de la primera edición del concurso de cortos del INCAA (Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales), que dio inicio al llamado Nuevo Cine Argentino, nominación propuesta por la crítica especializada para designar la emergencia distintiva de producciones cinematográficas que hacia mediados de la década del noventa se caracterizó, entre otros rasgos, por ser producciones independientes, de realizadores que proponían diferentes miradas en términos temáticos, estéticos y narrativos.

mixto Falklands islands”. Este anclaje establece una clave de lectura del discurso, en relación también al título que lo identifica: En la colonia.

Malvinas es aquí una colonia y sus habitantes, colonizados. Pero, estos habitantes re-niegan de ese estatuto y para ello se apela a una construcción de personajes insertos en acciones que recuperan estereotipos, lugares comunes de la *doxa* argentina para ridiculizar esa identidad y los valores/creencias que la sostienen.

La construcción del decorado, el vestuario y el maquillaje siempre exacerbado, el uso de algunos primeros planos y su montaje marcado por el sonido lo inscribe en la tradición de los relatos populares cómicos (rememora cierto cine silente y ciertos sketch televisivos y sus usos del gag, en el que los recursos audiovisuales están puntuando el efecto risible buscado).

El tiempo de la historia no está claramente precisado, ya que la única referencia que nos permitiría reconstruir la época son los objetos empleados, pero estos remiten a temporalidades diferentes yuxtapuestas, dotando de cierta universalidad a la situación: por caso, el celular y la revista de historietas para niños *Patoruzito*, que reenvían a diferentes décadas pasadas, con lo cual podemos hipotetizar que esas acciones se presentifican por la aparición de restos (objetos/huellas) de diversas épocas que coexisten como en un cambalache.

Otro aspecto a destacar es el relativo a los actores. Dos hombres dan cuerpo a cuatro personajes: dos madres (Olga y Yolanda) y sus respectivos hijos (Georgie y el Mencho). Estos últimos, supuestamente niños pero encarnados en esos cuerpos adultos, vestidos con ropas militares, pero en pantalones cortos, leen revistas ‘prohibidas’ mientras — acatando el mandato materno — están de guardia, sometidos todos a una obsecuente espera por la visita de la reina, en especial las mujeres madres encarnadas por esos cuerpos travestidos. La transgresión durante la espera, la búsqueda de reconocimiento/aceptación, el ejercicio de la violencia en sus diversas formas, el rito de tomar té y las conversaciones que involucra ese acto son los núcleos que estructuran la historia ficcional de estos cuatro personajes, quienes a su vez evocan por su hacer y/o decir a personajes de la historia argentina reciente, reconocibles en tanto tipos sociales. Entre ellos, particularmente, los “chicos de la guerra”, sintagma que identifica popularmente a los muy jóvenes soldados conscriptos enviados a la guerra, quienes contaban con escasa instrucción militar, ya que fueron al frente por estar cumpliendo el servicio militar obligatorio.

Los cuatro personajes, al igual que el cartel con su mezcla de inglés y español, se caracterizan por ostentar su hibridez genérica (hombres que representan mujeres), su hibridez en cuanto a la edad (hombres vestidos como niños), su hibridez de clase (mujeres que remiten a las representaciones de la oligarquía criolla y su gusto por lo europeo, pero en una versión *kitsch*), su hibridez cultural en un sentido amplio (objetos y prácticas considerados de la alta cultura entremezclados con lo popular) y nacional (argentinos que desean ser británicos). Ser y parecer se (con)funden. Este el campo semántico en el que se mueven los personajes en la ficción, evocando por analogía la confusión y el engaño sufrido y/o autosostenido por la sociedad argentina de aquel momento.

En el marco de este relato que se distingue por la construcción de estas figuras abyectas, particularmente las mujeres/madres, que expresan una identidad en clave grotesca, aparece en los parlamentos la siguiente interpelación de Yolanda a Olga: “¿usted sabe dónde está su hijo en estos momentos?”. Más adelante, la misma Yolanda le contesta: “Esto es lo que está haciendo su hijo. Leyendo literatura subversiva!” (se muestra la tapa de la revista *Patoruzito*, una popular y conservadora publicación humorística argentina destinada a un amplio público infantil). ¿Qué relación hay en esta historia de colonizados entre este enunciado recuperado de los discursos oficiales de la propaganda militar y Malvinas?

En primer lugar, el cortometraje retoma aquí la fuerza ilocutoria del enunciado original: el tono amenazante destinado al control de la población joven considerada en riesgo y un riesgo.

Enunciado que circulaba en los setenta y sirvió de interpelación a madres y padres de familia en el discurso propagandístico militar.

En segundo lugar, nuevamente, como en otros casos, la relación entre terrorismo de Estado y la guerra de Malvinas.

En tercer lugar, podríamos conjeturar, que la recuperación de ese enunciado da cuenta del cuestionamiento a la matriz de discursos del poder que organizaban el sentido común por entonces. *Doxa* que fue el fundamento del “algo habrán hecho”, entre tantas construcciones nominalizadas que expresaban posicionamientos ideológicos y que sirvieron para justificar y dotar de aceptabilidad las prácticas de violencia, que son producidas y reproducidas por las instituciones, marcando de este modo el sinsentido de numerosos discursos, incluso en este presente, en los que este ideograma aún perdura dotado de cierta aceptabilidad. La puesta en discurso de este cortometraje se funda en las relaciones con otros textos de la cultura, y particularmente de aquellos enunciados típicos del sentido común de los setenta y de amplia circulación en los medios, remisión intertextual sin la cual este relato pierde su fuerza pragmática. La clave de esta estrategia es la apelación a la parodia que, en términos bajtinianos, es la recuperación de la palabra ajena (incluyendo aquí tanto textos como géneros, estilos o modos de pensar) con un sentido inverso al que originalmente tenía, para señalar a un destinatario cómplice lo complejo y contradictorio de las relaciones centro-periferia, al tematizar la participación, siempre necesaria, del dominado en los procesos de dominación.

## 5. Anotación final

Algunos filmes argentinos, particularmente en los últimos años, abordan la experiencia de la guerra a través de operaciones que recurren al humor absurdo o la parodia, tensionando así ciertas representaciones que se instituyeron en la posguerra y poniendo en evidencia algunas de las relaciones de poder que permean la construcción de los colectivos nacionales. Esta estrategia se asienta en la distancia que el devenir temporal introduce: emerge un modo de mirar/representar fundado en un pathos reflexivo y crítico, que no puede sustraerse de las políticas de memoria(s) impulsadas por el Estado nacional de entonces.

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# SOCIOSEMIÓTICA: INTERDISCIPLINA Y PROYECCIÓN TRANSDISCIPLINAR

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## **Abstract**

Entendemos la producción social del sentido como un complejo tejido, cuyo entramado no se agota en la participación de la práctica discursiva. Esa interacción generalizada asume las formas de la intertextualidad y la interdiscursividad, al mismo tiempo que se manifiesta como intersemiosis, puesto que los préstamos y contaminaciones entre los diversos procesos significantes, desafiando las condiciones materiales propias de cada práctica, vulneran barreras y disuelven fronteras. En ese marco, nos interesa comprender por qué, más allá de la complejidad de esa interacción, se verifican ciertas dominantes de sentido en una época o una sociedad determinada. Tal como se visibiliza en el objeto de estudio foco de nuestra atención: la construcción de identidades colectivas. En ese sentido, una perspectiva sociosemiótica (constitutivamente interdisciplinaria) se revela pertinente, ya que al situar socio-históricamente tales procesos, permiten comprender “su razón de ser”. Estos planteos conducen a interrogarnos sobre las posibilidades de la sociosemiótica de desarrollarse como una suerte de transdisciplina, capaz de dar cuenta de la variedad y complejidad de procesos semióticos en funcionamiento dentro de la sociedad, sin violentar o distorsionar sus características específicas. Y, finalmente, si esta capacidad transdisciplinar atribuible a la sociosemiótica encontraría su posibilidad en el desarrollo de una metodología cimentada en la concepción peirceana de la semiosis.

## **1. La sociosemiótica: una propuesta inter/transdisciplinar**

El discurso que recorría los espacios intelectuales europeos de posguerra hizo posible la emergencia de la sociosemiótica, tal como la conocemos a través de la propuesta de Eliseo Verón (1987). El interés por dar cuenta de la producción de sentido en su dimensión social cobra especial vigor durante el período que se inicia al promediar los años sesenta y va a alcanzar una significativa productividad en las siguientes décadas del siglo XX, durante las cuales se abocará fundamentalmente al estudio de la discursividad pública y en particular al discurso político y al discurso mediático. Esta orientación no es ajena a las preocupaciones ideológicas que dominaban el discurso académico de la época y que toma forma explícita en el proyecto de Althusser (1988) de elaborar una teoría de las ideologías. La influencia del materialismo histórico y la noción de

trabajo, así como la del psicoanálisis y su concepción del trabajo onírico, se vislumbran ya desde la década anterior. De modo que en el dominio de las ciencias sociales y humanas, gran parte de las investigaciones estaban encaminadas a poner en descubierto las ideologías subyacentes a los discursos. Entre los nombres de quienes jugaron un papel relevante en esta etapa — sin pretender agotar la amplia nómina — encontramos los de Barthes (1957), Prieto (1975), Rossi Landi (1973), Kristeva (1973) y Lotman (1973). Ahora bien, todos estos movimientos en los que se operan cruces disciplinarios fueron posibles ya que, como sabemos, a partir del auge del estructuralismo, en el campo de las ciencias sociales y humanas ceden las fronteras disciplinares y proliferan las migraciones conceptuales y metodológicas, producto de una estimulante y fructífera *interacción*, entendida, según los casos, como interdisciplina, transdisciplina o multidisciplina.

Ambos fenómenos, indisociables, constituyen un campo propicio para la emergencia de la sociosemiótica. Dentro de ese marco, donde se abre espacio el interés por comprender los procesos de producción de sentido y en el que la apertura interdisciplinaria, o más bien transdisciplinaria, complejiza el objeto de estudio, Eliseo Verón, munido de un andamiaje intelectual pluridisciplinario, desarrolla la teoría de los discursos sociales, en la que, a fin de abordar el estudio de los procesos de producción social de sentido, pone en juego su formación filosófica y sociológica, reactivada por el entrecruzamiento con saberes provenientes de la lingüística, la teoría de la información y la teoría de la comunicación.

La teoría de los discursos sociales o sociosemiótica, propuesta por Verón y sostenida y enriquecida por intelectuales afines a esta línea de pensamiento (en particular en Argentina), enfoca su atención en la articulación entre producción de sentido y sociedad y se define como constitutivamente inter/transdisciplinaria. Desde sus primeras formulaciones, llevadas a cabo a fines de los sesenta y principios de los setenta del siglo pasado, la propuesta sociosemiótica se ha caracterizado por la centralidad otorgada a la noción de proceso y por la relevancia de la dimensión temporal. En esta concepción dinámica del trabajo social de producción de sentido adquieren un papel relevante los aportes de Peirce y de la teoría de la enunciación. En especial, la primera de estas teorías proporciona a Verón el fundamento necesario para sostener los desarrollos teóricos que, aún antes de haber incorporado plenamente la noción de semiosis elaborada por Peirce, pregonaban la necesidad de focalizar el estudio en los procesos de producción social de sentido.

El papel sustancial para la teoría de los discursos sociales desempeñado por la concepción de la semiosis de Peirce puede resumirse en las palabras del propio Verón: “Peirce fundó la semiótica y, a la vez, definió su problemática teórica fundamental: la de las relaciones entre *la producción de sentido, la construcción de lo real y el funcionamiento de la sociedad*” (1987: 120, cursiva del autor).

Es así que la sociosemiótica se propone indagar los procedimientos mediante los cuales los discursos construyen lo real y, para comprender sus razones (no necesariamente conscientes) se hace indispensable establecer las relaciones existentes entre los distintos conjuntos significantes y los aspectos fundamentales de todo sistema productivo: la producción, la circulación y el consumo o reconocimiento (Verón 1980: 146). De modo que el análisis de los discursos sociales, productos de operaciones mediante las cuales una materia, o más, es investida de sentido (Verón 1974: 24), debe rastrear las huellas de los condicionamientos sociales, políticos, económicos, psicológicos, sin dejar de lado aquellos impuestos por la materialidad misma del soporte, que, en alguna medida, supeditan las operaciones que intervienen para convertirla en materia significativa.

En lo que respecta a noción de discurso — vital para la comprensión de la producción de sentido en su dinamismo — la Teoría de la Enunciación, en particular la perspectiva proporcionada por Culioli (2010), permite abordar la problemática de la enunciación en un sentido

amplio, que no se agota en la esfera de lo lingüístico y conduce a Verón a concluir que los requisitos para dar cuenta de fenómenos heterogéneos mediante un discurso homogéneo deben obedecer a “[...] una doble condición: evitar la ilusión de la unidad de la conciencia subjetiva, que hace desaparecer lo social, y resistirse a la tentación de reificar el sistema, que ignora la complejidad dinámica de la semiosis” (Verón 2013: 119).

En una primera etapa del desarrollo de la perspectiva sociosemiótica, por razones que se desprenden de sus condiciones de emergencia, el acento estuvo puesto en los estudios de la producción. Es precisamente en ese polo donde los semiólogos, al proponerse reconstruir los procesos de producción, se obstinan en escudriñar las trazas del complejo diálogo intertextual, interdiscursivo e intersemiótico que se revela en las estrategias discursivas y que remiten a un contexto que no se agota en lo inmediato.

En un segundo momento, la atención se desplaza hacia el reconocimiento. La noción de contrato, que contempla el vínculo entre enunciador y destinatario, impone su pertinencia y ubica el poder del discurso en el polo del reconocimiento. El poder, o sea los efectos de los discursos son abordados, con sus particularidades, en las dinámicas diacrónica y sincrónica. No obstante, en el caso de Verón (2004: 213-230), el centro de interés se ubica fundamentalmente en la articulación entre producción y reconocimiento.

Estas dos etapas del desarrollo de la sociosemiótica están en estrecha relación con el estudio de los medios masivos, los que, gracias a su capacidad de programar la vida social, cumplieron un papel central en los procesos de producción social de sentido durante el pasado siglo. Esta destacada función social se enlaza con su capacidad de registro, en la que se activan, combinan y complejizan procesos semióticos simbólicos, indiciales e icónicos y cuyo éxito no puede dejar de vincularse con las capacidades y hábitos perceptivos de los seres humanos. Podemos decir, como lo hace Carlón (2016), que en una operatoria semejante se puede apreciar la conjunción de lo maquínico, la naturaleza y lo social.

A fin de entender la actualidad y proyección de la sociosemiótica, dada su constitutiva apertura transdisciplinar, pensamos que puede resultar ilustrativo detenernos en la que podríamos considerar una tercera etapa, y que es la que se inicia con el advenimiento de los nuevos medios. Si bien la productividad manifestada por la sociosemiótica en el campo de los medios masivos es incontestable — tanto en lo relativo a los medios impresos, en los que domina el funcionamiento simbólico, como en lo que refiere a los medios como radio, cine y televisión, en cuya operatoria los órdenes icónico e indicial desempeñan un papel central —, las transformaciones comunicacionales generadas por los innovadores productos del desarrollo tecnológico tensan con fuerza la actitud autorreflexiva y abierta que la orientación sociosemiótica asumió desde sus orígenes y mantuvo a lo largo de su desarrollo, y la llevan a profundizar aún más las especulaciones en torno a las relaciones entre semiosis y técnica, pero también a examinar las conexiones con un conjunto de saberes tales como los proporcionados por las ciencias biológicas y las ciencias cognitivas, entre otros. Estas reflexiones la conducen a integrar esos aportes, a replantearlos, en la medida en que le proporcionan elementos para aprehender los fenómenos de producción de sentido en su máxima complejidad.

## **2. La sociosemiótica hoy. Los nuevos desafíos**

Nos vamos a referir aquí a dos de los nuevos desafíos a los que se ve enfrentada la sociosemiótica y que movilizan el diálogo interdisciplinario. De algún modo, se trata de retos que ponen a prueba lo que Verón calificara como su poder conceptual y su eficacia metodológica. El primero de ellos, que es una consecuencia del advenimiento de los nuevos medios, desencadena una serie de transformaciones en el circuito de producción, circulación y reconocimiento que obliga al estudioso de esos fenómenos a renovar la mirada. Entre los cambios pertinentes desde el punto de vista sociosemiótico, se destaca la nueva relación que se establece entre los actores individuales y los

medios (Verón 2013: 279). Los desarrollos tecnológicos provocan, entre otras innovaciones, una modificación en las condiciones de circulación, como producto de la apertura que habilita a los actores individuales para producir contenidos y decidir las fronteras entre lo privado y lo público.

Una derivación de estos cambios propiciados por la tecnología se observa en el debilitamiento de la posibilidad de programar la vida social, tal como lo habían hecho los medios tradicionales. Se advierte así la incidencia de la tecnología en la organización de las relaciones sociales. Sin embargo, a pesar de la multiplicación de voces propiciada por la Internet, lo que parece ser una anodina deriva de infinitas y caprichosas programaciones no lo es, o por lo menos no lo es totalmente. El productor/consumidor es incapaz de sustraerse a los condicionamientos sociales (intelectuales, ideológicos, de estrato social, etarios, etc.) que modelan sus gustos e intereses y, subrepticamente, orientan el diseño de su itinerario comunicacional, integrándolo a diversos colectivos (Verón 2013: 287). Ninguno de esos discursos, en consecuencia, puede eludir ser leído desde la perspectiva de lo ideológico y del poder. Esto hace que, inspirados en Verón (2013: 282), podamos decir que tales transformaciones en los procesos de circulación han hecho de ella el nuevo campo de batalla en el que se juega la imposición de la palabra y — nos atreveríamos a agregar — el lugar en el que se consolidan ciertos y determinados colectivos.

Otra alteración importante, y no sin vinculación con la precedente, se desprende del empleo de los procedimientos de digitalización, que implican la posibilidad de manipulación icónica y la consecuente desestabilización de la función indicial. Estos procedimientos que desobligan a los discursos mediáticos de la finalidad de registro, vulneran su carácter testimonial y provocan una suerte de perturbación en los procesos cognitivos ante la necesidad de sopesar, en cada contexto, los comportamientos semióticos remitidos a los órdenes simbólico, indicial e icónico. Respecto de este punto, cabría preguntarse sobre la incidencia que esa alteración, generada por fenómenos del orden de lo tecnológico, ejerce sobre la percepción y/o la construcción de nuestros tiempos como la era de la posverdad.

En segundo lugar y como se desprende de lo que hemos expresado con anterioridad, ya desde hace varias décadas y como producto de la reflexión sobre sus límites (Eco 1977) (en alguna medida precipitada por las innovaciones tecnológicas), la semiótica — y en particular la orientación sociosemiótica — ha extendido la interacción a un espectro más amplio de disciplinas y ha puesto en crisis los límites que separaban las ciencias sociales y humanas de las ciencias de la naturaleza.

Aunado a eso, y como se infiere de lo que hemos planteado sucintamente en relación a la emergencia de los nuevos medios, el dinamismo y la apertura demostrados por la sociosemiótica desde sus orígenes impiden que permanezca ajena a los saberes que se ponen en movimiento al ritmo de la generación de modificaciones en las prácticas sociales, o que desatienda a reflexiones de orden filosófico como la que pregona “el fin de la excepción humana” (Schaeffer 2009), desarrollos, ambos, que inducen una renovada labor transdisciplinaria.

En ese sentido, y desde una mirada despojada de antropocentrismo, Verón, en sus últimos trabajos, hace visible su adhesión a la tesis formulada por J.-M. Schaeffer en torno al fin de la excepción humana. Este posicionamiento lo lleva a sostener que “la humanidad no es un tipo sino un proceso en curso, cuyo estatuto ontológico no es otra cosa que su devenir evolutivo”, a lo que agrega: “La semiosis es parte constitutiva, como lo había anticipado Peirce, de la evolución general de la vida tal como se ha producido en este ínfimo fragmento del universo en el que nos encontramos”<sup>1</sup> (Verón 2013: 139).

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1 No podemos dejar de relacionar estas reflexiones con los postulados de Jesper Hoffmeyer, referente ineludible de la bio-semiótica, para quien “La bio-semiótica no realiza distinciones esencialistas entre la especie humana y el resto de los seres de los reinos animal y vegetal, sólo reconoce que los humanos se diferencian por la capacidad de discriminar entre objetos de la conciencia y objetos del mundo fuera de ellos mismos” (2013: 17-80). Esto que lo lleva a sostener que la bio-semiótica no admite que la generación de conocimiento se divida por estatutos o rangos, como el científico y el humanístico.



En este marco y en relación a lo que hemos designado como los dos nuevos desafíos a los que se enfrenta la sociosemiótica, resulta pertinente recuperar otra cita de Schaeffer, en este caso mencionada por Carlón (2016: 148, nota 134), en la que el filósofo se refiere al antropocentrismo y dice: “En su forma más radical, que es filosófica, no sólo se niega a fijar la identidad del hombre a la vida biológica, sino también a la vida social: en su esencia propiamente humana, el hombre sería un ‘yo’ o un ‘sujeto’, radicalmente autónomo y fundador de su propio ser [...]”. Apreciaciones como estas refuerzan la convicción de que la sociosemiótica, retroalimentada en el entorno científico y tecnológico contemporáneo, vigoriza su poder conceptual al considerar la interacción entre los condicionamientos biológicos, tecnológicos y sociales cuando de abordar el análisis de las condiciones de producción, circulación y reconocimiento se trata.

Es en este mismo sentido que Carlón (2016: 148-156), enrolado en ese posicionamiento no antropocéntrico, recrimina a la perspectiva antropocéntrica el rehusarse a reconocer que la naturaleza o las máquinas puedan producir sentido y, por tanto, ignorar que el carácter de medios de registro, atribuido tradicionalmente a los medios masivos, es consecuencia de su condición de máquinas que, de algún modo, reproducen la percepción humana y cuyos productos semióticos revisten el valor indicial. Lo que ellos muestran es algo que está o ha estado allí; que es o ha sido (Barthes 1990). En este sentido, resulta ilustrativa y completa la idea la posición de Noël Carroll<sup>2</sup>, quien incorpora el orden de lo biológico como condición necesaria para la concreción de la semiosis: “El éxito de un medio no depende sólo de su capacidad de interpelar exitosamente vuestros dispositivos cognoscentes sin cuerpo, como sostienen algunas teorías antropocéntricas: somos también seres biológicos, dotados de singulares y específicos dispositivos perceptivos”.

Ahora bien, como ya lo hemos señalado en el comienzo de este trabajo, la sociosemiótica surge de la necesidad de disolver barreras disciplinarias y si bien, en alguna medida, en sus orígenes ha privilegiado la articulación con el campo de las ciencias humanas y sociales, los trabajos de Verón demuestran que los aportes de los saberes tecnológicos y de las ciencias de la naturaleza no se han visto de ningún modo excluidos. Con el arribo de los nuevos medios y la revisión de los que dominaron la escena a lo largo del siglo XX, se volvió indispensable y urgente repensar la vinculación de los procesos de producción social de sentido, tanto con lo tecnológico (o maquínico, en palabras de Carlón) como con la naturaleza.

Consideramos que la sociosemiótica hoy, impelida por las interacciones transdisciplinarias precipitadas por las nuevas prácticas y saberes, transcurre una etapa de profunda reflexión epistemológica en pos de ampliar la capacidad y eficacia hermenéutica de su aparato conceptual y metodológico.

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**FROM THE SESSION  
“SEMIÓTICAS DE LAS  
MEDIATIZACIONES”**

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# FORMA DE VIDA Y DIGNIDAD EN EL DISCURSO JURÍDICO EN COLOMBIA

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## **Abstract**

Este artículo presenta los resultados de una investigación que busca comprender y describir cómo la forma de vida, específicamente colombiana, soportada en el principio de la dignidad, se condensa en un texto-enunciado que contiene los parámetros de la acción y establece las soluciones cuando sucedan desajustes entre lo prescrito y el quehacer de los actores sociales. La investigación recurre al modelo de la jerarquía de niveles de las prácticas semióticas según el modo de expresión de estas, propuesto por Jacques Fontanille, y demuestra el proceso por el cual el desajuste entre el texto-enunciado y las escenas prácticas requiere de otra escena práctica (llamada interpretante) para el redireccionamiento de la acción, lo que está previsto como estrategia jurídica del universo cultural colombiano y, en consecuencia, de muchos Estados sociales de derecho. Para el caso, se hizo un seguimiento analítico de la figura de la *dignidad* en la Carta Política y en 152 fallos producidos por la Corte Constitucional y por jueces de tutela, entre los años 1992 y 2016.

Del estudio, resulta que el *hacer creer* de las sentencias de los jueces y de la corte se basa estratégicamente en una relación fiduciaria entre los actantes de la escena interpretativa y de la escena práctica, donde se debe dar el ajuste entre las acciones y el principio de dignidad que rige la identidad de los actores sociales y la guía axiológica de las acciones. Finalmente, se planea la hipótesis según la cual, en las dinámicas de la sociedad contemporánea, y en términos de las relaciones entre los espacios culturales de la semiosfera descrita por Lotman, algunas culturas parecen más determinadas por unos textos, prácticas inconstitucionales y militancias anti-axiológicas poderosas que contrarrestan el alcance de las coordinadas formales y jurídicas que pasarían a ser textos de la periferia cultural.

## 1. La dignidad en la interpretación de la Carta Política colombiana

El ordenamiento jurídico-político de la República de Colombia se rige por la Constitución de 1991, fundada en el respeto de la dignidad humana. Esta aparece formalmente enunciada, en los artículos primero y quinto, como el más inherente de los derechos inalienables de la persona. En el artículo 12 establece la primacía de la dignidad de la persona como el parámetro de la interpretación que se haga de la misma Carta Política y que el Estado propenderá por el respeto a la calidad de ser humano. Esta condición jurídica sería inviolable y, según el artículo 70, cubre a particulares y a colectivos y se extiende al reconocimiento de las diversas culturas del país. Sin embargo, suceden actuaciones en contravía de este mandato y, ante esto, el orden constitucional tiene instituido un procedimiento canónico para restablecerse, lo que se puede comprender como una relación de determinación entre el texto-enunciado, los comportamientos de los actores sociales en el devenir de la vida cotidiana y el ethos de la cultura.

La investigación de la que resulta este artículo parte del problema de cómo la forma de vida colombiana, soportada en principios de obligatorio cumplimiento, como la dignidad, se condensa en un texto-enunciado que contiene los parámetros de la acción y establece las soluciones cuando sucedan desajustes entre lo prescrito y el quehacer de los actores sociales. La investigación aborda el análisis de este asunto como una práctica cultural y, por esto, recurre al modelo de la jerarquía de prácticas semióticas propuesto por Jacques Fontanille (2014). El proceso analítico tiene como objetivo esquematizar el proceso por el cual el desajuste entre el texto-enunciado y las escenas prácticas requiere de otra escena práctica (llamada interpretante) para el redireccionamiento de la acción, lo que está previsto como estrategia jurídica del universo cultural colombiano y, en consecuencia, de muchos Estados sociales de derecho. En otros términos, el análisis semiótico de la interpretación de la dignidad en el universo jurídico colombiano contribuye a precisar los procedimientos semióticos por los cuales las culturas resuelven conflictos de convivencia humana a través de una escena interpretativa que afecta los textos normativos y las estrategias de los actores en la praxis cultural.

Para el caso, se hizo un seguimiento analítico de la figura de la dignidad en la Carta Política y en 152 fallos producidos por la Corte Constitucional y por jueces de tutela, entre los años 1992 y 2016. Las sentencias analizadas sucedieron cuando la Corte debió *i)* resolver necesidades interpretativas del contenido de la constitución y *ii)* decidir ante demandas interpuestas por personas naturales o jurídicas por vulneración de derechos. Los desajustes entre el texto-enunciado y la acción son resueltos por el juez de tutela y la Corte Constitucional a partir de la competencia que se les reconoce como actantes intérpretes que, además, realizan una labor persuasiva (o directiva, en términos de actos de habla) para ratificar las axiologías de la forma de vida contenidas en el texto-enunciado normativo. Debe precisarse que la tutela, en Colombia, es una acción preferente y rápida a la que toda persona puede recurrir, en todo momento y lugar, para instar a los jueces a la protección inmediata de derechos constitucionales fundamentales vulnerados o amenazados. Así, el juez de tutela actúa como un intérprete de la carta, pues verifica el cumplimiento de los mandatos constitucionales de protección y primacía de los derechos inalienables de la persona.

## 2. El proceso de análisis

El modelo de las prácticas semióticas jerarquiza niveles de pertinencia de análisis, según el modo de expresión de los objetos significantes, lo que puede sintetizarse como un proceso ascendente de integración del objeto semiótico de un nivel  $n$  a un nivel superior  $n+1$ , de modo que, en el nivel englobante y más complejo, la semiótica-objeto adquiere una nueva caracterización y exhibe elementos constituyentes que son más pertinentes en el nuevo nivel de estudio. En estas



relaciones de generación y de integración ascendente y descendente se comprende mejor la determinación recíproca y de dependencia de los objetos semióticos que poseen una constitución interna más o menos estable, como los textos enunciados, y el modo en que ellos participan en intercambios intersubjetivos o en dinámicas más intensas, como las escenas prácticas, donde los agentes que movilizan los objetos semióticos son los actores que los usan, adaptan, transforman, etc. según estrategias culturales recurrentes para resolver los problemas cotidianos de sentido. La estructura morfológica o material en que los objetos se manifiestan para entrar en las relaciones intersubjetivas sería la interfaz entre *i*) los niveles inferiores y más o menos estables de las prácticas semióticas y *ii*) los niveles superiores y más dinámicos donde los actores sociales y sus creencias tienen un papel determinante. Cada uno de los seis niveles del modelo propuesto por Fontanille (que, en orden de integración ascendente, son el de las figuras, los textos, los objetos materiales, las escenas prácticas, las estrategias y la forma de vida) se condensa y expande internamente en los niveles inferiores, de modo que cada nivel inferior concentra y depura el nivel inferior para simbolizarlo (Fontanille 2014: 87).

Si se considera que las prácticas semióticas se organizan en estos planos de expresión, se tendría que la Carta Política es un texto constituido por elementos figurativos y que, en términos de la investigación de las prácticas semióticas, condensa una serie de prescripciones para la convivencia en un orden social y hace hacer a los sujetos en las escenas de interacción social, donde la manipulación y la programación de la acción debe corresponder al acuerdo social condensado en el texto del mandato jurídico-político apropiado por cada sujeto. Pero en la compleja praxis relacionada con este texto constitucional, la acción de los actores puede resquebrajar el sistema axiológico que fundamenta la forma de vida del universo cultural, basada en valores como la solidaridad y en el concepto de derechos fundamentales propio del Estado moderno.

Dado que el hacer de los sujetos está determinado por la competencia cognitiva, afectiva y social de estos, la Carta Política establece las soluciones, en el aparato jurídico que fundamenta, frente a posibles desajustes de los actores sociales ante lo ordenado jurídica y políticamente. Los desajustes y acomodaciones cognitivos, activos y sociales pueden manifestarse en las escenas prácticas y en cualquier otro nivel en que tenga lugar el conflicto intersubjetivo o sobre bienes materiales. La memoria de la acción desajustada de la norma y la solución constitucional quedan simbolizadas luego, por condensación, en un objeto semiótico de un nivel inferior (como la parte resolutoria de una sentencia que conmina a una acción determinada) o en uno superior al que el objeto (sentencia) se integra y en el cual se despliega con una reprogramación del hacer que tiene necesarios efectos pragmáticos. Pero esta vía de solución estratégica debe contar con escenarios precisos en que sea posible la interpretación autorizada y competente por parte de un actante intérprete, con fuerza ilocutiva otorgada por el contenido del enunciado normativo de base que instaura, precisamente, la competencia para dirimir el conflicto. Esto es, en términos estratégicos, el modo con el que la comunidad y el orden constitucional prevén un cuerpo colegiado competente, la Corte Constitucional, o al juez de tutela, como recursos para la solución de los conflictos de naturaleza constitucional en las escenas prácticas.

### **3. Resultados del análisis**

#### **3.1. La dignidad en el texto-enunciado como determinante de interpretación**

El texto-enunciado constitucional se rige por principios y valores, entre los cuales están la solidaridad (Pardo y Rosales 2014) que hace parte de la gramática de la cultura, pero esta se tensa con acciones reales que la contravienen y que parecieran desplazar al texto a la periferia cultural. Con respecto de la dignidad, la carta expresa que es un valor que sirve de referencia

para el Estado social y la democracia constitucional, lo que es ratificado por el Juez Constitucional cuando emite sentencias interpretativas y correctivas de la acción en las escenas prácticas.

Al analizar el texto-enunciado y las sentencias de los jueces constitucionales, se encuentra una diferencia entre la dignidad como valor y la dignidad como principio constitucional. En la Constitución Política, en las sentencias de control constitucional (de la Corte Constitucional) y de amparo de derechos (de jueces de tutela), la dignidad se manifiesta en diferentes categorías del derecho figuradas como vida, solidaridad, intimidad, salud, trabajo, minorías, derecho de las víctimas, condiciones de reclusión, reducción de la prostitución, intimidad, autonomía y sexualidad, discapacidad, libre desarrollo de la personalidad, seguridad social. Como principio, cuenta con un componente imperativo más preciso que en la concepción como valor porque *i*) aglutina varios valores constitucionales, como solidaridad, vida, igualdad, seguridad, libertad, y tiene los ámbitos propios para la protección de la autonomía individual, las condiciones materiales de existencia e integridad física y moral; *ii*) y, al ser un principio general, opera como la guía de la interpretación cuando las normas y reglas no son solución a los problemas jurídicos.

La dignidad humana es así una delimitación específica del ordenamiento y no es una finalidad abierta a la interpretación. En el orden constitucional se establece que la competencia de la Corte y del Juez Constitucional está configurada por la práctica imperiosa e inmediata de este principio que inicia el ordenamiento jurídico colombiano (T-406 de 1992) y que inspira las actuaciones estatales. Esto se sostiene sobre la neta prevalencia de la categoría del ser sobre la del tener o del haber, dentro de un hondo y genuino humanismo que debe presidir los actos de los administradores de justicia en todos los niveles del sistema jurídico (T-414 de 1992). En la sentencia T-488, la Corte estimó que esto debe entenderse como un principio de acción, según el cual todas las autoridades del Estado deben realizar todas las conductas relacionadas con sus funciones constitucionales y legales para lograr las condiciones autonomía individual y las condiciones materiales de existencia e integridad física y moral de las personas.

La Corte ha estimado que el derecho a la dignidad humana supone *i*) la prohibición de intervenir el Estado en aspectos propios de la intimidad del ser humano y del libre desarrollo de la personalidad y *ii*) la adopción, por el Estado, de todas las medidas posibles para que la libertad pueda ejercerse de manera real y efectiva, sin restricciones injustificadas. La sentencia T-488 de 2007 distinguió la dignidad humana como autonomía para vivir como se quiere, como la necesidad de satisfacer ciertas condiciones materiales de existencia (o el vivir bien) y como exigencia orientada a preservar la integridad física y moral de las personas (o el vivir libre de humillaciones). Con estas soluciones de los fallos, guiadas por principios constitucionales, se observa que la competencia y actuación la Corte y del juez tienen efectos en el mismo texto que interpretan desde otros niveles de las prácticas semióticas, como en las escenas prácticas donde actúan como intérpretes, con un hacer persuasivo, y en el nivel de las estrategias, donde se integran a la solución prevista por la organicidad del sistema para la solución de los conflictos jurídicos.

### **3.2. Escena práctica de actuación inconstitucional y escena interpretativa**

La Carta Política obliga así a la Corte Constitucional a resolver problemas de interpretación de ella misma y a arbitrar en caso de vulneraciones de la dignidad. Esta, en el horizonte filo-político, no se limita al análisis inmanente del contenido del texto mediador de los valores, sino que se expande a la relación de este con las escenas en que se practica el concepto y con las estrategias que permean las relaciones intersubjetivas aglutinadas por un principio más englobante. En torno a la defensa de la dignidad humana, más allá de una categoría proclamada lingüísticamente y como correlato de la forma de vida, la Corte Constitucional ha afirmado que la garantía constitucional no es una facultad de la persona para adquirir su dignidad, ni para que el Estado

se la otorgue o conceda, porque “la dignidad es un atributo esencial de la persona humana” y equivale a que en el desarrollo de la acción se dé a todos un trato que respete plenamente la condición de ser humano (C-636 de 2009).

Pero son muchos los caminos para atentarse contra la dignidad con tratamientos inhumanos, como la tortura mental, el sometimiento de alguien a la privación del sueño, de la higiene, etc., y esto señala que la dignidad corresponde a las necesidades biológicas, psicológicas y sociales del ser humano (Fabre-Magnan 2007). Ya Arendt ha expresado que la vulneración de la dignidad consiste en matar en el hombre toda autonomía de la voluntad y que el camino a la dominación total consiste en matar en el hombre a la persona jurídica (2002: 975). Supiot expresa que “el papel del derecho frente a la dignidad consiste en otorgar la infinitud de nuestro universo mental a la finitud de nuestra experiencia física y es en esto que estriba una función antropológica de institución de la razón” (2005: 10), concepto que para Fabre-Magnan ve cumplido en el principio de dignidad.

La actividad del Juez Constitucional se encamina a hacer valer el respeto por este derecho cuando los actores sociales estén determinados por ciertas incompetencias que atentan contra ellos mismos y que conducen, además, a la construcción de una escena práctica para que tenga lugar la acción interpretativa del juez o de la Corte para superar los desajustes prácticos. Los fundamentos de las sentencias analizadas demuestran la dimensión cognitiva, actancial y afectiva de quien actúa fuera del marco constitucional y las diferentes categorías de causas de este hacer permitirían discriminar la incompetencia *a*) por *ignorancia* del mandato o de la norma; *b*) por *miedo* a la respuesta del semejante (como en el caso del temor a que una persona auxiliada sea realmente una amenaza que simula vulnerabilidad en una estrategia tramposa); *c*) por *ausencia de empatía* y de buena voluntad del sujeto hacia un particular; *d*) por *falta de medios*, lo que hace materialmente imposible que el sujeto pueda hacer y *e*) por *cinismo* o el no-creer en el sistema axiológico, lo que conduce, incluso, a la omisión, como la legislativa (González 2017), y causa la ruptura de los otros determinantes modales para actuar, dado que se desconfía del propio saber, no se justifica el deber y se paraliza el poder (Rosales y Pardo 2014).

A partir de Greimas, Fontanille recupera la distancia entre el hacer interpretativo, o acto cognitivo que, en un texto, se contrapone al hacer persuasivo. Este consiste en reconstruir el sentido de las proposiciones que surgen sobre el fondo de una transformación y una manipulación fiduciarias y que se pueden reconocer como un hacer-creer o un creer (Fontanille 2014: 111). Para el caso aquí tratado, el hacer-creer de la sentencia se basa en una relación fiduciaria entre los actantes de la escena interpretativa y de la escena práctica donde se debe dar el ajuste, a derecho, entre las acciones y el principio de dignidad que rige la identidad de los actores sociales y la guía axiológica de las acciones. Aunque se dan los dos en la escena que soluciona el conflicto, el hacer persuasivo y el hacer interpretativo no son actos simétricos porque no reposan sobre la misma disposición fiduciaria, dado que el hacer interpretativo se basa en la labor cognitiva sobre un texto y:

el hacer persuasivo produce enunciados (o cualquier otra forma semiótica) y de creencias, destinados a desencadenar en el enunciatario otras prácticas, comenzando por la práctica interpretativa, pero también la decisión, la acción, la reacción, la evaluación, la veridicción del discurso (Fontanille 2014: 111).

La práctica que se afecta por el texto persuasivo está en un modo de existencia virtual y solo se actualiza o realiza cuando “la diferencia entre semióticas-objetos (texto y práctica subsiguiente) queda suspendida” (Fontanille 2014: 111) por la acción de los interpretes del enunciado persuasivo, resultante del acto interpretativo, que impone el creer y determina el hacer consecuente en unas condiciones precisas.

Al esquematizar la escena práctica como juego de interpretaciones del texto y la producción de otros textos que condensan y obran como interpretaciones del primero, se tiene:

- **Fase 1.** La Carta Política es un *texto enunciado 1* cuya naturaleza concierne a un hacer persuasivo que produce enunciados y creencias destinados a desencadenar en el enunciatario prácticas que determinan, por manipulación, la *escena práctica 1*, donde el sujeto políticamente constituido debe tomar decisiones, actuar, reaccionar, evaluar, verificar el discurso (Fontanille 2014: 111) acorde al principio de la dignidad del *texto enunciado 1*.
- **Fase 2.** La *escena práctica 1* es una semiótica-objeto por su constitución expresiva, de contenido y compleja organización actancial en la que se integran elementos figurativos, textuales y objetos materiales portadores de contenidos. El desajuste en la performance del actor en esta escena se debe a cualquiera de las incompetencias ya mencionadas y en contravía de la forma de vida y del *texto enunciado 1*, quienes han anticipado estrategias para hacer prevalecer los principios fundantes de la organización social. La estrategia prevista para la solución del conflicto es la intervención de un judicador (la Corte o el Juez Constitucional) que obra como actante interpretante de los desajustes entre la *escena práctica 1* y el *texto enunciado 1*. El juez tiene competencia para realizar la defensa de los postulados de la carta y a él se le ha encargado de velar por el respeto de la dignidad humana en los ámbitos de la cotidianidad.
- **Fase 3.** La Corte, el juez de tutela o el actante interpretante (Fontanille 2014: 113) analiza el conjunto de *textos-enunciados* mediados materialmente para determinar el desajuste entre la norma y la acción que atenta contra la dignidad (o cualquier otro derecho vulnerado) y que ha sucedido en la *escena práctica 1*. El intérprete procede por evaluación y a él se le reconoce, sobre el fondo de la cultura y del ordenamiento jurídico, una competencia y un ethos para responder por el acto interpretativo y para que este afecte la *escena práctica 1*. El acto interpretativo se expresa con la sentencia o un *texto-enunciado* que expresa la identidad modal de quien lo profiere.
- **Fase 4.** El *acto interpretativo*, que se basa en procesos argumentativos, desemboca en una resolución persuasiva que redirecciona la acción de los actores de la *escena práctica* para que, sobre un hacer interpretativo de la sentencia, obren de modo que la escena sea ajustada a los principios constitucionales o *escena práctica 2*. Para esto, el enunciatario del enunciado interpretativo debe ser un actor o un actante de ambas escenas prácticas. De esta suerte, la *escena práctica 2* deberá coincidir, en el desarrollo de la acción, con las expectativas del *texto enunciado 1* y el enunciado interpretativo que es, en suma, un *texto-enunciado*, debidamente protocolizado, que media el acto interpretativo y preserva la *forma de vida* condensada en un proceso de simbolización textual con efectos en la acción.

Todo este proceso responde a una táctica interpretativa y a la fuerza persuasiva del enunciado interpretativo que debe materializarse en las acciones consecuentes de la sentencia. Esta, sobre la base de los argumentos, debe reivindicar el principio de la dignidad y debe producir efectos en el ethos del enunciatario; este ethos “no puede reducirse a una competencia y que consiste en una configuración compleja, que comprende isotopías figurativas y temáticas, posiciones axiológicas y “simulacros” modales y pasionales” (Fontanille 2014: 121).

### 3.3. Las estrategias y forma de vida

La estrategia consiste en que “en una interacción, al menos dos prácticas deben ser coordinadas, ajustadas o confrontadas” (Fontanille 2014: 89). Para Fontanille, vista desde el interior de una sola práctica argumentativa, la interacción entre el enunciador y el enunciatario aparecerá como una confrontación entre “simulacros”, pero ya en el caso de la sentencia, en la perspectiva de las estrategias, cada participante virtual o real de la escena práctica “estará comprometido con su propia práctica y las interacciones operarán como “reales” y no simuladas” (Fontanille 2014: 123).

Lo descrito hasta aquí hace parte de una estrategia englobante, prevista en el orden constitucional para modificar la competencia y performance sujeto para que se ajuste a los prin-

cipios y valores con que la carta busca organizar el universo de convivencia. De este modo, el texto enunciado y las sentencias que resultan del acto interpretativo prevén la acción futura, lo que subraya el carácter persuasivo del género deliberativo y jurídico que tratan del porvenir de las prácticas (Fontanille 2014: 127). El enunciado interpretativo nace de un discurso forense que analiza acontecimientos pasados o los antecedentes (Fontanille 2014: 111) y en los que se verifica el desajuste entre la acción y la prescripción de esta. El resultado de este quehacer discursivo conduce a la producción de un texto jurídico resolutorio de las diversas heterogeneidades que pueden incluirse en la misma categoría de acciones producidas por incompetencias de los actores de la escena práctica o de las omisiones legislativas. Nuevamente, las sentencias se comportan como un género deliberativo que resuelve la discusión con un mandato o enunciado persuasivo.

En las sentencias, el enunciador preserva una distancia enunciativa, y se vale de un juego polifónico de menciones y alusiones de base (Fontanille 2014: 88), para que la Corte o quien ocupe el rol judicador se asuma como una voz desembragada que, aunque directamente parece no comprometer el ethos de los miembros de la Corte misma, se entiende que sí lo hace porque estos, como se ha expuesto, están determinados e inspirados por los principios y valores sobre los cuales deben elaborar todo acto interpretativo. El texto constitucional es, de este modo, un dispositivo condensador de la fuerza del Estado que cuida a todos por igual en nombre del soberano constituido por la totalidad de la comunidad que decidió, sobre este procedimiento estratégico de persistencia democrática y basada en los derechos humanos (forma de vida), que todos sean sujetos al mismo efecto persuasivo de la lógica del texto-enunciado. Esta dinámica expresa cómo el principio de dignidad y el orden constitucional operan, condensados en los textos, como los parámetros (o el parangón) del despliegue de una praxis coercitiva frente a las incompetencias de los sujetos.

#### 4. Conclusiones

El esquema de resolución de la falta o carencia de sentido en el seno de una semiótica objeto, o de una práctica semiótica, propuesto por Fontanille (2014: 152), se expresa así: [*falta de sentido* → *esquemización* → *regulación* → *acomodación*]. Esta es una construcción heurística que describiría el fenómeno en cualquier nivel del modelo de análisis o en diferentes procesos de integración. Un esquema de la misma naturaleza, que relaciona actos, operadores, objetivos y el horizonte estratégico (Fontanille 2014: 239), relacionado con procesos de resolución de conflictos a través de un quehacer interpretativo con fuerza persuasiva y correspondiente a un texto de la gramática cultural (Lotman 1996), como lo sería el ordenamiento jurídico-constitucional, sería, explícitamente el siguiente el esquema de Fontanille, así:

[*ruptura del sentido* → *evaluación forense* → *regulación* → *acomodación*]<sup>1</sup>.

Como las muestras analizadas en esa investigación se relacionan con el modo en que se configura la dignidad, lo interesante del análisis de este fenómeno y de los fallos jurídicos que produce la Corte y el Juez Constitucional es que permite caracterizar mejor el sentido de la dignidad en la cultura colombiana y la afectación por las incompetencias recurrentes de los actores sociales que, en la escena práctica, se separan del mandato expresado en el texto normativo. No obstante, por causa de esta visibilidad del fenómeno y de las operaciones semióticas implicadas, no debe entenderse a la dignidad humana como el derecho que otorga el ordenamiento jurídico,

<sup>1</sup> En una expresión más detallada, sería: [*ruptura del sentido del texto por acción del sujeto incompetente* → *evaluación forense de la escena práctica de la ruptura* → *regulación de la acción por acto interpretativo y persuasivo de autoridad* → *acomodación de la práctica para la reivindicación del vulnerado y ratificación del sistema axiológico*].



sino como un reconocimiento del respeto de la calidad de ser humano, característica que no nace con el Estado de derecho, sino que es anterior como presupuesto filosófico-político de la modernidad, siendo el Estado el medio para garantizarla y desarrollarla.

De este modo, la escena interpretativa, las estrategias establecidas en el ordenamiento jurídico y la acomodación de la realidad por efecto de las sentencias estarían condicionadas siempre por este principio que se reconoce como esencial en el ethos de la cultura colombiana. Pero queda pendiente por detallar, con más precisión, la hipótesis según la cual, en el seno de la vida cotidiana, se manifiestan situaciones en las que la dignidad es vulnerada, incluso ultrajada, lo que haría suponer que el orden constitucional sería un constituyente de una forma de vida compleja. Dicho orden busca persistir en un entramado axiológico y contradictorio, donde se imponen otros valores movidos por dispositivos pasionales y creencias para el ejercicio vertical del poder y el control asimétrico del acceso a los derechos.

En otros términos, valer preguntarse si la forma de vida de algunas culturas de hoy, con una honda huella de la reificación del hombre, y en términos de la dinámica con que Lotman caracteriza los espacios culturales de la semiosfera, están más dinamizadas por unos textos, prácticas inconstitucionales y militancias antiaxiológicas, muy poderosas, que contrarrestan el alcance de las coordenadas formales y jurídicas de la acción y de la convivencia en el orden de los Estados sociales de derecho. Las gramáticas de estos modos de convivencia regidas por la modernidad serían, en consecuencia, textos de la periferia de los espacios culturales.

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# LA SENSORIALIDAD FRENTE A LOS AROMAS FLORALES Y LA REPRESENTACIÓN DE LA MUERTE EN LA CULTURA URBANA DE BUCARAMANGA, COLOMBIA

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## **Abstract**

Este artículo expone los resultados de una investigación, desde la semiótica de la cultura, que se interroga por la relación que, en el ámbito de la ciudad de Bucaramanga, Colombia, se establece entre la sensorialidad olfativa de las fragancias y algunos contenidos axiológicos que operarían como determinante social en la relación de aceptación (euforia) o disfórica (rechazo) de la emanación floral. El objetivo es comprender cómo la experiencia del olor en la escena práctica es expresada por el texto-enunciado que opera como condensador de las decisiones estratégicas en las prácticas de construcción intersubjetiva de sentido.

El constructo axiológico que resulta arrojaría elementos para comprender el ethos del universo cultural frente a la experiencia odorífica de objetos naturales en diversas prácticas culturales, especialmente en las iniciativas de comercialización de nuevos productos. La muestra estudiada está constituida por 72 textos escritos por los informantes en escenarios de formación académica de estudiantes de pregrado y posgrados de Colombia. El modelo de análisis seguido para la consideración de la muestra es el propuesto por la semiótica como jerarquía de los niveles de pertinencia de las prácticas semióticas según el nivel de expresión. Este procedimiento da razón heurística, como se evidencia en este trabajo, de cómo los objetos semióticos, según su complejidad, se insertan o son constituyentes de otro nivel de análisis o de pertinencia en la organización dinámica de las prácticas semióticas y de las dinámicas de los espacios culturales.

## 1. El problema del olor de las flores en Bucaramanga

En el marco de una semiótica de la cultura, se desarrolló la investigación que se pregunta por la relación que, en el ámbito de la ciudad de Bucaramanga, Colombia, se establece entre la sensorialidad olfativa de las fragancias y algunos contenidos axiológicos que operarían como determinante categorial en la relación de aceptación (euforia) o disfórica (rechazo) de la emanación floral. El sistema olfativo y el poder de asociación sensorial del olor están conectados con la parte más instintiva y menos racional del cerebro humano (Prieto 2012) y, en el orden de la conservación de la vida, el cuerpo se retrae ante los olores que lo agreden y se acomoda receptivamente a los olores que se valoran como convenientes para subsistir. De esto resulta que se producen, en el recuerdo de cada persona, improntas de olores específicos que adquieren sentido bajo la influencia del entorno sociocultural. La manera en que la cultura vive o persiste (Fontanille 2015) dictamina cómo debe ser categorizado cada olor y esto deja en la memoria los modelos cognitivos que relacionan la emanación odorífica, la sensorialidad y el sentido personal y social de la experiencia.

En otros términos, la aceptación o rechazo de la penetración física, afectiva y simbólica del cuerpo por parte de la emanación odorífica aparece como un acontecimiento diferenciado (Groupe  $\mu$  2015: 70) que se dota de significado. Para el Groupe  $\mu$ , construir una categoría es identificar, por razones prácticas, una o varias analogías entre objetos percibidos como diferentes y, para hacer semejantes o exagerar las diferencias entre las cosas, ellas se comparan en una sintaxis (2015: 178) que es la base del sentido o el modo de organizar la experiencia en el tiempo y el espacio. Sin esta labor de diferenciar y de compartir intersubjetivamente las categorías, el mundo se volvería indistinto y desaparecería la posibilidad de sentido. La estabilidad personal e intersubjetiva de las categorías depende de la cultura que “se define como un conjunto coherente de productos de estabilización intersubjetiva” (Groupe  $\mu$  2015: 195). La manera en que el entorno sociocultural vive o persiste influye en cómo debe ser categorizado cada olor y este se integra a prácticas semióticas en las que se construyen relatos, convenciones sociales y, en general, objetos significantes que hacen parte y representan cómo se toman decisiones en el mundo.

En este orden de ideas, la investigación se interroga por los valores que un grupo de informantes del departamento de Santander, específicamente en la ciudad de Bucaramanga, relacionan con los olores de las flores y cómo esta experiencia puede ser una manifestación, en términos de la comprensión de prácticas culturales, de un sistema de tensiones axiológicas en la forma de vida. Este interés se relaciona con las iniciativas de apertura de nuevos horizontes de producción y desarrollo económico del campo en la Colombia de hoy, llamada del postconflicto armado, específicamente en la región santandereana, donde es doble el aprovechamiento económico de flores (no solo con fines ornamentales) y de plantas medicinales y aromáticas. El objetivo, en términos semióticos, es comprender cómo la experiencia del olor en la escena práctica es expresada por el texto-enunciado y se integra a un constructo axiológico esquematizable, lo que arrojaría elementos para comprender el *ethos* del universo cultural frente a la experiencia odorífica de objetos naturales empleados en diversas prácticas culturales y en esta iniciativa de comercialización de nuevos productos.

Colombia cuenta con una floricultura favorecida por condiciones agroecológicas del país y su producción de flores ornamentales representa el 16% del mercado mundial, lo que hace que el país latinoamericano ocupe el segundo lugar de la producción floral del mundo, después de Holanda, que cuenta con el 56% del producido (Castro 2015). En la región de Santander, el Centro de Investigaciones de Excelencia, CENIVAM, y el Centro de Investigación en Biomoléculas, CIBIMOL, ambos de la Universidad Industrial de Santander, investigan sobre la composición química y los compuestos bioactivos de hierbas y flores nacionales que, como fuentes de compues-

tos volátiles, abriría el aprovechamiento del recurso renovable en nuevos productos y mercados, específicamente para favorecer a las familias campesinas. Por ejemplo, estudios recientes de flores tropicales, como gloria de la mañana (*Ipomoea horsfalliae*, familia *Convolvulaceae*) y la flor del cielo (*Thunbergia grandiflora*, familia *Acanthaceae*), han permitido conocer la composición química y evaluar de la actividad terapéutica y antioxidante de extractos polifuncionales, pero también las posibilidades de comercialización en la región santandereana y el país.

Otros trabajos importantes de investigación científica de la región santandereana son los relacionados con el cultivo de plantas aromáticas y medicinales tropicales y la obtención de productos, al menos primarios (como aceites esenciales y extractos volátiles) por parte del mismo cultivador. Con la participación de pequeñas y medianas industrias y las asociaciones de cultivadores en proyectos de producción diversa y armónica con la naturaleza, se impulsan nuevos productos para el área de alimentos, de las terapias médicas alternativas, de los cuidados del cuerpo (con antisépticos como enjuagues bucales, geles antisépticos, jabones, perfumes, aceites para masajes) y del entorno (con insecticidas de baja toxicidad, ambientadores, abonos, etc.).

La respectiva obtención y comercialización implica la apertura de escenarios de productividad, pero esto tropieza con la resistencia del consumidor de la región, específicamente el de la ciudad, que opta por las marcas de dominantes. Esto hace que la dinámica económica para el consumo de los productos de la región entre en tensión con otras lógicas de las grandes industrias y empresas. Encontrar las axiologías que fundamentan la significación social de los olores ayudaría a comprender la perspectiva sociocultural sobre la toma de decisiones en el uso de las fragancias, franja del desarrollo económico regional con bajo impacto ambiental.

## 2. Metodología

Para la semiótica, que se ocupa de analizar los fundamentos de la construcción del sentido en prácticas culturales (Fontanille 2014), el cuerpo vivo es un complejo donde suceden fenómenos sensoriales y perceptivos que dan base a la explicación de los procesos significantes complejos. Estos tienen cierta autonomía con respecto del cuerpo que los produce y son modos de expresar la manera en que la comunidad cultural organiza los valores y en sentido común para resolver problemas de la vida cotidiana, incluso, para la construcción de los asideros que permiten reconocer a la cultura como una persona supraindividual, en los términos de Lotman (1996).

Con este criterio de convergencia cultural de las percepciones particulares, se obtuvo una muestra, constituida por 72 textos escritos por los informantes en escenarios de formación académica de estudiantes de pregrado y posgrados en el área de educación de tres ciudades del departamento de Santander, a saber, del área metropolitana de Bucaramanga (capital del departamento, con una población de 1.350.000 habitantes), Socorro (31.000 habitantes) y Barrancabermeja (200.000 habitantes). Estas dos últimas poblaciones son capitales de dos de las siete provincias que componen al departamento y son lugares de concentración de procesos administrativos de zonas rurales. Los escritos fueron producidos durante procesos de formación académica en los que se reflexionaba, entre otros asuntos, en elementos de la identidad cultural de la región que sirvieran como objetos aprendizaje de lengua. Los educadores que produjeron los textos se consideran competentes por la experiencia de vida en el departamento y, además, porque el 70% de ellos ya realiza actividades de mediación del aprendizaje de otros; es decir, obran como mediadores, ante otras personas, de la cultura y de los valores de esta.

Los informantes inicialmente serían solo de Bucaramanga, dado el interés de este estudio, pero en la medida en que se analizaban los escritos elaborados por ellos, se evidenciaba la necesidad de comparar los contenidos de los textos con otros producidos en la provincia o el es-

pacio rural, razón por la cual se convocó a los otros informantes a la escritura libre y sin mayores condiciones sobre el asunto de experiencias con el olor floral. Así, los informantes son 44 de Bucaramanga (con edades entre los 18 y 25 años), de los cuales 32 son mujeres y 12 hombres. Del área de provincia se tienen 28 informantes, con edades entre 25 y 42 años, de los cuales 21 son mujeres y 7 son hombres. Hay tres elementos diferenciales entre los dos grupos: *a)* el grupo de la provincia es de mayor edad y todos los informantes tienen título universitario para el ejercicio de la docencia, mientras que los informantes de la ciudad son más jóvenes y no están titulados; *b)* todos los informantes son colombianos y el 90% de ellos son oriundos y habitantes del espacio desde el cual construyen los textos (Bucaramanga o de la provincia de Santander); los otros casos provienen de otras regiones del país y tienen en la región santandereana un haber que abarca más de 60% de la vida personal, lo que quiere decir que todos los informantes conocen o han sido educados en las costumbres y creencias de la región.

ALGUNAS CARACTERÍSTICAS DE LOS INFORMANTES

	Área metropolitana de Bucaramanga		Provincia de Santander (Socorro y Barrancabermeja)	
Edades	18 a 25 años		25 a 42 años	
Sexo	Mujeres	Hombres	Mujeres	Hombres
	32	12	21	7
Total	44 (39 oriundos del área urbana)		28 (24 oriundos de la región)	
	menor rango de edad, estudiantes de programas universitarios en el área de educación		informantes de mayor edad, titulación universitaria, ocupados en educación	

Tabla 1. Características de los informantes.

Los escritos fueron analizados como textos-enunciados en los que la instancia de enunciación aparentemente inicia la predicación sobre la cultura santandereana, pero en algún momento del texto construido, con una extensión promedio de 500 palabras, pasa a un relato personal. Esta estrategia de ejemplificar o narrar con fines argumentativos la idea sobre la que se discurre opera como una forma de ratificación de lo expuesto desde el “he vivido” y desde el “pienso que mi experiencia de santandereano me permite afirmar de este modo”, tal como expresan algunas de las composiciones acopiadas y estudiadas. El modelo de análisis seguido para la consideración de la muestra es el propuesto por la semiótica como jerarquía de los niveles de pertinencia de las prácticas semióticas según el nivel de expresión (Fontanille 2014). Este procedimiento da razón heurística de cómo los objetos semióticos, según su complejidad, se insertan o son constituyentes de otro nivel de análisis o de pertinencia en la organización dinámica de las prácticas semióticas. En consecuencia, cada semiótica-objeto, como cada uno de estos textos y el conjunto de ellos, obra como un condensador de lo que sucede en las escenas prácticas, donde los actores sociales obran guiados por estrategias de acomodación y solución de conflictos a partir del ethos cultural.

Al mismo tiempo, los textos-enunciados ratifican los regímenes de creencias y modos de hacer de los actores sociales, al tiempo que evidencian, internamente, cómo suceden tensiones axiológicas en la forma de vida que representan. Esto es observable en los resultados del análisis y en la comparación de los textos de los informantes de Bucaramanga con respecto de los inform-



antes de la provincia santandereana. El nivel de análisis del texto-enunciado fue considerado como el nivel de pertinencia o de inicio del estudio y se recurrió a la consideración de la manifestación figurativa, de los procesos transformacionales y del contenido axiológico de los escritos.

## 2. Resultados

### 2.1. El texto enunciado

Un grupo de 44 enunciados textuales fueron producidos por los habitantes del área metropolitana de Bucaramanga (los textos urbanos), mientras que los otros 28 corresponden a informantes de la región de provincia. Ambos tipos de textos, salvo algunas excepciones, recurren a un embrague enunciativo para exponer la manera típica en que el santandereano se relaciona con las flores y el carácter o modo de ser del santandereano: “Solo pretendo una descripción detallada y no la repetición de lo evidente que solemos hacer en Santander [...] Busco santandereanos detallistas que estén más allá de su hosquedad ante los olores” (informante U18-01). Luego, el yo predica de la propia experiencia, lo que consiste en una breve narración que da fundamento al argumento que expone y que explica la relación disfórica o eufórica con el olor de las flores:

La fragancia de estas flores me parecía sobria, suave y delicada. Pero no era un aroma que me originara un placer divertido, sino cierta tranquilidad y serenidad [...] un sentimiento pacífico que apaciguaba cualquier detalle violento [...] Con el tiempo, el olor de las flores que yo manipulaba, como rosas rojas y hortensias, me condicionó a relacionarlo con el olor de la muerte. Procuraba no tener contacto con ese olor y aguantaba la respiración cuando trasladaba los ramos a otro lugar del templo o a la basura. Recuerdo que era un olor detestable que me hacía pensar sobre lo efímero de la vida. [...] Creo, además, que esto participó con el despertar en mí del temor a la finitud [...] El olor [de las flores] ayuda a recrear mayores estados depresivos de las personas que viven el duelo en el espacio mortuario (informante U25-02).

Los textos urbanos tienen construcciones con valores disfóricos asociados a la muerte, al frío de esta, el miedo y lo inaceptablemente efímero de la existencia humana, la tristeza y la depresión, a la corrupción orgánica, el fracaso amoroso y las supersticiones. Las representaciones eufóricas se pueden categorizar con los términos curación terapéutica (siendo esta una construcción positiva del olor de las flores que, en el caso de los textos de provincia, se relaciona con experiencias desagradables, como el verse forzado a tomar infusiones amargas), la belleza de la naturaleza, el recuerdo de experiencias pasadas, especialmente de la infancia y de familiares, el placer y la belleza, ritos religiosos y la tranquilidad.

Los textos construidos por los informantes de la provincia relacionan el olor de las flores con el orgullo por el paisaje y los recursos naturales del país, la armonía, el agrado, el éxtasis, el placer, el amor, el recuerdo de la infancia y de familiares, como los abuelos, la delicadeza en las interacciones sociales, incluidos el saludo de condolencia, en caso de duelo, y el perdón. En el plano de las valoraciones disfóricas, se precisa el nombre de las flores (rosas, jazmín, caballero de la noche, mirtos y claveles) cuyas fragancias recuerdan la muerte, la soledad y los estados depresivos, procesos terapéuticos desagradables, como las nebulizaciones y el consumo de brebajes, el olvido de seres amados y la fragilidad humana. En la tabla 2, el número entre paréntesis indica la frecuencia con que aparecen las figuras lingüísticas en los textos de los informantes.

Todos los textos analizados expresan una captación semántica del objeto tratado (el olor de las flores) puesto que se procede a una construcción de los objetos cognitivos a partir de la consideración de los valores estéticos y figuraciones con equivalencias múltiples en el universo cultural referido; es la instancia de enunciación quien toma posición frente a los objetos cognitivos para autenticar el valor

de ellos, incluso con el recurso a estereotipos y lugares comunes. En los textos más elaborados, se recurre a la captación impresiva del olor o una expresión de valores hedónicos que “permite la manifestación directa de la relación sensible con el mundo; da acceso a las formas y a los valores por intermedio de las puras cualidades perceptivas, percibidas globalmente, sin análisis” (Fontanille 2001: 242).

CATEGORÍAS EN LA REPRESENTACIÓN TEXTUAL DEL OLOR FLORAL		
Valoración	Textos urbanos	Texto de provincia
Eufórica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terapia (11)</li> <li>• Belleza de natura (8)</li> <li>• Memoria de la infancia (7)</li> <li>• Placer y belleza (5)</li> <li>• Ritos (5)</li> <li>• Tranquilidad (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naturaleza colombiana (12)</li> <li>• Armonía (11)</li> <li>• Placer, éxtasis amoroso (9)</li> <li>• Memoria de la infancia (8)</li> <li>• Cortesía (6)</li> <li>• Acto de perdón (6)</li> </ul>
Disfórica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muerte (31)</li> <li>• Tristeza y soledad (13)</li> <li>• Corrupción (8)</li> <li>• Fracaso afectivo (3)</li> <li>• Supersticiones (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muerte (12)</li> <li>• Tristeza y soledad (8)</li> <li>• Terapias (3)</li> <li>• Olvido de seres amados (2)</li> <li>• Fragilidad humana (2)</li> </ul>

Tabla 2. Figuras recurrentes en la valoración del olor de las flores.

## 2.2. La escena práctica, la estrategia y la experiencia odorífica

La interpretación y representación subjetiva que hace el individuo de un aroma alude a las diversas variables individuales y sociales en que él haya vivido, entre estas, las emociones asociadas a objetos particulares (Bedini 2010). De esa manera, la impronta se gesta (Rapaille 2007), prevalece en la memoria de una mente que aprende o se adapta y se auto-organiza (Pozo 2012) y la memoria olfativa recupera, en la escena práctica de un ejercicio de escritura, la justificación de determinada relación eufórica o disfórica con el olor que se proyecta de la experiencia personal a la colectiva. La escena de los acontecimientos pasados traída al presente está someramente enunciada y los textos, en conjunto, responden a un esquema que se puede expresar así: *i)* representación lingüística de la escena experiencia sensorial recordada, *ii)* explicitación de la relación del olor floral con la vivencia sensorial y afectiva, *iii)* exposición categorial de la relación olor floral, *iv)* proyección de la personal captación del fenómeno a lo comunitario. Esto se puede representar sucintamente con el esquema: *recuerdo* → *relación olor/sensibilidad* → *categorización* → *proyección comunitaria*.

Estas construcciones, así esquematizadas, quedan influenciadas por un número importante de factores; junto a la sensorialidad corporal, están la familiaridad, similitud, compatibilidad del estímulo y la respuesta, edad, los efectos de la memoria, entre otros de orden psicológico y social (Engen, citado por Bonadeo 2005: 109). Por ejemplo:

En Santander, el olor de las flores se relaciona con la afectividad, lo que se traduce en una señal de solicitud o de otorgamiento de perdón; el olor de dulces flores en ritos de cortesía entre profesionales (saludos de cumpleaños) y el dolor y la soledad cuando fallece un ser querido. Como esta experiencia es muy dura, el olor de las flores, para la gente de la región se relaciona más con este dolor (informante P30-15).

En el modelo de análisis, la estrategia es una interacción de al menos dos prácticas que deben ser coordinadas, ajustadas o confrontadas (Fontanille 2015: 123) para resolver el problema de dar sentido a las propias acciones y captaciones en la escena práctica, de tal suerte que las soluciones diferentes aparecen como simulacros constituyentes de un nivel de expresión englobante de las prácticas semióticas. A partir de Fontanille (2015: 123), se puede expresar que la interacción de simulacros expresados en el texto enunciado aparece como una confrontación de imágenes (como la imagen textual del enunciatario y la imagen textual del enunciador), pero es en el plano de las estrategias donde los participantes del acto enunciativo y las imágenes y captaciones que expresan en el texto aparecerán como modos específicos de resolver los desafíos reales y no los simulacros. En el caso de los textos analizados, estos reflejan cómo los actores sociales recurren a la estrategia para resolver dos problemas conjuntos: *a)* dar sentido a las escenas prácticas marcadas por el olor de las flores y *b)* expresar esto con las sinestesias y otros recursos del lenguaje verbal escrito, de modo que sea visible la experiencia odorífica como un fenómeno personal y sociocultural.

La estrategia recuperada a través de los textos consiste en la construcción de la relación disfórica entre el sujeto y el olor floral (véase tabla 3). Las relaciones del olor floral con la muerte, la descomposición y de estados anímicos son dominantes en la muestra textual analizada y corresponderían, tanto a informantes del espacio rural como urbano, al recuerdo de la presencia de flores muy fragantes en ritos fúnebres. La estrategia se puede esquematizar como la memoria de una relación afectiva del olor de las flores, lo que desemboca en una captación cognitiva impresiva y semántica de la vivencia. La categorización con un fundamento axiológico, predominantemente disfórico por la asociación con la muerte que despierta miedo y angustia en el ethos de la cultura compartida, es proyectada como lo propio del sentido común del entorno cultural.



**Tabla 3.** Esquema estratégico de la valoración del olor floral.

Esta determinación disfórica del olor de las flores puede comprenderse por la manera en que se organiza la ciudad bumanguesa. A lo largo de la calle 45, una de las vías que atraviesa la ciudad de este a oeste, y donde convergen vías de acceso al perímetro urbano, se encuentran cementerios, la morgue del Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses, varias salas de velación, las dos cárceles (para mujeres y para hombres), el hospital psiquiátrico y otros centros de atención médica, además de áreas consideradas en el pasado como de tolerancia. La investigadora Claudia Mantilla (2010) hizo un estudio semiótico en el que demuestra que los imaginarios de esta calle están asociados a oposiciones axiológicas relacionadas con vida/muerte, salud/enfermedad y libertad/prisión. A lo largo de la vía se instalan los parques y mer-

cados populares de flores que deben gran parte de las operaciones comerciales a los ritos de velación y enterramiento. La investigadora, a partir de pesquisas de historiadores sobre la vida comercial de la región, expresa que las flores son, para los habitantes de la calle 45, un elemento superfluo y ornamental que no corresponde a las urgencias vitales de las personas con el carácter severo y austero del santandereano. Por el contrario, las flores son vistas como lo propio de rituales mortuorios y, en un segundo lugar bastante alejado del primero, como parte de otras ceremonias como los matrimonios.

Además, los mercados populares de Bucaramanga expenden flores con fines terapéuticos (generalmente, quien las vende es conocedor de recetas de curación indígenas y tradicionales, de ritos espirituales y mágicos), lo que fundamentaría algunas de las representaciones disfóricas en que se relacionan terapias, aromas de flores y algunas prácticas de nigromancias, etc. Sin embargo, en la calle 33 de la misma ciudad hay varios expendios de perfumes y aceites (mezclas odoríficas artificiales) con importantes operaciones comerciales. Estas fragancias artificiales son ambientadores y otras son aguas de colonia y de perfumes para uso personal y que imitan fragancias de las reconocidas marcas. Es decir, existe una repulsa ante el olor floral natural y una mejor recepción comercial de las fragancias artificiales o de mezclas que dejan de lado el olor específico de una flor o planta.

La variante de esta estrategia disfórica es la construcción de la relación entre el sujeto y el olor floral con una tendencia eufórica, en espacios rurales o de provincia. Esto se explica porque los informantes de estas zonas son cercanos a los cultivos y al campesinado, ejercen la docencia en ámbitos rurales y tienen una experiencia más directa y constante con “la belleza del paisaje colombiano, la variedad de plantas que huelen en todo momento del día, el trabajo del hombre y de la mujer del campo” (informante P40-27). En estos espacios, las flores y los olores de estas hacen parte del ornato de viviendas y de las reminiscencias infantiles. En estas condiciones, en la construcción de los textos de los informantes de provincia, aparecen elementos que no figuran en la construcción de los textos de los informantes urbanos, quienes hacen menos referencias al paisaje natural, a los privilegios de la geografía santandereana y colombiana y a las ornamentaciones y disfrute del paisaje, menos a la dimensión de las flores con respecto de las nuevas oportunidades laborales en el campo. Precisamente, este es el horizonte de expectativas que se abre en los espacios rurales y que se relaciona con las intervenciones institucionales para el impulso de nuevos productos de origen floral y herbal en el mercado regional y nacional. Esta línea de construcción axiológica dinamiza las relaciones en las lógicas que se tensan en el sentido común y lo transforman.

### 3. Conclusiones. Forma de vida y coexistencia de sistemas axiológicos

Anne Le Guérer (1998: 119-150) muestra cómo los mitos y los ritos están asociados a los perfumes que oscilan entre olores de lo vivo y los olores de la descomposición (de la muerte), lo que da base a procesos complejos de orden antropológico. En las prácticas de la vida cotidiana, el olor y el cuerpo vivo mantienen una relación de sentido entre la polaridad de la vida y la muerte. Así, por ejemplo, para muchas personas de la cultura santandereana y bumanguesa, el olor de las azucenas (*lirium*) y de las flores del caballero de la noche (*cestrum nocturnum*) no media un valor eufórico, sino disfórico o negativo, porque “huele a muerto”, huella perceptiva en tensión con otras valoraciones positivas relacionadas con el reto de recuperar, en la Colombia de hoy, un ethos constructivo y vital que supere las marcas profundas de la violencia y permita la apertura de caminos de desarrollo sociocultural.

Los textos condensan la experiencia heterogénea y diversa de las escenas prácticas rememoradas; las convergencias y descripciones en los textos expresan complejos sinestésicos o de cómo el olor actúa en toda la dinámica corporal y cultural. Esto se puede esquematizar heurística-

mente como una la resolución textual de la heterogeneidad polisensorial de la escena práctica, en correspondencia con una estrategia que aparece condensada en el enunciado escrito (Fontanille 2014), debido a la pérdida de todas las propiedades de la escena práctica cuando es enunciada lingüísticamente en el texto, pero con una focalización precisa de la captación cognitiva de la experiencia odorífica.

Esta condensación parece afirmar y revertirse en la escena práctica, en una *expansión optimizante*, puesto que el sistema de valores y de creencias contenidas en el texto, a modo de *paragonaje* (Fontanille 2014: 88), son las dadas por informantes que se desempeñan o desempeñarán como mediadores del aprendizaje de bienes culturales y de las axiologías reguladoras de la experiencia y el sentido dado a esta. Las tensiones entre las percepciones de los informantes y el programa de desarrollo regional para comercializar productos naturales como estrategia de sostenibilidad económica con bajo impacto ambiental se relacionan con las dinámicas de la forma de vida, entendida como una forma de representación de las estrategias de iconización, de producción de pautas de sentido o de solución adecuada y adaptada de la cultura a los problemas de sentido. Es así, como afirma Fontanille, que la cultura puede ser entendida como una retórica persuasiva (2014: 93) que ampara el quehacer semiótico de los actores de ella, se convierte en el parámetro de interpretaciones y define las tendencias de sentido de su propia actividad.

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**FROM THE SESSION  
“SEMIOTICS FROM  
THE VIEWPOINT OF  
TRANSDISCIPLINARITY  
AND COMPLEXITY  
THEORY”**

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# OF SEMIOTIC PROCESSES, GENDER MEANING PRODUCTION IN POLITICS: FROM MODEL TO POLITICAL CANDIDATE IN MEXICO (2015)

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## **Abstract**

This paper studies the semiotic processes, gender meaning production in Mexican politics through the case of pre-candidate Giselle Arellano to a seat in the local congress for the state of Zacatecas, Mexico, in 2013. This cultural phenomenon as a semiotic text includes several subtexts: 1) The negative answer of conservative political party, PAN, to grant the candidacy to model Giselle Arellano, on the grounds that she lacked an honest way of living. 2) Photos and video in lingerie of Arellano published in social networks. 3) Arellano's lawsuit and protest in media regarding this result. 4) The conservative party, PAN, later authorization to Arellano to contend for a seat in the internal process to local congress. The theoretical framework draws from Juri Lotman's notion of semiosphere and text in regards to the different layers of meaning construction in semiotic processes and also his views on the concepts of explosion, unpredictability, inflection point and predictability (1996, 1999, 2000, 2013). The event also offers the possibility to show the tension between socio-cultural semiotic modelling through discursive interaction, specifically gender (Lamas 2000). From a gender perspective, women in politics are discriminated against and excluded due to former types of jobs that patriarchal culture designates. Thus, this to say that when the potential politician, a woman, does not comply with the traditional social imaginary, she is excluded.

## **1. Introduction**

Through the case of pre-candidate Giselle Arellano to a seat in the local congress for the state of Zacatecas, Mexico, in 2013, this paper approaches the semiotic processes, gender meaning

production in Mexican politics. This cultural phenomenon as a semiotic text includes several subtexts: 1) The negative answer of conservative political party, PAN, to grant the candidacy to model Giselle Arellano, on the grounds that she lacked an honest way of living. 2) Photos and video in lingerie of Arellano published in social networks. 3) Arellano's lawsuit and protest in media regarding this result. 4) The conservative party, PAN, later authorization to Arellano to contend for a seat in the internal process to local congress.

One of the objectives of this study from a gender perspective, it is to present a critique towards Mexican political discourse to pinpoint the use of androcentric language that subordinates women (Estrada, 2016). In particular, the aim is to reflect on equality between women and men to eradicate - reduce - the processes of naturalization of violence (Bourdieu, 2003). It also shows how women in politics are at a disadvantage and do not have the cultural and social privileges of their male counterparts. The representations of women imposed by the sex-gender system in Mexican society remain sexist, discriminatory and exclusive. The above is observed in some media narratives when they refer to the actions of women in politics, such is the case of several legislators who broke with the traditional roles of women to enter politics and / or protest against corruption (Estrada and Flores 2016).

Even after Mexican women obtained the right to vote in 1953, women stayed at home. At that time, it was the duty of a woman in spite of the new law. Mexican politics, as a historical-cultural semiosphere, did not include women participating in Congress. It was unheard of seeing women's names on election ballots, despite the fact that the law already stated that right. Nevertheless, in the collective social imagination it was believed that the role of women was to be in the private sphere taking care of children only (Estrada and Ochoa 2015). This semiotic system did not provide the necessary strategies to include them after the right to vote for women to enter politics or make policies for inclusion in the public world, but kept them private until a group of feminists in the 1990s questioned the absence of women in the seats of the Mexican congress is when the percentages of women in representation positions were analysed for the first time (Estrada 2012).

Nevertheless, some strategies and mechanisms were proposed in 2012 to palliate the above, in particular the first initiatives of the so-called positive discrimination or gender quotas. These public policies paved the way for women in the twenty-first century to see their names on the ballots to be candidates and could win some popular election. Based on these findings and the fact that these inequalities became visible, some academics such as Graciela Hierro (1999) opened the feminist reflection within the Mexican academy and decided to give congresses, colloquiums and seminars in universities all over the country so that thought and inclusive language spread in many areas of everyday life and the importance of women entering Mexican politics.

A society that pretends to be democratic, cannot leave women excluded, because for reasons of representation they are a little more than 50 percent of the national population and are citizens with the same rights and opportunities in accordance with the Mexican Constitution, in its Article 43. There are also several ethical, political and efficiency fallacies that lead to the belief that there is less capacity in government or performance for public office. The figure of the feminine remains exposed to a continuous vulnerability and therefore is a political issue projected with different speeches that mask its reality. The prejudice of seclusion in the private space continues to subject women to a subjectivity that confuses them to a state of emergency (Agamben 2000) and, on the other hand, the discourse of public institutions, which generate practices of disapproval, with a load of meaning in which cultural components of various kinds, whether religious, moral, conventional or traditional, are combined (Alencar Rodrigues & Cantera, 2013, UN Women, 2012). For these reasons, this research intends to identify how political discourse shapes practices of naturalized violence within the public space and how, in some way, the media legitimizes it and the political substratum endorses it.

## 2. Of semiosphere, text and (un)predictability

The theoretical framework draws from Juri Lotman's notion of semiosphere and text in regards to the different layers of meaning construction in semiotic processes and also his views on the concepts of explosion, unpredictability, inflection point and predictability. According to Lotman (1996: 12-19), a semiosphere is a semiotic universe and a semiotic space, which has two distinct characteristics: a delimited character and semiotic irregularity. The notion of border is one fundamental aspect of this delimited character of the semiosphere. One can say with Lotman "the border is a bilingual mechanism that translates all external messages to the semiosphere internal language and vice versa" (1996: 13-14). Any communication into and out the semiosphere is translated to a set of codes. Lotman underlines the importance of coding in the semiotic system For example, referring to historical Russia, women, children and servants were included in the personality of man. However, in other semiotic systems, this may be different (1996: 13). On the other hand, the semiosphere heterogeneous nature develops in different places and speeds, which determines, partially, the internal organization structural irregularity (Lotman 1996: 16-17).

The social and communicative function of text for Lotman can be summed up in the two following processes: text as a message and text as collective cultural memory. Most importantly, for a message or communication to have the category of text, it must be coded at least in two different codes, the natural language and the specific language. This theorist mentions the text 'law' as an example, which contains the natural language and the legal language coding (Lotman 1996: 53).

Lotman establishes that a continuous process has an implicit predictability, a process that manifests a cyclical or a gradual evolution, in contrast to unpredictability during an explosive process (1999: 19; 2013: 64). Both, predictability and unpredictability are both present in semiotic processes. The following (Un)predictability operative model is based on these Lotman's ideas, as shown in Figure 1.

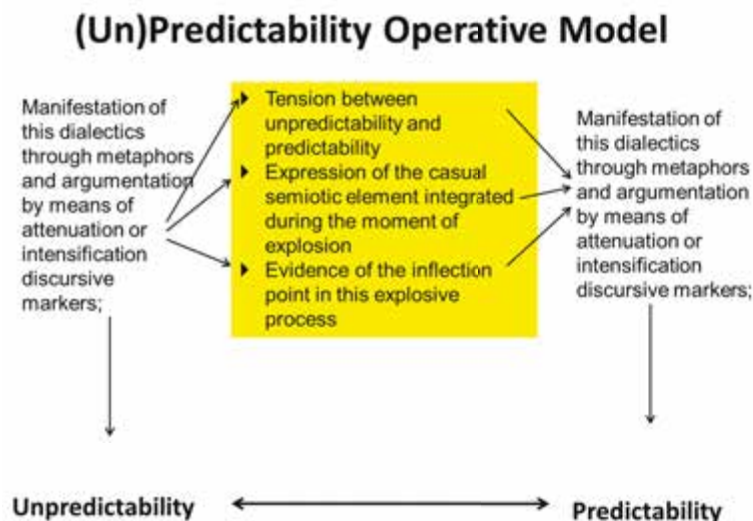


Figure 1. Adapted from (Un)Predictability Operative Model (Zárate & Zambrano, 2015).

## 3. Semiotic processes and gender meaning production in Mexican politics

Gayle Rubin (1986), gender studies theorist, establishes that being a woman and to act in political scenarios is more criticized in a sex-gender culture. In this sense, one can say that Mexican politics can be conceptualized as a distinct semiosphere where patriarchal views and androcentrism are still present in political discourse when referring to women. According to Ana de



Miguel (2016), androcentrism is when men's views are more valued and they are placed at the centre of all things. This same author expresses that through the notion of sexism is the idea that men are superior to women physically, morally and intellectually, and the status of women is of subordination. Through specific discursive mechanisms, power is exercised (Foucault 2008). In this case, the subordination of women, has taken place as a result of discursive practices, organized and reproduced, to preserve a system of domination (Serret 2006: 68).

In this political scenario and semiotic system, Giselle Arellano, Mexican political pre-candidate for the conservative party, PAN (Partido Acción Nacional in Spanish), tried to contend for a seat in the local congress for the state of Zacatecas, Mexico, in 2013, as shown in Figure 2.

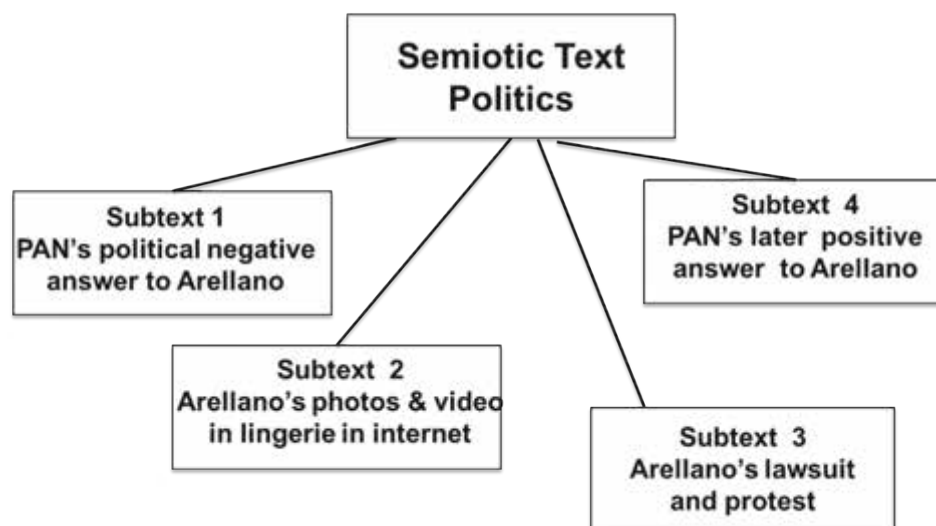


Figure 2. Politics as a semiotic text includes several subtexts.

This cultural phenomenon as a semiotic text includes several subtexts: 1) The negative answer of conservative political party, PAN, to grant the candidacy to model Giselle Arellano, on the grounds that she did not have an honest way of living. 2) Photos and video in lingerie of Arellano published in social networks. 3) Arellano's lawsuit and protest in media regarding this result. 4) The conservative party, PAN, later authorization to Arellano to contend for a seat in the internal process to local congress.

### 3.1. PAN's political negative answer to Arellano

On March 15, 2013, the article "Niega PAN registro a modelo migrante", written by Gerardo Romo, published in *Reforma* newspaper, mentioned that "La dirigencia nacional del PAN encabezada por Gustavo Madero y Cecilia Romero negaron el registro este viernes como precandidata a diputada migrante de Zacatecas, a Giselle Arellano, argumentando que no tiene un modo honesto de vivir, por lo que la joven de 33 años quien es modelo profesional se dijo denigrada". The quote shows interesting levels of analysis. As stated before, the concept of border is one basic element of the delimited character of the semiosphere (Lotman 1996). One can observe, thus, that the border separates a conservative semiosphere with a more liberal one. There are two distinct semiospheres, one pertaining to Mexican politics. In this sense, the border is translating the external messages to this conservative semiosphere internal language.

#### 3.1.1. Arellano's photos and video

It is a common knowledge in politics the publication of photos or declarations as a political attack. Within the continuum of semiotic processes, predictability is expressed in this sense.

In this respect, one can ask what the notion of border is in this Mexican political semiosphere. This may be clearer in the next quote: “La precandidata causó polémica por un video que apareció en redes sociales en el que aparece modelando en ropa interior y con unas alas de ángel para una empresa de Las Vegas” (Romo 2013). The general public knew of Giselle Arellano’s situation through the social widespread of a video in lingerie. It is interesting to note, though, the case of Marlene Benvenuti, a former lingerie model, a local congresswoman in the state of Nuevo Leon in the same conservative party PAN. In Benvenuti’s case her protest for a state case of corruption, triggered the publication of photos of her former job as a model (Estrada and Zárata, 2017).

The border at the semiosphere periphery translates into this conservative internal language the message that is not appropriate for a candidate to appear in a photo or a video modeling in lingerie. From a gender perspective, as it has been said in a sex-gender culture a woman is more prone to be questioned when acting in politics (Rubin 1986). This idea relies in the woman’s stereotype taken into consideration as housewife, honest worker, in Mexican society (Lamas 2012). Collective imagination in Mexico still conceives women as queens in the home –with all moral attributes, including modesty, and in particular, as emotional and physical caregivers. On the opposing side, this same collective imagination places women as bad persons, with no moral. However, there is a middle type of women who want to exercise power (Ortner 1979), such as Arellano. In this case, one can identify that Arellano was discriminated against due to her former modeling job, which would be a naturalization of violence (Bourdieu 2003).

### 3.1.2. Arellano’s lawsuit and protest

After receiving the notification from the conservative political party, PAN refusing her candidacy to run for a seat in the state congress of Zacatecas, Mexico, Giselle Arellano sued the party and protested in her Facebook account. Through her lawyer, Arellano demonstrated her legal activities in Las Vegas, in United States, which complied with the party statutes (Proceso 17 March 2013). On the other hand, in her private Facebook account, she stated that: “¡Soy Giselle Arellano, soy migrante, y soy orgullosamente zacatecana! ¡Quiero ser tu diputada migrante!” It is worthwhile to note that her declaration included a cartoon of herself portrayed as the Wonder Woman comic strip character with the background of the party logo.



**Figure 3.** Image of Giselle Arellano as Wonder Woman character.

Unpredictability takes form in the moment of explosion in this semiotic process when Giselle Arellano sues the party and her protest in social networks.

### 3.2. PAN's later positive answer to Arellano

Unpredictability is implicit in the explosive semiotic process such as in this case. The conservative political party, PAN (*Partido Acción Nacional* in Spanish) authorized Arellano to run as pre-candidate for a congress seat for the state of Zacatecas, Mexico: "ZACATECAS, MX.- El CEN del PAN revirtió su negativa a permitir la participación de la precandidata del PAN a diputada local migrante, Giselle Arellano Ávila, quien hoy sí apareció en las boletas del proceso interno del partido para definir a sus candidatos al Congreso local que contendrán en la elección constitucional" (Proceso 17 March 2013).

### 4. Conclusion

This study incorporates Juri Lotman's notion of semiosphere and text in regards to the different layers of meaning construction in semiotic processes and his views on the concepts of explosion, unpredictability, inflection point and predictability. It also includes theoretical gender perspectives (Rubin, Lamas, Ortner) to analyse in the previous pages through the case of pre-candidate Giselle Arellano to a seat in the local congress for the state of Zacatecas, Mexico, in 2013 how semiotic processes, gender meaning production in Mexican politics take place. This cultural phenomenon as a semiotic text includes several subtexts: 1) The negative answer of conservative political party, PAN, to grant the candidacy to model Giselle Arellano, on the grounds that she lacked an honest way of living. 2) Photos and video in lingerie of Arellano published in social networks. 3) Arellano's lawsuit and protest in media regarding this result. 4) The conservative party, PAN, later authorization to Arellano to contend for a seat in the internal process to local congress. Mexican politics as a semiosphere still conveys a collective imagination of woman, on one hand modest, virtuous and emotional and physical caregiver; on the other side, as a woman of no moral or virtues. But what happens with the woman in the middle category, who wants to exercise power? (Ortner 1979).

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**FROM THE SESSION “TO  
COEXIST, TO PARTICIPATE,  
TO CHANGE”**

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# IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: INTERVENTION IN THE FIELD AS TEXT

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## **Abstract**

Nowadays a widespread social movement challenges the commodification of contemporary society and carries out actions that aim to eliminate the market system's economic mechanisms and create systems to distribute goods through a "reciprocity" dynamic. The paper describes the principles of this vast social movement that has been largely ignored by the media. It also examines some exemplary cases of interventions on the field, which are considered as a special type of text equipped with an author, a reader, an utterance, an interpretation and interpretative cooperation. The paper then proposes a general model to analyse texts made up of ongoing social processes, with their own specific method of documentation and a new general typology of texts, thus giving semiotics back its capacity for social criticism.

## **1. New social organisms**

A wide network of movements and associations in Europe have recently been experimenting with concrete forms of anti-consumerism and systems of income that are alternative to the cycle of industrial production, while at the same time inventing economic models based on the exchange of goods rather than trade. The characteristics shared by these movements make them a new cultural phenomenon that is socially unexpected and economically relevant. Italian Solidarity-based Purchasing Groups (GAS in Italian) are associations that organise local networks to distribute primarily food products by organising collective purchases and transportation, and then distributing to its members the goods produced organically by independent farmers who respect ethical work conditions. This cuts out the chain of organised commercial distribution, the over-elaborate display of products in shopping centres whose buildings have destroyed landscapes, intensive industrial agricultural production, labour exploitation and land exploitation through monocultures in non-European countries as well as the mental intoxication carried out by advertising, marketing, fashion and commercial promotion. Other groups, like the *Campi Aperti* (Open Fields) Association in Bologna, defend land from speculation by making collec-

tive purchases of land through low denomination shareholdings. This land is then farmed by new farmers who sell or exchange agricultural products within local communities. In this way, alternative development models based on the principle of revitalising local economies independently of international agro-industrial production have been elaborated. Still other groups, which are more radical, organise the cultivation of wheat (with non-GMO seeds) on common land, the transformation of wheat into flour and the production of bread, pasta and other staple foodstuffs which are then distributed to 60 families from cities that participate in the work. In this way, space and money is taken from industrial and commercial production processes, and quality goods, that the groups monitor themselves, are obtained. These are just a few examples of the activities with which increasingly widespread yet little known associations and organisms have recently been experimenting. These organisms share some main characteristics, such as (a) widespread presence in different types of areas (metropolises, small towns, rural areas), (b) the total absence of news about them in the mass media, (c) the concrete experimentation of economic and productive forms that conflict with the market system, (d) their theoretical and operational difference from pseudo-movements presented in the media as “alternative” to the institutional system, or that present themselves as such (e.g. “Podemos” in Spain, the Movimento 5 Stelle - 5 Star Movement - in Italy, Occupy Wall Street in the USA), (e) and the presence of economic reference theories such as the theory of Degrowth or Solidarity and Fair Economy equipped with canonical texts and authors (such as Serge Latouche, Joan Martinez Alier, Ivan Illich, Euclides Mance, Vandana Shiva). A fundamental common characteristic is the fact that they carry out direct actions on the ground by operating a real *dissenting economy*: they establish independent networks of agricultural production and non-commercial distribution of food products that are outside the market system; they reclaim abandoned land, plant species and work techniques; they create traditional seed banks; they experiment with new community housing units and urban systems; they exchange self-produced products. These types of concrete actions, that are either episodic or recurring over time, are examined in this paper in order to describe their characteristics and understand their nature.

## 2. Principles of a dissenting economy

In Europe numerous movements, associations and coordinating authorities operate in opposition to consumerism and commodification, in particular by establishing non-commercial processes for the production, circulation and distribution of goods, especially foodstuffs. However, there are also active organisms opposing the commodification of goods in the context of field interventions by NGOs in international cooperation, and in the Degrowth theoretical movement. The theoretical and operational convergence evident in the organisms that are operating in these three areas means that they can be considered part of single, cultural and political movement that is in the course of formation and has some basic common values:

- a. the objective of creating an economic system that is alternative to the market system, and is based on the economic model of “reciprocity” taken from K. Polanyi’s work (cfr. Polanyi 1944);
- b. an overall de-commodification project for society, that is, the objective of creating a society in which goods are not commodities;
- c. the organisation of a system of direct relations between producers and buyers that eliminates all commercial intermediation, distribution chains and long-distance transport, as well as advertising, marketing, fashion and anything that promotes consumption;
- d. the Domestic Economy model which dates back to Aristotle and is virtuous: self-production of everything necessary for daily life plus a little surplus to exchange with other external

production units in order to obtain that which cannot be produced because of the natural environment. In Aristotle's model, the agricultural holding, the *oikos*, self-produces food and craft products in quantities suitable for their own consumption and it exchanges its surplus and reserves with other *oikos*. Nowadays there are regional areas or organised local groups that coordinate with groups from other areas.

This set of projects includes a wide range of experiments that have been underway for some time. It is this action in the field that is the focus of our interest as the object of a semiotics of the current most important and innovative social processes.

The common reference outlook for this set of movements is the principle of *Food Sovereignty*. This expression, which was introduced by the international coordination of Via Campesina in 1996, refers to the right of every nation and community to maintain its own production of basic foodstuffs according to its own agricultural and productive tradition, and to produce its own food on its own land without depending on external techniques, materials, seeds and supplies. This is a uniform strategy of opposition to industrial agriculture and its different aspects such as systems of intensive monoculture meant solely for international export, GMO seeds, industrial firms' ownership rights of organic goods and living organisms (food plants, medicines, cosmetics) modified by specialised biotechnologies like GMO seeds. Legitimised by treaties like the TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) established in 1995 by the WTO (World Trade Organisation), these agreements dispossess local communities of their economic and food autonomy. By contrast, the opposition strategy inspired by the food sovereignty principle fosters local communities' re-appropriation of control of their own food resources, and therefore their quality of life.

In poor countries, this strategy is a collective choice made by communities to improve their overall quality of life by adopting an organic programme of coordinated actions aimed at re-launching local community life. Rural organisations, federations of rural producers and networks of territorial coordination manage the production, harvest and distribution of local food, and they promote free exchange of seeds, common ownership of land, creation of mutualistic funds and social training programmes. The ROPPA network (Reseau des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest) for example, which was created in 2000 brings together about a hundred farmers' associations from 11 African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo) into a reciprocal and common action and it is the interlocutor for local governments and the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation). In western countries, it is primarily an individual choice that goes through constellations of small productive units, that is, networks of single producers that have made an individual choice to undertake small-scale farming in agreement with varied groups of buyers. Only subsequently do they organise with other individual producers distributed widely on the national territory.

### 3. The interventions in the field as texts

In semiotic terms we examined interventions in the field carried out by these organisms as texts and identified which factors play the role of textual elements (the equivalent of words and sentences), which are syntactic elements, how the roles of author and reader are distributed, what is the meaning, the processes of interpretation, the interpretant, the reader's collaboration and white spaces. Once it was accepted historically that a text is an organisation of elements and functions, the material of which are not only words and sentences but any other subject (e.g. visual: colours, shapes, diagrams, pictures, photographs, and then posters, architecture, lights - TV or computer screens - etc), this made it possible for all subjects, given certain rules, to con-

stitute textual material, including muscular actions (gestures, movements, behaviours), physical actions with objects (moving objects, exchanging goods), complex actions (digging, building, walking, posing, delivering, etc).

Thus for the purpose of this analysis of the three areas in which the new economic and social vision is manifested (international cooperation, degrowth association actions and actions of anti-consumerism social movements), we distinguished at least four significant moments. First and foremost, by extending the method elaborated for international cooperation actions, it is possible to generally treat social actions, processes and practices as *utterances*, since they can be equipped with an “author”, “reader”, “objective text”, “meaning”, “interpretation”, “results” (interpretants), thus distinguishing the roles laid down by Interpretative Semiotics, and identifying the conditions that render actions effective, that is, that give them meaning (cfr. Pellerey 2011: 110-112; Pellerey 2015:66-123). *Authors* of texts are those who organise actions in different ways and participate in them (NGOs, local organisms, associations, movements, coordinations). *Utterances* or *texts* are the material and objective conditions laid out in the action and organised in technical mechanisms of development or action carried out in the field, and are the objective “letter” of the text. *Readers* are those who benefit from the action, that is the local community or dissenting economy groups that effectively use the mechanisms put in place. *Interpretation* is the activation of technical conditions put in place by the text thus obtaining from the action a series of immediate consequences and results that constitute the meaning. The *meaning* of the action is the result obtained, the meaning the action takes on in the meeting between the material conditions put in place and their interpretation by the affected community. This meeting constitutes the *interpretative cooperation* put in place in the action. The consequences that follow the initial immediate results constitute knock-on *interpretants* up until the final interpretant of the achieved stability of improved quality of life: in fact, the meaning is the effective transformation of the quality of life obtained thanks to the action undertaken. The *limits* of the interpretation are the constraints on the use of text that is uses of mechanisms that are incoherent or incompatible with the basic objectives of the action. A well to extract pure water produced by the cooperative action of different authors (an ONG, local administrations, associations, volunteers...) is a device to obtain water with continued regularity for the benefit of a community before it can be understood as a tool for irrigation for farming or to facilitate hygiene or to change cooking techniques, all of which are possible interpretations in different directions.

In this framework the notion of Model Operator was formulated, which corresponds to the Model Author that is the operational strategy adopted on the field to be an effective operator. While the Author or Empirical Operator is the organisation equipped with its own “biographical”, historical and legal identity, the Model Operator is the operational unit *in loco* with its strategic choices. The Model Operator is composed of people from different entities participating in the action, including members of the same local community. The Model Operator is capable of adopting the necessary ways of thinking how to organise effective actions that make sense in the local situation: that is, that they are capable of transforming the quality of life. This means that the Empirical Reader is the overall indistinct population to whom the action is addressed, and the Model Reader refers to those who interpret the utterance using the mechanisms available, after having drawn the appropriate meaning and obtained its effects and results, that is, the part of the community that participates in activities having grasped their worthwhile meaning.

Secondly, it is possible to identify a series of *utterance terms* of the action, that is, norms of functionality and effectiveness of ways of formulating actions: mechanisms that regulate the formulation of the utterance making the meaning usable in its operational context. These are conditions that organise two types of basic functions, the subdivision of tasks and the reciprocal

recognition among participants of the utterance. They include conditions like the activation of the action only on the explicit request of the local community, its running by a body recognised as legitimate and trustworthy by users and the explicit approval of the agreed programme by the assembly of affected communities, etc. These conditions regulate the roles to be respected and the reciprocal expectations to be maintained in order to produce an utterance recognised as valid and legitimate by both interlocutors (cfr. Pellerey 2011:110-112; Pellerey 2015:96-100).

Thirdly, it was possible to formulate a *pragmatic semantics of the action*, which examines *contextual*, *co-text*, and circumstantial factors that determine the meaning of the action. The three factors just mentioned give rise to the choice of the action that makes sense in specific local conditions. This is a preliminary on-the-ground analysis to choose the most suitable action as well as an analysis of the factors and reasons that have led to the success of a particular action. “Context” in Interpretative Semiotics refers to the general area of facts in which the action is formulated that is the kind of discourse in which the utterance is formulated (e.g. economy versus education or medicine, industrial production versus recovering traditional crafts or the development of tourism etc.). “Circumstances” refer to social, economic and cultural situations in which actions are enclosed (e.g. the presence of conflicts among groups in the community, the existence of strong associative traditions in the workplace or the preference for individual work, relations between ethnic or religious groups, the type of male-female relationships...). “Co-text” is the set of technical and material factors present on the ground including climatic and environmental ones such as the fertility of the land, the existence of an intact or strongly contaminated natural environment, geographical position and road links with the rest of the country, presence of given raw materials, the technical skills of people present etc. The interaction of these factors enables the formulation of an action that makes sense and has real meaning vis-à-vis the place and the moment of its utterance, which is compatible with values, cultural practices and the objectives of the beneficiary community (cfr. Pellerey 2011:110-112; Pellerey 2015:92-96).

Fourthly, the specific property of “procedures for deployment” has been added to the characteristics and properties of a text. The starting point was the need to describe and examine texts such as actions on the field or stage shows made up of social practices or *ongoing processes*, the duration in time of which deprives them of stable, permanent thoroughness that is coexistent with all parts or elements (similar for example to a written text irrespective of length or whether it is divided in chapters). The lack of clear boundaries of the material that constitutes the text (such as the boundaries of a practice, what is part of a street demonstration, a street exhibition of mimes, a public marathon, a garden party?) makes the text vague, and when repeated several times over time, it changes with each rendering like stage shows, for example. This changeable identity has placed doubts on the very observation and documentation of these texts because of their unstable and evanescent nature, so much so that it has been necessary to create a method of documentation especially for these kinds of texts (cfr. Pellerey 2016a and Pellerey 2016b). The same doubts regard their nature as texts articulated over time: when does a process begin and end, that is, what are its time limits and what depends on the author’s planning? These doubts can be attributed to the stable permanence of the text over time and its objective demarcation, as well as the appearance of fortuity due to the lack of structured organisation of the material available, which is guaranteed by an author (Cfr. Pellerey 2016a, 2016b).

Following these observations we have contrasted (a) on one side *stable* texts versus texts that spread their *material manifestation over time*, (b) on the other *finished* or *permanent* texts that are invariable every time they are interpreted or performed, versus *unstable* or *fleeting* texts that change every time they are performed, in a constantly renewed textuality. “Stable” texts can also be described as texts that spread their material manifestation through the spaces of



pages or other fixed bearings instead of over time, thus keeping their material composition unchanged over time. This leads to a general opposition between texts spread through space that remain stable and unchanged in every part of their deployment (among these are films whose frames are fixed and do not change over time), and texts spread over time which have “dynamic” organisational properties: variable with each performance, articulated in successive rather than coexistent phases, vague boundaries and an unpredictable final identity. The “procedures for deployment” will subsequently be extended to qualifying characteristics for every text.

#### 4. Documenting actions in the field

In relation to demarcation, stability and documentation, a method to fix texts with “dynamic” deployment properties, that is ongoing processes like the practices of social movements, is proposed, with the method divided into three phases: (a) *participant observation* in preparatory moments of the action such as meetings, assemblies, discussions, preparation of demonstrative actions in which reasons for and forms of the action are specified; (b) multiple *repeated viewing* of meetings and preparatory assemblies of organisms and associations as well as the actual actions in the field repeated on several occasions in different contexts, or of different single and unique actions; (c) *drafting of observation notes* written during and immediately after meetings and actions. Like in theatre, videos or other recording systems are unfaithful duplicates and are reduced to the visible and sound components of the action which do not render the multiplicity of emotional and perceptual feelings experienced by participants in the midst of the real situation (such as emotional density, collective expectation, tactile and olfactory sensations, temperature, light, ambient noise...). The written notes and the verbal description render what participants experience - that is the atmosphere in which they were immersed and the meaning they attributed to the experience. Combined with this is other paratextual material such as films, photographs, written documents, declarations and interviews with those responsible for the actions, members of organisms and associations as well as casual spectators and suppliers of material.

#### 5. A Food Sovereignty text

A textual *genre* of Food Sovereignty widespread in Europe is the CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), a system of mutual agreements between farmer-producers and communities of supporters, generally city dwellers that pre-purchase a certain amount of goods before sowing time that will be delivered weekly during harvest. Together they establish the quantities and varieties of agricultural or farmed goods to be produced (fruit, vegetables, pulses, eggs, meat, cheese, etc.) and the means of either delivery or direct pick-up from the farm. The aim is to support healthy, fair, local agriculture, smoothing the path of the producers who work knowing they have already sold their harvest and do not have to submit to the fluctuations of the market and the risk of unsold produce. Moreover, they are not forced to chase consumer trends or disproportionately increase production by using chemical fertilisers and pesticides. On the other hand, buyers are ensured a constant annual supply of quality goods at an agreed price. Cutting out the intermediary steps of distribution, display in shops and supermarkets and packaging contributes to lowering the price, reducing environmental pollution and limiting the commercial market. The best-known cases of CSA today are the French AMAP (*Association Maintien Agriculture Paysanne*) which comprise several thousand groups coordinated at a regional and department level.

Making a CSA agreement constitutes an action that can be described as an *utterance* of the overall Sovereign Food text. The Empirical Author of the action is the *entity charged with planning* the agreement, for example, small independent producers of a region or a group of organised buyers. The Model Author is the *operational unit* that organises a project that makes sense

in the specific local area, that is, the set of actors that come together to establish an agreement in real, specific circumstances: the operational unit is composed of some producers and users who, by working together, become a single organism of “co-producers” distributing roles and tasks among themselves. The Model Author is in fact the set of *producers and users* that, among all of those present in the area, established an agreement, recognising its merits and benefits. Thus, the Empirical Reader refers to all those organisms that are *potentially interested* in the action, but the Model Reader is those who actively participate in the agreement and enjoy the benefits. These *benefits* (economic stability and guaranteed sale on one side, quality goods and price controls on the other) are the prime meaning of the utterance, the direct interpretant of the action. The text of the action refers to the *material conditions and technical mechanisms* drawn up on the field, in this case a series of agreed physical actions and organised interactions to bring about the exchange, which is the direct material of the text. The text of the action is therefore (a) the *actual dynamic* of production of agricultural goods which includes, for example, the choice of non-GMO seeds, how seeds are acquired (free trade or rural banks), the *material work* carried out on the field (work techniques and natural fertilisers), the *participation* of users in sowing, harvesting or irrigation, the rotation of crops etc.; (b) the *agreement* established verbally and the forms and timeframes for scheduled payments; (c) the *mechanics of harvesting* goods and their transport that could envisage, for example, the participation of the user and the absence of packaging; (d) the *mechanics of delivery* of goods or their direct collection by the users; (e) the *treatment of land* in the winter period.

The interpretation of the text is the actual *performance* by the Model Reader of what was laid down and agreed: the dialogue to establish the detailed provisions of the agreement, travelling to the work field, producing the agreed quantities in the agreed manner, transporting and distributing goods, treating the land, etc. If the meaning of the utterance refers to the initial direct results obtained by the contractual partners, the concatenation of interpretants follows in the unlimited semiosis: the *reduction* of the commercial exploitation of goods and reducing commercial chains themselves to sale space; reduction of the packaging industry, reduction of the long-distance transport industry and petrol consumption; elimination of the advertising and promotional industry. The subsequent interpretant is the reciprocal social *trust* created between producers and users, that is, the social relations produced and created by an economy of “reciprocity”. The logical final interpretant is the stable *improvement* of conditions of well-being, a condition of life in which the exchange of goods primarily generates social relations rather than consumption or financial income.

## 6. Transformation of semiotics: innocent texts and colluded texts

Semiotics is continuously changing its tools and models and forging ones that are suitable to the era in which semiologists live and work. In relation to historical and cultural eras and contexts, in the past relevant studies focused on mass media, aesthetic texts and literary works, journalistic and televised information, painting, daily objects and practices such as cooking, media tools that constitute strategic support to the consumer society and commodification like fashion and advertising, and so on. The current outlook is suitable to an era in which the critical crux of the historical present is tied to the debate on models of development and the relationship between development and well-being, both in western countries as well as in impoverished countries.

Therefore, semiotics maintains its nature as a means of describing and analysing the tools and conditions that characterise the production of textual objects in contemporary society. However, it highlights their quality as tools of functional support or natural logical collocation in economic and cultural strategies and ideologies, in which they play a role in supporting and

actually structuring the ideologies and visions in which they are immersed. In fact, texts are not innocent, they collude with one or other vision of the world. Thus, semiotics retrieves its quality of demystifying social action in relation to the processes of social construction of images of reality. Comparing different conceptions of development and wellbeing, and different economic and political choices made when faced with “globalisation”, which is a system of international markets managed by multinational companies rather than governments, is the fulcrum of what will occupy our efforts in the coming decades, with the formation of new cultural paradigms that are only nascent today. In this case, by reinterpreting the original project of critical science of signs, semiotics can usefully turn the explanatory capacity of its tools and its models to the contemporary world’s requests.

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# IS THE AMERICANISATION OF THE INTERNET A FORM OF SEMIOTIC COLONIALISM?

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## **Abstract**

For the most part, the World Wide Web was praised as heralding a new era of enlightenment, making cheap access to the world's knowledge available to everyone, bringing the promise of a space where one would be free to express their individualism and connect with others who want to share or learn about your culture.

However, given the rigidly Western symbolism of the language of technology, is there a danger of corrupting the information that the rest of the world produces, through forcing other cultures to conform to the West? This framework - this semiotic framework put in place largely by America - purports to be focused on user efficiency and ease-of-use via familiarity across the web, but is it just a form of colonialism? Is it easier for the world to interact with technology or is it easier for the West only?

My paper will look at this symbolic language as a tool of digital colonialism and examines the possible impact it will have on a generation of children growing up in a world where the internet is ubiquitous and necessary. These interactions could be a positive sharing of experiences, or it could be a negative reduction of individualism.

## **1. Introduction**

Many countries play key roles in the development of the internet, but no country has created as much that dictates the overt environmental structure of the online world as United States have. Are such design trends a one-way domination of the networked society by the juggernaut of online innovation? Or is it a global, two-way sharing of ideas, knowledge, and values?

This text will be looking at the symbolism and structure of the underlying computer languages and architecture, considering their effect in creating an Americanised internet, spreading Western symbolism in a kind of "semiotic colonialism" of global information. This paper

draws heavily from *Semiotics of Programming* (2010) by Kumiko Tanaka-Ishii, which has greatly influenced this author and is recommended for more depth.

While these questions about globalisation are reminiscent of arguments made about Coca-Cola and Nike, the internet is more pervasive. No one needs soft drinks or designer sneakers, but people increasingly do need the internet to function in the modern world.

Walter Mignolo's (1941- ) work on colonialism and modernity is of great relevance to this problem. Very briefly, he states the world is entering an era of polycentricism where capitalism is not controlled solely by the European countries (Mignolo, 2012). This essay is not a critique of Mignolo's work, but rather it seeks to append the discussion from a semiotic perspective. Alongside the polycentric order and the single unifying thread of capitalism, there is the online world. This is, arguably, the biggest source of information, authoritarianism, empowerment, and economics in the modern world.

It could be said that the internet is a key moment of enunciation for Mignolo's statements of control. This era of internet growth is America's (and Europe's) latest attempt at the creation of the capitalist "more" that underpins Western economies. The obtaining of physical "more" (wealth from food, land and consumer products) is becoming increasingly finite with the decrease in resources and cheap labour, and the increase in global players to the market (China, Brazil, India and so on). The online control of infrastructure, knowledge and values, thus allows Western capitalism to continue its growth through the colonial model, using the signs and systems of the internet.

## 2. Technology and semiotics

Within the browser window or internet application, there are several different languages operating to turn a pre-constructed static concept into something a person can interact with at a visual level, and which can be updated dynamically by the developer. Each element of code serves to anchor the frontend signs, with all the accompanying implications such as position dictating a way of reading the website. Top-down, left-to-right and so on are tropes we see universally online although not all cultures read in such a manner.

When the programme is run, or the website is opened, the code is implemented. This implementation falls into two rough divisions; either the code is interpreted by the browser window and the translated code displayed on the screen or it is compiled by the programmer into a file that is run by the user on their machine without modification. These divisions are not quite that clear cut or defined, but for our semiotic analysis, they work.

The concepts of implementation lead nicely to Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914). Initially, it could be said that programming languages are a system of interdependent signs that do not require any outside framework – much like mathematics, and in line with the Saussueran view of arbitrariness of the sign (Saussure, 1959). It does not matter what the code displays literally, as it is all a signifier to the signified 0's and 1's of the computer code. The syntagms the user types are the symbolic representation of the computer output you wish to achieve. This process is not reversible; the machine code at output cannot be the conceptual signifier for the programming language. Much as the paintbrush can tell something of how the painting was constructed, it cannot convey the meaning of the picture.

The visual output of a website on the screen is the signified of the browser window code so if we are taking a diachronic look at dynamic mark-up languages like HTML, there is a direct signified/signifier relationship to the language that alters as the developer makes changes.

The syntax of website HTML is responsible for the mythological field underpinning most, if



not all, of the internet framework. Whilst the concept of the myth is not innate within the sign (the sign is arbitrary remember) it gains meaning by being or not being with other signs (Barthes, 1991). The finite selection of terms available within the structure exaggerate this exclusivity, restricting the metonymy of the linguistic register – ostensibly for universal comprehension but there are differences with statement terminators and so on. All choice suggests value so the choice of “width” over *largeur* is a social valuation. There is then, the suggestion that anyone who does not use “width” is wrong and not part of the official language.

Edward T. Hall (1914 – 2009) identified several differences between cultures, most notably high context and low context societies. High context cultures are less explicit, use more metaphor, and focus more on relationships (Hall, 1976). Therefore, there is more emphasis on verbs rather than objects. However, some programming architecture is, by its very nature, object-orientated. With these languages, there is less focus on the relationships and context. Thus, high context societies may be better with architectures that focus less on individual design and more on the contextual links between sites and pages. However, as American companies push forward their own design ideals, it highlights a dichotomy with what is considered “good” software/internet design.

From a Peircean perspective, we can start applying a level of interpretation to the equation. The compiler becomes the method of interpretation that leads to the interpretant. It should be noted the interpretant is not a method of interpretation, but rather than having the dyadic signifier/signified relationship, Peirce added the third element as a kind of concept (Short, 2009). Thus, we have the code sign, the object to which it refers (the specific output action) and the interpretant that creates the concept – “Print f parenthesis, an integer” is the sign, the object is the display of the integer and the interpretant is what that number means to the viewer on the screen. However, if we chain together Peirce’s triadic model, then the interpretant becomes the sign of the compiler’s next action, which is to execute the programme in machine code, with the chain continuing *ad infinitum*.

Ruby, written by Yukihiro Matsumoto of Japan, uses primarily English syntax. Ruby is an imperative programming language rather than declarative – that is, it is written like a recipe focusing on what the programme should do sequentially rather than what the computer is to achieve ultimately. In declarative programming, such as database languages and HTML, there is simply an instruction to display the page or perform the query and what happens beyond that is not the concern of the language. The term for this is “side-effects”. Imperative languages allow for modification to a user’s interaction while declarative programming does its best to limit such alterations. Ruby is high context then, but with multi-paradigm aspects that suggest a culture-straddling universality.

Dolittle is an interesting language because it is constructed with Japanese Kanji. Building a simple programme using Dolittle highlights a significant amount of English labelling around its environment. By programming in a primarily logographic syntax, one can experience the Saussurean arbitrariness of the sign, although one can argue that the word “Print” – which does not mean anything to do with printers in software development – is as arbitrary a sign as the Kanji is to non-Japanese readers.

Peirce might posit that both the word and the Kanji have a second-degree relationship, to those that can read them – as with all indices (Short, 2009, p.49-50). Therefore, the difference between using Kanji and English seems to exist within that process of translation where the interpretant exists.

The idealised work environment of the programmer is an abstraction –the programmer does not need to write in machine code or create each website library by hand. There exists an abstrac-

tion layer, which allows for transformations between code and images. Combine this with the process of reinterpretation that is going on with the compiler, the limiting or not of side effects, then is the programme that is displayed the original programme or is it a simulacrum constructed via other people's (Westernised) code? Where is the reality of the programme – is it the preview panel the programmer uses, the original paper and ink sketch or the viewer's interpretation on his individual hardware/software combination? Despite attempts to make every platform's application a clone, there are differences between processing speeds, graphics and icon libraries.

If we are distributing simulacra that are constructed merely within a framework of suggestions (albeit quite strict suggestions) then programming is akin to a post-modern constructivist process where meaning lies with the viewing of signs that point towards an ideal reading which the programmer envisioned. We can often tell from the first page of a novel what genre we are reading because of the signs and our own interpretation. Thus, if websites or software uses non-native cultural signs the interpretation will be skewed from the ideal. This is not merely the choice of icons but the placement and relationship of the components at a philosophical level. The technology is new enough that iconography can be iconic – maybe indexical – but rarely symbolic. It is a metalanguage of signs. How one interacts with and within the creative space is still culturally sensitive and symbolic due to the wide connotations.

Programming is not quite like maths, where numbers and sign are ubiquitous culturally. The future of programming is moving towards drag-and-drop interfaces which are fine, but if the only paradigmatic switches one can make are Western based (chronotropic elements like left-to-right, top-to-bottom scrolling, fonts that work best for the Latin scripts and so on) then it's still restricting the field to a specific linguistic community (Peirce, 1868).

### 3. Programming culture

The signs of the programming architecture might individually represent English syntax, but the Western colonialism really comes in through the relationships between aspects of the programming code. The words are merely signs, interpreted as they are by English speakers to be reminiscent of that language and its values. But even non-English speakers, learning the language as set of codes and rules, will still feel the influence of low context relationships within these languages unless the languages offer flexibility.

While paradigmatically, programming languages offer a certain freedom, syntagmatically they become increasing fixed and rigid the closer to the machine code you get. There are some languages – Python for example - that attempt a natural language feel but it is cosmetic and there are still very rigid syntagmatic rules to follow. This is not necessarily a problem, we are creating logic not literature many would say, but there is a cultural bias that allows Western developers to more easily translate their pictographic diagrams into a codified computing syntax.

Open source, community-managed languages seem to be more authentic - more analogue - since one can be involved within creating the libraries, the compiler and so on. The proprietary languages are the preserve of the digital corporations. Chandler discusses the notions of privilege within language about cultural relativism, providing a simple but effective introduction to the problem (Chandler, 2017).

In practice, most languages fall somewhere in the middle, but we are witnessing a shift in boundaries where companies are encroaching on the open source and vice versa. This debate is extremely reminiscent of what occurs in the art world when a transient, unofficial object becomes official and durable – Duchamp's *Fountain* for example. The effect for us is that there exists an authoritarian code and a hacker code, with different mythologies attached to each. In

colonial terminology, it could be akin to using a patois for people who are forced to conduct business in a foreign tongue like English.

It is obvious from the first glance that most computer languages are Anglocentric. It is only relatively recently that Western computers have been able to display Chinese, Japanese or Korean languages, let alone allow one to programme in them. It is a bit like providing printing presses to Arabic or Asian cultures but only including the letterpress blocks for A – Z – it is an overt, almost aggressive act of defining the “correct” language of the programming world.

American and European developers, following the American-English structure, wrote the main languages. Most of the keywords and element names being written in the American dialect, making it the “legitimate” language as Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) comments. Roland Barthes (1915-1980) also discusses this legitimising language, with the trial of the peasant who was effectively dehumanised by use of an external frame of reference (Barthes, 1991, p. 43-46). The language of the middle class is not his language. This is the same for our Anglocentric code when given to a non-bilingual/non-English speaking programmer. However, Bourdieu points out that once you are a part of legitimate group, you have potential to open the definition up. “Each member of the group is thus instituted as a custodian of the limits of the group: because the definition of the criteria of entry is at stake in each new entry, he can modify the group by modifying the limits of legitimate exchange through some form of misalliance” (Bourdieu, 2016, p.191).

During the design stage, a programmer or designer can use pseudocode to model the programme’s structure prior to building it. This pseudocode omits some of the machine specific logic and instead focuses on being quickly readable to the human. The structure very much depends on the individual writer so there is an interesting opportunity here to imagine that this is the “beginning” of the semiosis that takes a programmer away from her natural language and her own cultural linguistic syntagmatic structure. She is learning a second language, building from her native language, but it is a language that is semiotically mediated through the English signage, even if it is not English *per se*.

#### 4. Problems and programming

The problem with languages being constructed from an Anglocentric starting point is that English is an imperialistic language, and to many it represents oppression and a loss of individual culture (Corradi, 2017). It automatically puts the Anglicised linguistic communities further into the chain of meaning since the step of bilingualism is missed. If one translates the word “string” into Japanese Kanji and then googles the result, the first page contains a Wikipedia entry on strings in programming languages – however it is entirely written in Kanji. The computing languages used as examples include FORTRAN and Pascal, whose syntax is English.

Nevertheless, the Pascal wiki is translated into several languages – including Chinese and Russian -that begs the question, can we not create a natural language programming language that has its own interpreter, and would such a translation negate the authenticity of the programme? The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, while not rigidly applied any longer, still flavours the semiotic analysis with the idea that the language affects thought as well as thought affecting language – and the construction of reality that this then leads to would be akin to the final programme displayed upon the screen (Chandler, 1994).

The meaning and sign may be indexed but the connotations existing in us, the viewer, are dynamic and volatile (Chandler, 2017). Development of e-commerce, big data analytics, personal websites and so on should be driven by the user and the first user is the developer. We

are at risk of sleepwalking into an online homogeneity, based around the underlying “American-ness” of the internet.

Denying users an experience that they dictate at a signifier level - as opposed to being led to think and act by the signified of another - is increasingly an issue, as “code” becomes the second most widely learned second language. Social technology no longer augments society but is part of people’s very identity, it is affecting how we think and act, so we should be wary of ignoring the underlying semiotic codes (Fischer and Reuber 2011, Meyrowitz 1986, Shrum 2008).

The impact upon future generations will either mean they lose their cultural identity to some degree as they find their online world mediated by a semiotic framework that is Westernised, or they will struggle to interact as harmoniously online as native English speakers will. These non-native speakers do not necessarily need to be resident in non-Western countries either, which increases the “us” and “them” mentality within their online semiosphere (Lotman, 2005). This is akin to the difference between Kull’s idea of Umwelt creating the semiosphere from within and Hoffmeyer stating the Umwelt must fit within the limiting space (Kull, 1998). This perhaps best sums up the future dichotomy of online interactions originating from this paper’s assertion that the architecture of said space is Westernised. While Kull’s theory seems more likely to occur regardless (all populations retranslate and affect eventually), the extent to which all Umwelts can contribute to the semiosphere is perhaps the question – as it was/is in all colonised populations.

With an increase in non-American/European programmers could potentially come a lessening of Anglocentrism, creating a two-way sharing of cultural symbols via technology. Of course, this could also be an example of using foreign labour within the American/Western (economic) framework that, as Walter Mignolo has stated, epitomises colonialism (Mignolo, 2011).

Mignolo sees a process of “dewesternization and rewesternization” alongside a “global political society” emerging from the recent revolutions and populist uprisings that have been occurring across the globe (Mignolo, 2012). However, any global movement to combat colonialism by either the West or from, say, China, will require use of the internet and infrastructure that is, for the most part as we have just seen, infused at its deepest level with the values and symbolism of the West. As Mignolo writes, “A multiplicity of options within capitalism does not really create more freedom. A multiplicity of options does not benefit the client. It is the company making the products that benefits” (Mignolo, 2012: n. p.). The companies in this case, happen to be mostly American.

Mignolo’s prediction of a polycentric global economy will suffer if the only technology linking them is americanised. It is like having many countries export and import goods, but only using American ships, dollars, and speaking English. The future is interesting, and it depends greatly on whether the companies of the internet transcend Western-only values and what the impact is from any opening of the Chinese State internet – the so-called Great Firewall that keeps Western influence out of their technology. A two-way relationship with ideas being shared and a middle ground forming (much how English was formed via influences from multiple other languages) could lead to a truly global internet – a semiosphere, (a space of semiosis that can only exist through its own languages) that evolves with, rather than confines the user.

As Ruby hints at, there are possibilities for multi-paradigm technologies that cater across the spectrum of design. The backend architecture does not need to be as rigidly Western as it currently is. Once back-end developers from around the world are learning to program semiotically, then the designers of the front-end can start to apply cultural individuality without compromising the technical aspects of the site.

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# NEWS FRAMING: A SEMIOTIC APPROACH

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## Abstract

This paper aims to explore the potential of a semiotic approach to the concept of framing, because it is one of the most important concepts in research of media contents, especially of the news. Framing can be defined in short as creating a context leading to a specific sort of semantic biases, to stressing certain values. It is closely connected to the well-known concept of agenda-setting, in which it plays its part. Because framing is a matter of media contents, there are many ways to enrich and deepen its research using various semiotic approaches. This paper will introduce the main solutions already being used, and also outline some new possibilities.<sup>2</sup>

## 1. Introduction

Researching contents using semiotic analysis have now become a rather common part of media studies. What we can meet much less often is the intent to use the semiotic apparatus to explore the media-science concepts and theories using a semiotic apparatus. This study is one of such efforts. Its aim is not only to explore the concept of *framing* – so important for the media studies – and to show its analogies with selected semiotic concepts and theories, but also to stress this way the possible benefits for media studies. Because if they focused on searching deeper analogies between their concepts oriented on media contents, and some semiotic theories, it could be surely enriching.

## 2. Definition of framing

As I already mentioned, framing is one of the crucial concepts of media studies. However, for the needs of this study, we do not need to make any broad media-science exposition of this topic, but only its basic description, ranging from descriptions of its functioning to its main definitions.

Let us start with one comparison: While *agenda-setting* can be defined as influencing audiences through an emphasis on certain topics just by their selection and coverage, *framing* is related to the way of grasping of what is being spoken about, i.e. influencing audiences through

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the way an issue is characterized in news reports.

In this respect, Scheufele and Tewksbury speak about a “distinction between *accessibility* and *applicability* effects” (Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007: 15). They explain that “even the most basic priming studies in social psychology demonstrate that inapplicable yet highly accessible constructs are unlikely to be used in social perception and judgment” (Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007: 16). For example, Semetko and Valkenburg researched five news frames: *responsibility*, *conflict*, *human interest*, *economic consequences*, and *morality*. They came to a conclusion that “[s]ober and serious newspapers and television news programs more often used the responsibility and conflict frames [...], whereas sensationalist outlets more often used the human interest frame” (Semetko & Valkenburg 2000: 93). Certainly, this conclusion is not very surprising, but it demonstrates that the same topic can be approached from many perspectives – i.e. frames – and that these perspectives are biased.

Most often we can meet two types of definitions of framing. One focuses on framing as a one-time action or change, and it might sound like this: “[framing is] the selection of a small number of attributes for inclusion on the media agenda when a particular object is discussed” (McCombs et al. 1997: 704). The second type focuses on framing as a long-time phenomenon connected more with a social discourse than with the particular object being discussed. An example of such definition is this: “[framing manifests itself as] persistent patterns of selection, emphasis, and exclusion that furnish a coherent interpretation and evaluation of events” (Norris et al. 2003: 4).

## 2.1. Nature of framing

Thus, we can see that the frames are certain structures present in texts<sup>3</sup>. The first question we must ask in this context, is, what do frames do in texts, what is their influence? Many researchers have been looking for the answer to this question, so we can say quite a lot about it. Among the most important notions belong these that “[frames] simplify, prioritize, and structure the narrative flow of events” (Norris et al. 2003: 10), that “[frames] help audiences ‘locate, perceive, identify, and label’ the flow of information around them” (Goffman 1974: 21 in Semetko & Valkenburg 2000: 94) or that “[frames are] ‘personifying’ political conflicts to make them more comprehensible” (Norris et al. 2003: 14).

However, the effects are not everything. The second topic we must explore in connection with frames is their nature. Here, the answer is not as clear and self-evident as in the case of their effects. Still, we can learn some important things, starting with the statement that: “In ‘one-sided’ contexts, conventional frames become so widespread within a society that they are often regarded as natural and inevitable” (Norris et al. 2003: 14). This notion implies two crucial things.

First, it is necessary to ask a question of participants. Frames are implanted in texts by their authors and absorbed from texts by their readers. Neither side does it consciously – even when an author is intentionally biasing to something, or when a reader reads in a very critical way, their attention is focused only on a few selected frames. (That is understandable, see below.)

Second, the abovementioned definition gives us a basic support for putting frames into semiotic context.

## 2.2. Media frames or semiotic frames?

Although “frames” and “framing” are terms used mainly in media studies, their nature is – as we will see – formed by the nature of *semiosis* itself. Even though semiotics might do without frames – because it has a few similar concepts, the frames can hardly do without semiotics. (See Kalaga

3 By the term “text” I mean not only written word, but any message in any sign system or combination of more systems (spoken words and gestures; image and sound etc.).

2016: 128.) Frames are some interpretations or points of view, cores of which are constructs analogous to Peirce's *interpretants*, which makes them essential for meaning-making.<sup>4</sup> Similarly to signs in a natural language, frames are arbitrary and shaped by culture and society, too. Still, some of them have surely some natural foundations for which we could call them "motivated". And then, "framing" can be defined as – usually long-term – pushing through a certain point of view.

The relation of representamen and interpretant (or signifier and signified) is in the case of frames much more free than in a natural language where one interpretant can be linked only to a few representamens (synonyms), and one representamen can be linked only to one or a few interpretants (homonyms). The reason framing is more free in this sense, is the fact that representamen is every text (or its part) which offers some framing of a given topic – and that is, in fact, each text which includes the given topic.

### 3. Second-level operations

The fact that certain frame can be, like an interpretant, expressed through an almost unlimited amount of representamens, does not mean that the application of Peirce's model is somehow flawed, but that we cannot use the same criteria here as in the case of language signs. (Even though there is a correspondence in the issues of arbitrariness and motivation, as was shown above.) While language signs work on the primary semiotic level, frames work on the secondary level which makes them similar to the Barthes' *myths*.

#### 3.1. Frames and Barthes' myths

Barthes describes the function of myths that way that a myth takes some primary-level sign and makes it a form, which he fills with its concept (Barthes 2011: 110-118). In the case of frames, it is similar, and just the aforementioned possibility of representing a frame by a virtually unlimited amount of representamens/texts is proof that interpretant or rather the signified of a frame<sup>5</sup> operates not on the primary, but on the secondary level. (This analogy is also confirmed by Kalaga 2016: 132.)

It might look that I commit a logical mistake here – that I confuse "content" (or more precisely *concept*, as Barthes says) and "form"; that frame as some point of view should be only the form. But no, the frame equals to the concept and the particular framed story is the form – just like in the case of Barthes' myths. After all, the point of the media is not to tell *a* story, but to offer stories continually. It seems that even in this context we can find an echo of the famous McLuhan's words that "the medium is the message" (McLuhan 1991: 20).

It is also necessary to say that the primary-level is never fully suppressed (Barthes 2011: 116) and the primary-level signs chosen for representing the frame always have their effect influenced by their specific connotations which might have both positive and negative impact. Grabe and Bucy offer us a rather thorough analysis when they explore a visual framing of elections in their book: "how comfortably candidates appear to "wear" their visually constructed frames; the better the fit, the more likely voters are to accept this construction (artificial though it may be) as natural and veracious" (Grabe & Bucy 2009: 86). Exactly this imaginary naturalness is, after all, one of the main features of the Barthes' myths.

4 One proof of this being the conference "No Meaning without a Frame" organized in 2014 by the University of Tartu.

5 For the benefits of this study, I switch between Peircean and Saussurean terminology. I believe the disparities are not important here, whereas using both the traditions is surely contributive.

### 3.2. Framing as a second-level agenda-setting

In one more respect, the framing operates on the second level – it can be described as a second-level agenda setting. Let us have a look at the following definition: “The first level of agenda setting is, of course, the transmission of *object* salience. The second level of agenda setting is the transmission of *attribute* salience” (McCombs, Llamas et al. 1997: 704; emphasis mine).

By this distinction, the authors improved and extended the older approach of Bernard Cohen. They write: “[...] Cohen noted that while the media may not tell us *what to think*, the media are stunningly successful in telling us what to think *about*.<sup>6</sup> Explicit attention to the second level of agenda setting further suggests that the media also tell us *how to think* about some objects” (McCombs, Llamas et al. 1997: 704).

Although this conception seems quite thought-out, especially with the aforementioned extension, still it raised some opposite attitudes. Scheufele writes:

Empirical work by Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley (1997) and Nelson and Kinder (1996), however, directly contradicted the theorizing put forth by McCombs and his colleagues. Although Nelson and his colleagues did not completely reject the notion of frame accessibility, or salience, and their role in framing processes, they suggested that perceived importance of specific frames, rather than their salience among audiences, is the key variable (Scheufele 1999: 116).

The main difference between the terms “importance” and “salience” lies in the field of consciousness – “salience” is an unknown distinctiveness of a feature or an object, whether “importance” is a product of conscious individual actions or social influence.

No matter which side do we incline to, it is clear that framing – unlike the (first-level) agenda setting – focuses much more on features than objects, i.e. on *how*, not on *what*. Also, it is clear that operation of framing is influenced by various social factors.

### 4. Framing and a social reality

Framing is something settled, habitualized, even with institutional forms – not in the meaning that it would be expressed explicitly, but it has its standard and wanted, even codified forms within the media routines. For this reason, I think, it is quite valid to say that framing participates in the social construction of reality, as we know it from Berger and Luckmann (1999).

About a substantial participation of framing on the social construction of reality also speaks Scheufele (1999: 104-106). And not only this, he even offers us a model of how a frame is working. He distinguishes four phases of the cycle of framing: 1. frame building, 2. frame setting, 3. individual effects, 4. journalists as audiences (so-called “process model of framing”; 1999: 114-118). The last point is important because it shows that journalists are members of the audience, too, and they not only influence but they are influenced at the same time.

This is closely connected with the question of where the frames are actually located. Entman states four locations: 1. *author's mind*<sup>7</sup>, 2. the *text*, 3. the *receiver's mind* and 4. the *culture* (Entman 1993: 52-53). And the last point, the culture, is so crucial for the whole process because it is where all the participants of communications draw their frames from. “The *culture* is the stock of commonly invoked frames; in fact, culture might be defined as the empirically demonstrable set of common frames exhibited in the discourse and thinking of most people in a social grouping”

<sup>6</sup> (Cohen 1963: 13).

<sup>7</sup> Entman writes “communicator” (1993: 52), but I prefer the term “author”, because there is also a “receiver”, and the term “communicator” sounds like that it can mean both author and receiver.

(Entman 1993: 53). And as can be concluded from Berger and Luckmann (1999: 128-144), participants of communication slowly change their culture (and themselves) by their communication.

The term “framing” carries some negative connotation because it is used to be interpreted as a negative bias, whether of hermeneutic or social nature. In other words, there is a reproach that frames take part in either distorting the “objective reality”<sup>8</sup> or – and mainly – in pushing through and preserving the dominant paradigm at the expense of points of view of those groups who are not dominant (in social, ethnic, gender or other way).

So, however, it might seem that the influence of frames is devastating and that there is no escape from them, their connection with the effort to preserve the status quo offers certain direction or solution. On the individual level, the awareness of frames is the most helpful, as well as researching them. On the level of society, the remedy seems to have the form of long-term effort for elimination of certain stereotypes. As Entman writes, clarifying the term “framing” might have a positive influence on the areas of 1. audience autonomy, 2. journalistic objectivity, 3. content analysis and 4. public opinion and normative democratic theory (Entman 1993: 56-57). The benefits for the first three areas are evident, I suppose. The last point regards the possible use of framing as a tool of manipulation and its influence on the nature of democracy. However, Entman writes that “attempting to determine which of the differently framed opinions is the closest to the public’s “real” sentiments appears futile” (Entman 1993: 57). That confirms the thesis presented in this paper that frames are – (not only) in relation to the reality – similar constructs as Peirce’s interpretants.

## 5. Conclusions

I hope that in this paper I managed to prove the claim that “framing” is a term suitable not only for exploring biases in media contents but that from its very nature it is something closely related to the principle of semiosis itself. Because of this, frames are *necessary* to express any meaning. Just as natural languages, frames also seem very natural, even though they are mostly arbitrary.

And just as signs in general, also, frames can be intentionally used for persuasive or manipulative purposes. And this is probably the reason for their close connection with the media – so close that we can say that framing is the basis of the language of the media. Still, the results of framing differ according to the type of the media.

Yet, it is not a part of the media in the usual sense – newspapers, radio, television, Internet. Frames are part of any social communication in general, and in this sense, we must explore their part in the social construction of reality. Nevertheless, it does not mean any antithesis of a free will, because the nature of framing when *creating* content is determined by both the nature of an institution and an individual (similar to the gatekeeping). And also there is an important fact, we mentioned before, that framing is a cycle with several locations and at least two participants whose points of view on the content – and on the frames, unconsciously – differs.

Frames are in a certain sense similar to Barthes’ myths because they connect the sphere of real-world objects with the sphere of their socio-cultural interpretations and ideologies (and discourse, paradigms etc.). Just as myths, so too frames operate on a secondary level and they deprive first-level signs their meaning to give them a new one. In this sense, frames are social constructs research of which in media studies could be conveniently enriched thanks to the aforementioned (and other) semiotic concepts. Also, it is a proof of the fact that semiotic theories might stand as an essential part of applied researches, for example of those dealing with framing in media studies.

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8 Whatever it may be.



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# LA VILLE CRÉATIVE. ESPACE URBAIN, PÉRIPHÉRIE ET MÉMOIRE COLLECTIVE DANS UNE PERSPECTIVE INTERDISCIPLINAIRE

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## **Abstract**

Urban creativity presents itself as a constantly changing expressive form, characterized by a multiplicity of forms and supports. We could talk about a translation process that develops from the relationship that urban creativity establishes with other elements of the contemporary city. The paper aims to analyse the relationship between visual perception, imagination, memory, and living urban space in the transformation of local identity and in the re-construction of collective memory. It focuses on the urban periphery exposed to marginalization processes and to criminality, such as Tor Bella Monaca, a neighbourhood on the East side of Rome. For the study of such a problematic object, the research — still ongoing — applies the constructivist paradigm into an integrated approach of qualitative analysis combining the semiotic study of space as a significant system, the effects of meaning produced by creative interventions, and the ethnographic method. Field visits, in-depth interviews and the keeping of a field diary have shown the potential of this interdisciplinary perspective, which allowed positing a hypothesis about the role of creativity and on how imagination urges people who live and cross those spaces to have the kind of experience that creates new frameworks of meaning.

## **1. Introduction. Art urbaine et régénération des banlieues : d'une étude flexible**

Cette contribution fait partie d'une recherche en cours sur l'art urbaine et d'un laboratoire universitaire sur le *street art* comme objet d'étude<sup>1</sup>, qui utilise le paradigme constructiviste dans

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<sup>1</sup> Le laboratoire d'ethnographie urbaine a eu lieu en mai 2017 dans le cadre de l'offre de formation du CorisLab (Sapienza Université de Rome), le laboratoire de communication et recherche sociale qui apporte un soutien à la recherche scientifique et à l'enseignement des différentes méthodologies dans les domaines des sciences sociales. Le laboratoire s'adresse à des étudiants en premier cycle et doctorants.

une approche intégrée d'analyse qualitative qui combine l'étude sémiotique de l'espace comme système signifiant et les effets de sens produites par des interventions artistiques à la méthode ethnographique, caractérisée par une instance opérative d'extrême pragmatisme et une focalisation progressive (Hammersley 1992 : 63). Le travail de terrain comme activité d'observation, les histoires de vie et les entretiens informels ont montré le potentiel de ce point de vue, qui a permis de formuler une hypothèse de sens sur le rôle de la créativité dans un espace urbain à la périphérie de Rome.

L'exemple du *street art* est très intéressant, parce que, dans un cas comme celui de Rome, complexe et contradictoire, le *street art* et la créativité urbaine en général sont souvent encadrés par des discours stéréotypes liés à la régénération des banlieues, qui omettent un regard plus profond sur les mécanismes et les dynamiques d'interaction, ce qui permet de signaler les changements et révéler des interprétations non conventionnelles.

Parler de *street art* aujourd'hui implique la considération d'une pluralité de formes, supports, styles, méthodes d'interventions, qui sont fondés sur l'opposition entre la durabilité du support et la transiitivité du texte artistique, donc de son être éphémère, y compris en ce qui concerne les travaux artistiques spontanés ou commandés.

Au moment de son arrivée dans une zone urbaine, le *street art* est déjà créateur de signifiés, qui viennent soit par le type de destinataire de l'intervention artistique, par exemple un commanditaire institutionnel, soit par le choix du lieu de sa parution, du support, d'une position déterminée, d'un moment déterminé. On a donc décidé d'entreprendre une étude pour examiner la relation entre l'art et le territoire, s'il est expression de l'identité locale, s'il témoigne la mémoire collective du lieu, s'il contribue à re-communiquer les banlieues, si les résidents y accordent des valeurs différentes de celles du touriste ou visiteur, ou si par ce biais ils refusent et s'opposent à une stratégie dominante. Pour cela, il faut prêter attention aussi aux processus de *nomadisme contemporain* : les interventions de *street art* dans les banlieues romaines ont généré nouveaux accès par différents sujets qui ne partagent pas nécessairement les mêmes compétences spatiales et temporelles. Tout cela souligne la nécessité d'une étude flexible qui peut nous permettre de distinguer le flux d'informations et de mettre au point une stratégie de multiplication des compétences afin de tracer les horizons de sens dans lesquels inscrire les interprétations (Callari Galli, Scandurra et Riccio 2007).

La sémiotique topologique de Greimas nous permet d'analyser l'articulation spatiale et de reconnaître son efficacité symbolique. De plus, l'analyse des qualités sensibles des objets et l'étude des composantes plastiques et figuratives nous permettent de saisir les stratégies de communication et construction d'une mémoire du lieu des objets artistiques, aussi par rapport à la formation de l'identité du quartier.

Face à un si vaste objet, il faut tenir compte, comme Greimas dit — dans *Pour une Sémiotique topologique* —, que « toutes les pratiques sociales organisées en programmes du faire portent en soi la signification comme projet et comme résultat, et inversement : toute transformation de l'espace peut être lue comme signifiante » (1976 : 134). C'est une complexité qui altère la hiérarchie en termes d'importance des éléments de ce texte stratifié dans le temps et variable dans l'espace qui est la ville, et qui retrouve une piste intéressante dans la réflexion de Pezzini sur le paysage sémiotique : « En outre, la ville est l'objet des langages qui parlent d'elle, qui 'la parlent', qui l'analysent et qui l'interprètent, en lui donnant une nature et une personnalité sémiotique ; en même temps, elle est d'une certaine manière un sujet de langages, elle est l'expression et la productrice de cultures qui lui sont inhérentes et spécifiques » (2013 : 4).

Le travail d'un cas d'étude retenu représentative des hypothèses initiales, le projet *Morandi a colori* dans le Centre Culturel Giorgio Morandi, a consisté à identifier des informations potentielles, à documenter les traits significatifs, les processus et les modes de présence des sujets dans l'espace. Au cours de la recherche ont été utilisées différentes techniques d'investigation<sup>2</sup> :

2 La première phase de la recherche sur le terrain a eu lieu au cours de la période d'avril à juin 2017.

l'observation participante, la définition d'un parcours avec le *gate-keeper* — une personne bien vue et connue, avec la crédibilité et la légitimité chez les habitants —, les colloques avec les informateurs — qui sont particulièrement informés sur ce qui se passe et sur les sous-groupes qui ne peuvent pas être observés directement, par exemple les trafiquants de drogue.

## 2. Le cas du projet *Morandi a colori*

Le Centre Culturel Giorgio Morandi se trouve dans le quartier Tor Sapienza, à la périphérie est de Rome. Le noyau urbain actuel s'est constitué dans les années vingt, par l'intervention d'un cheminot antifasciste du Molise, Michele Testa, qui a créé la coopérative Tor Sapienza dell'Agro Romano. Il y avait une pharmacie, une école et un médecin généraliste. Après prévue comme zone de développement industriel de la ville, au cours des décennies, cette zone et celles proches ont fonctionnées comme quartiers-dortoirs, qui ont accueillis d'abord les classes populaires expulsées du centre de la ville, ensuite les immigrés italiennes du centre et du sud du pays, et enfin les demandeurs d'asile. Sur ce plan, il est important de préciser que le cas de Tor Sapienza n'est pas isolé. Avec autres zones urbaines tels que San Basilio, Tor Bella Monaca et Collatina, elle a le plus haut niveau de criminalité. Mais ce qui est intéressant c'est la présence de différentes formes de créativité urbaine spontanées, en tant que tout le quartier fait partie d'un projet appelé *Tor Sapienza Quartiere d'Arte*. Il y a la Place Pino Pascali, normalement vide, sauf pendant le marché du dimanche de Porta Portese 2, où la *crew* de *graffiti writing*, qui s'appelle Dans La Rue, organise un événement public annuel, impliquant les différentes disciplines de l'hip hop, principalement le *graffiti*, sur les murs de l'abattoir de Rome, afin aussi d'assurer la participation des habitants. Et encore, dans le même quartier, il y a le Metropolitiz, une occupation illégale — avec une soixantaine de familles d'origines italiennes, péruviennes, marocaines, rom, etc. — d'une ancienne usine de salami, qui accueille au même temps le MAAM, le Musée de l'Autre et de l'Ailleurs de Metropolitiz\_ville métissée avec plusieurs œuvres d'art urbain et d'art contemporain d'artistes provenant du monde entier<sup>3</sup>. Tous les trois font partie d'une recherche en cours sur la créativité urbaine. La particularité de cette zone est donnée aussi par les noms des rues, toutes inspirées aux protagonistes de la peinture italienne, de Giorgio Morandi — et précisément, à Giorgio de Chirico.

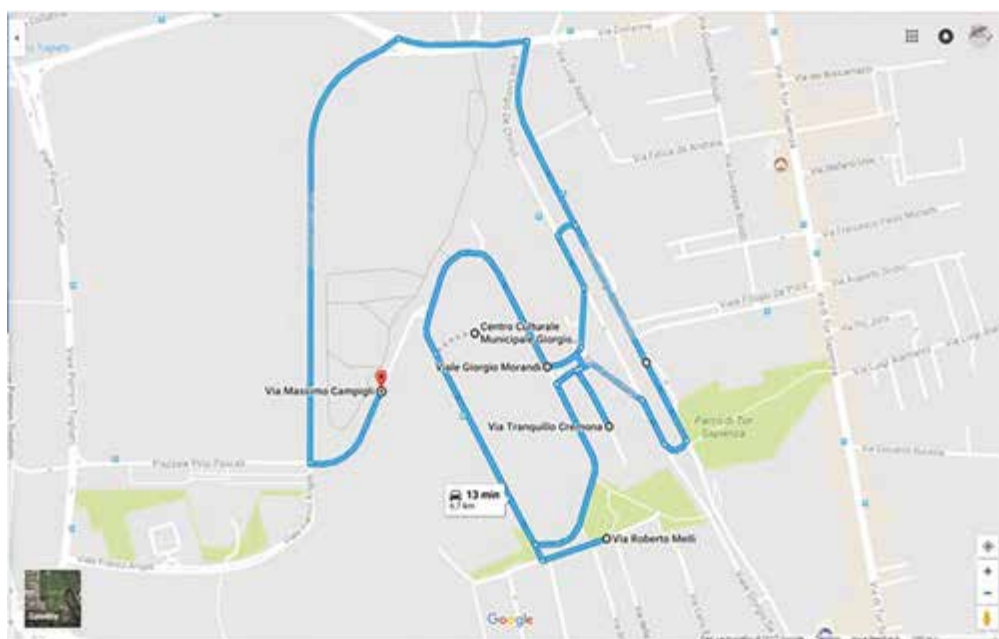


Figure 1. Carte de la zone urbaine confinent avec les logements de l'ATER (© Google Map).

<sup>3</sup> Un approfondissement de ce cas d'étude a été présenté au colloque « Greimas aujourd'hui : l'avenir de la structure », 30 mai – 2 juin 2017 (Greco 2017).



Le projet *Morandi a colori* naît à l'intérieur de cette extension de la périphérie de Rome. L'avenue Giorgio Morandi entoure littéralement ce que se trouve à l'intérieur, c'est-à-dire le complexe de logements de l'ATER (Société territoriale pour le logement de la ville de Rome), qui comprend 509 logements populaires livré à-ils-même, entre occupations abusives de slaves, italiens et rom dégradés et problèmes structurels (Fig. 1). On pourrait parler d'une zone franche, privée de magasins, fermés et jamais plus ouvertes, où les institutions semblent ne vouloir pas plus entrer. Depuis 2004, le projet — née de la collaboration entre les deux centres culturels municipaux (Giorgio Morandi et Michele Testa) — s'encadre dans les activités créatives du Centre Giorgio Morandi, actif depuis Trent ans avec nombreuses activités éducatives et ludiques, dans les domaines les plus variés. Dirigé par l'artiste Carlo Gori, le projet vise à renouveler le complexe résidentiel aussi par une galerie d'art en plein air avec les œuvres des différents artistes, la plupart commandée par le projet, comme une ressource pour le quartier, pour développer le sens touristique et effacer la vision d'une zone urbaine à éviter. Il s'agit en effet d'une disposition très complexe liée à un événement terrifiant, datant de 2014, quand un group des habitants, en une véritable guérilla, guidé aussi per des forces politiques d'extrême droit, a attaqué les mineurs et les femmes immigrés d'origine africaine qui résidaient légalement dans les bâtiments de la rue Giorgio Morandi, dans un centre d'hébergement, fait qui a touché l'opinion public au niveau international et a reçu un large écho par les médias.

### 2.1. L'espace vide entre continuité et discontinuité

En arrivant au Centre culturel Giorgio Morandi, dans les deux directions, on a l'impression que la voie suivie jusqu'ici présente des limites visuels (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. Carte de la zone urbaine confinant avec les logements de l'ATER (© Google Earth).

Déjà à l'extérieur on peut observer une opposition entre les éléments urbains qui indiquent une certaine *continuité* de la section de route et les propriétés plastiques qui font du Morandi un élément de *rupture* de cette continuité. La perception d'une *discontinuité* est donnée par la morphologie architecturale qui distingue le complexe de logements qui, selon Lotman (1987), se manifeste comme un texte architectural hyper structuré, créent un *effet de sens d'exclusion* dans l'opposition intérieur / extérieur (Fig. 3).





Figure 3. Logements de l'ATER, Viale Giorgio Morandi (© Google Earth).

L'espace intérieur est interdit au regard (Fig. 4). La perception de l'extension de l'espace est interrompue au niveau visuel, mais non en ce qui concerne les déplacements pratiques du sujet (Marrone 2001).



Figure 4. Viale Giorgio Morandi (© Google Earth).

En effet, par le moyen des portiques, on peut parler d'un *seuil*, une frontière qui articule l'espace en zones différentes entre elles, qui créent une perception différente entre espaces proches. Les portiques produisent une séparation moins nette ; ils distinguent ce qui est englobé de ce qui est englobant, donc au même temps les lie.



**Figure 5.** Les portiques des Logements de l'ATER (photographie de l'auteure).

Au de-là des portiques, une fois la frontière passée, on se trouve dans un espace circonscrit et fondamentalement *vide* : la perception c'est d'être seuls.



**Figure 6.** Les étudiants du laboratoire pendant l'observation sur le terrain e la construction du parcours avec l'informateur (photographie de l'auteure).

Quand on arrive à l'intérieur du complexe, on a le sentiment d'un espace clos, presque une cour interne, finie, comme si on entrait dans une microsphère tout à fait différente de ce qui se trouve au dehors (Fig. 6).

L'architecture particulière du complexe se compose de quatre bâtiments de sept étages chacun. Au centre, il y a deux édifices bas conçus pour accueillir garage et locaux commerciaux (Fig. 7). Mais, actuellement, il n'y a rien de plus que quelques associations, un médecin généraliste et une



église orthodoxe : là où se trouvaient les magasins, il y a vingt ans, sont tous occupés abusivement et au lieu des portes à enroulement il y a des portes d'entrée en aluminium. Mais ce n'est pas tout. Autres logements ont été construits sur le toit, au-dessus des magasins : des baraques en bois ou en maçonnerie, tous renforcés avec des barres de fer pour prévenir l'entrée non autorisée.



**Figure 7.** Les espaces centraux vue depuis la terrasse d'un bâtiment (photographie de l'auteure).





Figures 8 et 9. L'accès au Centre culturel Giorgio Morandi (photographie de l'auteure).

Malgré le nombre d'habitations, seulement en certains moments est possible voir quelqu'un dans les espaces commune et vert : dans la période d'observation, dans le matin et dans l'après-midi, pendant la période scolaire, mais aussi à la fin de l'année scolaire, il n'y avait personnes à les fréquenter sauf pour un petite group d'enfants avec les mères dans le parc, et de jeunes et enfants, qui occupe un coin dissimulé de la structure qui accueille le Centre Culturel, où, selon les informateurs, ils sont engagés en activités illégales concernant la drogue. Dans le Centre Culturel il y a une exposition réalisée par les enfants des écoles proches pour un projet concernant le rêve traduit en peinture et dessin. À l'extérieur on remarque d'emblée une centralité donnée par plusieurs éléments : la morphologie architecturale, les rampes qui nous portent dans la place où se trouve le Centre Culturel Giorgio Morandi, son positionnement dans l'espace, l'horizontalité de la structure, les traits chromatiques des objets planaires (Fig. 8 et Fig. 9), d'une sémiotique plastique qui, citant Greimas, comme *une langue autre* nous parle de manière différente, autant d'éléments qui l'oppose au complexe essentiellement vertical, gris des parois extérieures des habitations, pointées directement vers le centre comme si c'était un mur d'enceinte (1984).

## 2.2. L'identité visuelle du lieu

Promenant pour la structure du Centre Culturel Giorgio Morandi on rencontre aussi des objets inattendus et inhabituels, c'est-à-dire les œuvres de Street Art et les stratégies communicatives activées par elles. On peut parler d'un *accident esthétique*, avec Greimas (1987), une rupture de l'isotopie, qui, dans ce cas, resémantise les parcours dans l'espace urbaine avec une conjonction inattendue. Dans la place centrale on peut voir différents types d'œuvres de *street art*, du *graffiti writing* à la peinture murale, qui, si on regarde l'offre de Street Art dans la ville de Rome, récemment souvent caractérisée par des œuvres monumentales, nous donne plutôt l'impression d'un art qui on peut définir à portée de main, soit en ce qui concerne le control, donc sa conservation et restauration, soit pour l'interaction possible, mais toujours vulnérable. Dans plupart des cas, ils communiquent signifiés autonomes qui transcendent les fonctions. Par exemple, dans certains quartiers périphériques de Rome, il y a des cas de projets de Street Art qui ne passent pas par le vouloir des habitants, mais qu'ils sont perçus comme une intervention centralisée par le



haut. Au contraire ici est très forte l'idée d'une certaine structure architectonique qui va au-delà des fonctions pour lesquelles a été conçue. Si on regarde le banc de la place (Fig. 10 et Fig. 11), la relation entre Street Art et objets urbains est très forte. La surface irrégulière — dans certains points dépasse, dans d'autres rentre — joue un rôle décisif dans la création de sens : ces différences créent un cadre idéal des relations oppositives qui émergent à la fois au niveau figuratif et au niveau plastique, en mettant l'accent sur l'*extension*.



Figures 10 et 11. Le banc de la place en face du Centre Culturel (photographie de l'auteure).



Les œuvres occupent toute la surface et ont été réalisées par différents artistes. Et en fait, il se compose de plusieurs pièces qui ont des différences stylistiques assez évidentes. Au niveau figuratif, les œuvres créent un effet de symétrie si on se situe au centre de la place. Les bancs de la structure circulaire sont englobés dans l'œuvre qui dialogue avec l'architecture des habitations. Sont spéculaires mais présentent des traits figuratifs et plastiques différents. La première nous montre une cité médiévale, donc ce qui est passé, la seconde nous parle d'une ville de la future qui rappelle l'architecture actuelle. Donc ces espaces se transforment : ils deviennent non seulement lieux où se déroulent les activités prédéterminés, mais ils acquièrent significations sociales autonomes qui mettent en jeu catégories sémantiques comme, par exemple, individuel / collectif. Une des œuvres qui plus attire l'attention est l'hommage au film *L'Accattone* de Pier Paolo Pasolini réalisée par un artiste réfugié, Aladin (Fig. 12).



Figures 12. Murale de l'artiste Aladin (photographie de l'auteure).

Le murale occupe la façade du Centre Morandi. Du dialogue avec des habitants, il est apparu, cependant, comme cette œuvre a généré la contestation d'un sujet qui refusé cette image pensant que c'était celle de l'homme Pasolini, que ne pouvait pas représenter le quartier, en tant que pédophile, mais c'est le portrait de l'acteur Franco Citti qui dans le 1961 a interprété le rôle. C'est donc une question bien liée à la *grille culturelle*, qui, selon Greimas « [...] qu'étant de nature sociale, cette grille est soumise au relativisme culturel, qu'elle est largement — mais non infiniment — variable dans le temps et l'espace. Dès lors, chaque culture étant dotée d'une « vision du monde » qui lui est propre, elle pose aussi des conditions variables à la reconnaissance des objets [...] » (1984 : 9).

La problématique des conditions variables à la reconnaissance des objets aussi dans la même sémiotique concerne toujours plusieurs interventions artistiques, comme dans le cas des deux murales qui montrent deux personnages clés de la peinture italienne, liés au quartier par les toponymes: Giorgio Morandi et Giorgio de Chirico (Fig. 13 et Fig. 14). Elles sont positionnées sur les façades latérales des bâtiments bas centraux où se trouvaient les magasins et où, aujourd'hui, se trouvent les locaux occupés abusivement et l'église orthodoxe, tout à fait fermée. Elles se trouvent dans un espace vide, une sorte d'amphithéâtre, ce qu'il reste d'un projet de construction de la métropolitain (de l'année 60), jamais conclu du moment que la zone locale a été considérée comme

pas suffisamment peuplée par un tel plan urbain. Mais ce sont figures pas nécessairement reconnues par les résidents : pendant l'observation, dans le deuxième de deux couloirs de la structure — le premier dans un état de dégradation préoccupant, plongé dans le noir, mais où il y a, quand même, des occupations abusives, et le deuxième, juste en peu plus éclairé — on a rencontré un informateur. Par le récit de ce témoignage, on émerge une valorisation esthétique du Street art dans le Morandi, mais il manque un processus de reconstruction et reconnaissance par l'énonciataire.



**Figures 13 et 14.** Les peintures murales qui montrent les portraits de Giorgio Morandi (1) e Giorgio de Chirico (2) (photographie de l'auteure).

D'autre part, toutes les œuvres qui sont là jouent à restituer une *mémoire du lieu* à la collectivité et à communiquer le quartier construisent une lecture pluri-isotopique du Street Art. Les valeurs thématiques en figures, par la présence d'une sémantique sus-jacente, sont ceux de l'environnement, de la famille, de la romanité, de la ville, de l'art, qui parle d'elle-même, de la participation, de l'altérité figurativisés par des arbres anthropomorphes, des renards et des papillons, comme dans les œuvres de Mauro Sgarbi, par l'ensemble des membres de la famille par Pino Volpino, par l'arbre de la vie, par les animaux différents qui se dirigent vers l'entrée du Centre culturel de Carlo Gori ; ou encore par la jeune fille de Beetroot, qui couvre presque entièrement la paroi latérale de l'entrée principale du centre culturel. Une œuvre en particulier reprend le thème de l'autre et des conflits qui il y avait dans le quartier et qui regard vers les bâtiments en question maintenant déshabités. De plus les interventions artistiques transforment les murs en façades interactives. Ils demandent au visiteur d'avoir un comportement active et de joue avec le texte et au texte (Lotman 2009), sans une légende qui peut lui orienter par rapport à certains choix d'interprétation ; il est modalisé selon le *pouvoir faire*, transformer l'élément artistique avec lequel interagit, ainsi assument un rôle active dans le processus de communication : il peut réfléchir son image dans le visage à miroir des personnages d'une œuvre, mettre sa tête sur le corps caricaturés des différents personnages et prendre des photos (Fig. 15), non par une concession programmé, mais plutôt par l'absence d'une interdiction et de suggestions, ou peut participer à la création artistique dans le cadre d'un tableau qui rappelle l'interface d'un ordinateur, objet d'une stratification du sens, selon les indications reportées, mais actuellement peu utilisé (Fig. 16).



Figures 15. Open Wall – Modes d'emploi (photographie de l'auteure).

Le visiteur est ainsi modalisé selon *un vouloir faire*, dans une dimension pragmatique, mais aussi il doit compléter la relation entre l'art et le monde naturel comme dans ces cas par une continuité au niveau figuratif. Ce concerne la définition du point de vue inscrit dans l'énoncé qui simule la position de l'énonciateur et indique la position que l'énonciataire doit occuper pour reconstruire le sens : il doit développer une compétence d'observation.





Figures 16. Open Wall – Modes d'emploi (photographie de l'auteure).

Dans le cas des bancs et des deux visions de la ville, entre passé et future, où l'énonciataire doit faire une opération cognitive pour analogie entre le passé et la future, et entre le texte visuel et le texte architectural qui émerge par superposition au niveau visuel (Fig. 17 et Fig. 18), on pourrait dire, avec Greimas et Courtés, quand un system sémiotique est susceptible d'entretenir des relations (de similitude) avec le monde naturel, surtout en ce qui concerne les sémiotique visuelles (1979).





Figures 17 et 18. Les bancs et entre le texte visuel et le texte architectural (photographie de l'auteure).

### 3. D'une microsphère observée, parcourue et entendue

Les fréquentes citations, qui se trouvent dans plusieurs œuvres — ils sont, par exemple, à Picasso, Modigliani, Tiziano, tous cités visuellement, ou citations artistiques aux thèmes de l'art de Giorgio Morandi, mais avec une transformation des techniques et des traits plastiques par couleurs fluorescents, formes bidimensionnelles qui n'ont rien à voir avec la rigueur formelle des objets de nature morte de Morandi — interpellent un *faire interprétatif* à partir d'une comparaison entre le nouveau et le déjà connu. Il y a eu des cas pour lesquels les habitants ont demandé de remplacer une murale avec l'image stéréotypée de la romanité, pas populaire ici, du Colisée de Rome (Fig. 19), juste dans le coin dissimulé dont on a déjà parlé.



Figures 19. Le groupe du laboratoire pendant le travail de terrain, avec le gate-keeper, artiste et curateur, Carlo Gori (photographie de l'auteure).



À un regard plus profond, le Centre Culturel et le projet du *Morandi a colori* représente un cas exceptionnel non seulement en ce qui concerne le Street art stricto sensu, mais pour les aspects de la ville et de l'habiter la périphérie qui contiennent comme une microsphère capable de communiquer — si observée, parcourue et entendue par le system de relations — ces différents aspects et le sens, pas du tout évident et acquis, de la relation entre la ville et son formes expressives. Cette émerge d'une opposition entre les textes architecturaux hyper-structurés et les ouvres artistiques, et qu'est liée à la mémoire culturelle que la ville peut exprimer par le Street Art en formulant ces espaces dans une perspective insolite, par la décomposition des règles associatives établies par convention parmi les éléments caractérisent le visage historique et culturel de Rome. Chaque parcours, différent de l'autre, est une tactique qui s'oppose à une stratégie (de Certeau 1990). On peut reprendre la réflexion de Greimas qui, dans *Pour une sémiotique topologique*, parle du créateur individuel, faisant référence à l'idéologie individualiste et réactionnaire de l'urbaniste, qu'ici est ri-communiqué (1976).

Par rapport au phénomène du Street Art, des projets les plus connues, qui encouragent les accès des non autochtones, sollicités par le désir de chasser les ouvres, avec un accroissement de la dimension métropolitaine de ces quartiers, ici est l'identité local à être confirmé, aussi sous la forme d'une réponse à un *multiculturalisme manqué* de Rome. Ici le street art est créatrice d'une mémoire culturelle, comme fauteur d'une créativité du quotidien, reprenant de Certeau (1990), qui réside dans l'utilisation et dans sa capacité de remodeler les habitudes et témoigner la périphérie, retrouvant sa dimension sociales, dans une condition de multiplications des possibilités d'entrer en communication avec l'autre, par une augmentation des informations, qui vient de son polyglottisme structurel (Lotman 1987).

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**FROM THE SESSION  
“ART THERAPY AND  
NARRATIVE TOOLS”**

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# THE ROLE OF INNOVATION AND TRADITION IN ART THERAPY NARRATION

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## **Abstract**

In art therapy, innovation arises from the here-and-now aspects of the patient (client)-therapist relationship and from the sharing of artistic material. It is a creative growth process achieved in finding and recognizing unexpected solutions on the basis of what we already know. In other words, innovation in art therapy can be the creation of something that is, for oneself and for others, a pleasant surprise. This surprise often stems from a cultural tradition and it is important not to consider creativity as irrational but as a new key to understanding universal and specific elements of our cultural environment.

## **1. Introduction**

In dealing with art therapy many problems are still to be settled, such as the role of creativity in such therapies, the similarities and differences between expressive art therapy and art psychotherapy, and what sort of training is required for these new professional roles. Many people generally talk about the healing aspects of art expression and art fruition, but not so many know the extent of these healing aspects and if they are connected with narration and single individual's therapeutic history or whether other things should be taken into account. From my point of view, narration plays an important role in the healing process of art therapies. Different narrative elements can be seen both in art psychotherapies and in expressive art therapies. In many cases verbal language, mostly used in art psychotherapies, makes the difference, even if the polarities verbal vs nonverbal are not so strictly associated with art psychotherapy and expressive art therapy. On the other hand, one should also consider how art therapy may be similar or dissimilar to art, and similar or dissimilar to therapy. Some ideas concerning this topic will be discussed here considering the traditional or innovative aspects of creativity that lie behind the realm of art expression as well as behind the therapeutic setting and the therapeutic relationship between patient (or client) and therapist. In this respect empathy can be seen as a bridge concept



between art and therapy. This is quite natural, but also ethics, an apparently far distant concept, may be worth discussing here, as it may explain some differences in therapeutic approaches and in their narrative qualities. This is less evident, but somehow crucial, as I shall try to demonstrate in the last part of this paper.

## **2. Creativity**

Sometimes creativity is confused with simply original, bizarre, transgressive behavior, which may also have sarcastic connotations (as in the expression “creative finance”) but thoughts and behaviors, to be truly creative, must also be effective and appropriate. When we talk about creative thinking, we refer in particular to problem solving processes that lead to innovative solutions (as in Wertheimer 1945, and the Gestalt tradition). Creativity has therefore to do with implementation and solutions and the best way to reach them. By asking ourselves where this idea of effectiveness and appropriateness comes from we could see that not only cognitive but also emotional processes are involved. This is particularly important in considering communicative aspects involved in art expression and in art fruition. Through emotional regulation, creative behavior can be shared and addressed to the right people. Through art, one can keep one’s own cultural identity and through art one can rediscover one’s own cultural tradition.

## **3. Old questions and paradoxes**

If we consider the role of emotionality in creativity processes we may recall two famous paradoxes suggested by the psychoanalyst Winnicott (1971). Talking about adolescence and conflicts that are typical of this age Winnicott (1971) thinks that the adolescent’s rebellion can be described in terms of his/her wish to “go forward”, to soon become an adult. But to become adult requires time and, above all, the possibility of modulating one’s own emotional world considering the past relationship with parental figures. According to Winnicott (1971), the paradox of the adolescent’s experience is precisely that: to go forward the individual needs to go back to his/her past and live again the emotions linked to that period.

Not so different considerations may be made about originality and creativity, which are somehow connected with a wish to go forward. According to Winnicott (1971), and that is his second paradox, it is not possible to be original unless originality is based on tradition. Tradition is a sort of going back, it is a rediscovery of our past in some way similar to the rediscovery of affection and parental bonds in adolescence. When talking about tradition as a source of artistic expression one should consider some other old questions concerning the universal dimension of myths and archetypal images in the passage from a personal experience to a collective one (Jung, 1959 [1936]; the individual-collective expression question) and what universality has to do with cultural elements and/or with natural aspects such as universal sounds and rhythms (heart rate, water noise, etc., nature-nurture question). Finally, when talking about tradition one should bear in mind that there are at least two forms of tradition, a popular tradition and an elitarian one, just like, for example, the difference between classical and pop music. These different forms of tradition are connected with personal educational experiences.

## **4. The role of art therapies: the example of the lullaby**

All these aspects are in some way present in art therapies. Art therapies encourage learning creative processes where creative learning means recognizing our own emotions, managing to adjust them to our creative purposes. Creative learning means rediscovering — through artistic expression — our own cultural identity that may have individual as well as collective references. As in the lines of the Italian poet Pascoli, “There’s something new / about the sun today/ or

rather something old..." (Pascoli 1907 [1892]), creativity goes back to the individual memories and past of an artist but also to experiences that concern his or her community. A good example of collective reference can be the case of the lullaby. The lullaby, as a poetic work produced not only by a single author, individually, but also by an entire community, due to the many variations and interpretations that are continually added, and as a collective creation and collective heritage, takes on a social and universal value regardless of its creative aspects. Through oral tradition there is a continuous self-regeneration of a collective poetic heritage in time and space. There are often new creations found in places, even far away, as variations of the same theme that has become contaminated as a result of contact with specific heritages. The most magical aspect of the lullaby takes us back to a primitive level of civilization, with a widespread presence of archaic elements. In this case, the "singing to sleep" coincides with casting a spell, relying on the power of an enchanted formula, the use of magical amulets, magic words and regular rhythms. Lullabies are connected with the primitive and popular perception of the risk that children face, due to their fragility, of being captured by the magical powers of the night, easily prey to dark evil forces (De Martino 1959; Ranisio 2016). The repetitive aspects of rhythms enchant, so to speak, the dream and, through music, attention is suspended. Let us consider for a moment this state of suspension: it can also be associated with creativity. The creative mind needs, so to speak, to be put to sleep, to be brought to a reduced state of vigilance as many mediation techniques suggest, together with the free association methodology Freud adopted as a substitute for hypnotic induction in psychoanalysis (Freud 1953 [1900]). Quite recently in the field of neuroscience Limb and Braun (2008) observed that during improvisation tasks the human brain tends to deactivate itself. These considerations apply to art therapies as well. Art therapies in their expressive form as expressive art therapies rely on improvisation techniques just as in many models of music therapy, such as Nordoff and Robinson (2004) and in dance-movement therapy with the technique of authentic movement by Whitehouse (Pallaro 2006). Improvisation in art therapy is a way for a patient (client) to say something about him/herself. It is a sort of narration, even though different from a narration in psychotherapy or in art psychotherapy, where words are mainly used in a rather stable set of rules. Improvisation has certainly to do with innovation, but it is also a tool to rediscover something quite old, almost forgotten and very often belonging not only to individual experience, but also to collective memories and cultures.

## **5. Art and art therapy**

When art and art therapy meet, two important questions may arise: "What can art and artists give to the art therapist?" and "What can an art therapist give to an artist?" Not everything is art. Not every expressive behavior can be considered as artistic. An artist is a person who is involved in a special research project dealing with his/her emotions. Therefore, an artist can give an art therapist this idea of art as a research. Artistic research is where innovation can be used, as we have said, to rediscover tradition. On the other hand, not everything is therapy. In the realm of art therapy every expressive behavior can be used in a therapeutic perspective. Nevertheless, not everything is therapy. Therapy is interaction, dialogue (either verbal or nonverbal) and the possibility to grow together. Therefore, an art therapist can give an artist the possibility to grow, to get out from his/her unproductive periods. Artistic research means growing together in the moment of art fruition. This could be the best possible meeting between art and art therapy, between innovation and repetition.

## **6. Empathy**

Artistic research in a therapeutic view of growing together (therapist and patient-client) has to do with empathy, in other words, feeling what another person feels. Different forms of empathy

have been studied. Imitation and simulation processes have been described in the field of neuroscience. A team of scientists at University of Parma, Italy (see among the others, Gallese 2003), discovered the so-called “mirror neurons” that are activated when we do a motor action as well as when we see another person doing the same action. Another form of empathy has to do with cognitive abilities (Bizzarri 2015; Gallagher 2008): only if and when we recognize another person as different from us can we interact with that person and share with that person qualities and feelings we have in common. A more philosophical aspect of empathy has to do with pure intuition: a sort of direct and immediate communication between two autonomous souls. A romantic relationship, “from the heart to the heart”, as Beethoven wrote in the dedication to his masterpiece *Missa Solemnis* (Solomon 2001, 2004). Maybe these distinctions within the concept of empathy can be regarded more as qualities of the same concept rather than distinct concepts. Nevertheless I think that the intuitive aspects of empathy are the ones that are more in touch with expressive art therapy, where art therapists are required to master their own emotions and facilitate through art the expression of their patients’-clients’ emotional externalizations beyond words. It is important for expressive art therapists to have a good training in these dynamics, as it is very easy to make mistakes using simply a personal projection instead of intuition (Meltzer 1976). When intuition can be properly used a direct emotional communication can be assured between the therapist and his/her patient, or client: the same direct communication that there is between an artist and his public, especially when the artist is a great artist. To work properly, an intuitive relationship requires participants to share some common traditions and roots.

## 7. Ethics

The therapist-patient (client) relationship has many ethical aspects. We can summarize these aspects as a bundle of prescriptions and rules concerning what therapists and patients (clients) have to do or have not to do. Deontological aspects refer to these ethical aspects. However, this idea of ethics is very rational and has a clear reference to Kant’s philosophy. According to Varela (1999), this ethics is an ethics of knowing what to do. Many psychotherapy models and also art psychotherapy models refer to this idea of ethics concerning what to do. There is, though, another model of ethics that is much more linked to intuition. According to Varela (1999), this ethics is an ethics of knowing how to do. It involves immediate coping rather than rational judgement. If we see a person who needs help we immediately give him/her the help he/she needs instead of thinking about what to do or not to do. In this kind of ethics the situation elicits the action from us: here, according to Varela (1999), we have the true ethical actions. This ethics of knowing how is somehow at the basis of the therapist-patient (client) relationship in the models of art expressive therapies and to some extent the same kind of ethics can be found in the relationship between an artist and his/her public. A sort of spontaneous wisdom has replaced a sophisticated set of rules, a knowledge by acquaintance where sensation and direct emotional communication are present is operating rather than a knowledge by description where language and inferential cues organize individual narration. What comes from sensation is new and old at the same time as we have said earlier quoting Pascoli’s poem. Therefore, we can see how art therapies and arts in general are linked to innovation and tradition; new things can surprise us, they are somehow connected with body arousal, while tradition is in a way linked with repetition that we find so often in many artistic languages. Between arousal and repetition there is a common space where art and expressive art therapies can live and work together, sharing similar emphatic contacts and ethical codices.

## 8. Conclusions

In art therapy what is new comes from the interaction between the therapist and the artistic material. Creativity can be described as a growing process. Stable and unstable features are taken to-

gether to follow patients' (clients') emotional histories. In this type of narration tradition emerges as a point where people can live all their past experiences, not just a part of them, a process where it is possible to find their own authenticity, what Winnicott (1971) calls the "true Self", a place where one can have a rest and enjoy, without any imposition, his or her wishes. What we believe is unexpected turns out to be a pleasant surprise that we want not just to keep for ourselves but to share with people who can understand us immediately and with whom we can directly communicate our emotions. In other words, what is unexpected is maybe what we have always loved. Sharing surprises is perhaps is the best way of going towards our deepest traditions.

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**FROM THE SESSION  
“IMAGE AND SOCIAL  
INCLUSION”**

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# ALIENACIÓN PSICO-POLÍTICO-SOCIOCULTURAL EN LA SEMIOSFERA COSPLAYER DE LA JUVENTUD FRIKI-OTAKU MEXICANA

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## **Abstract**

En México, desde la década de los 60s, la presencia de la ideología japonesa se hizo visible a través de varias series animadas que eran transmitidas por televisión. En algunas ocasiones se proyectaban dramas o telenovelas infantiles como el de la *Señorita Cometa* que era muy bien aceptado entre los niños de aquella época, pero al mismo tiempo su preferencia se inclinó a otras series que consistían en seres bienhechores, con poderes extraordinarios, que combatían a los monstruosos villanos que acechaban a las sociedades civilizadas, aunque fue evidente que aquellos defensores eran eco de las viejas formas samuráis aún vigentes en la memoria de su cultura pero ya mezcladas, en una intertextualidad, con la occidentalización que Japón comenzó a experimentar después de su derrota e invasión norteamericana sufrida posterior a la Segunda Guerra Mundial.

El cómic y la animación japonesa se mantienen sin mayor alteración de las décadas de los 70s a los 90s, pero a comienzos de este siglo se da un *boom* en un sector de jóvenes que deambulan entre la extravagancia, de una posible inmadurez psicosocial, que a su vez pudiera provocar la tendencia a manifestar trastornos con rasgos autistas, o simplemente empujar al vacío del consumismo alienado del *friki* y al fanatismo del *manga*, *cómic* y *anime* japonés, y que se fueron transformando en *cosplayers*.

Esta investigación pretende ser transdisciplinaria con el propósito de atender y profundizar sobre lo histórico, lo psicosocial y semiótico-cultural de la semiosfera mexicana de jóvenes inmersos en los textos *friki-otakus*, que se identifican por contener textos homogéneos derivados

de la producción idealizada de la mitología japonesa, pero que al mismo tiempo se convierte en heterogénea a la semiosfera general de su propia cultura, como se puede apreciar en la transformación de la representación que tendrá de su propio cuerpo al ornamentarlo y trastornar, junto a una posible habituación del pensamiento y forma de vida de un estilo semejante al de Japón (Bojarín 2011: 63), generando un mundo ajeno a su propia identidad donde se establecen una serie de actividades y comparten valores fetichistas que se intercambian solamente entre ese mundo del simulacro, posiblemente bajo un régimen orientado hacia la alienación y control político-sociocultural de una ideología que capta e importa lo que en el mismo país oriental califican como basura.

## 2. El manga: narrativa gráfica japonesa

El presente trabajo rescata estudios que con relación al tema ya han sido desarrollados anteriormente, por ejemplo, se considera el aspecto histórico que nos brinda Tania Lucía Cobos (2010: 9), pero del cual se resguarda, con cierto recato, algunas categorías sociológicas, que no son tan pertinentes desde la percepción antropológica o dimensión cultural.

Con relación al texto de Federico Alvarez (2015) se aprecia la intención de justificar la semiosfera de los jóvenes apegados al *otaku*, considerando que hay todo un proceso de enajenación, de un producto mediático a partir de las estrategias de las nuevas tecnologías de la comunicación virtual. Considera que hay razones para considerar que el grupo *otaku* subalterno no está encañado en el consumismo, ni mucho menos son unos “[...] imbéciles, estúpidos, inmaduros, vagos, locos, anormales e inadaptados sociales”, tal como los han presentados la televisión principalmente.

Por otro lado, Mario Bogarín (2011) pretende penetrar por la parte psicológica, pues se enfoca en la apropiación imaginaria de los objetos del manga y del anime que estos grupos producen. Se cerciora que uno de los principales cometidos de la proyección de la cultura popular japonesa es convertir a todos los personajes de su mitología en tiernos, lindos, dulces, amables, vulnerables, débiles, adorables, inocentes, puros, genuinos e inexpertos; características que parecen forjar una empatía inmediata con el sentir psico-cultural de los *fans otaku*.

En el texto de Dominique Menkes (2012) se establece la relación que hay entre el *otaku* y la posmodernidad, para ello recurren a la fuerza del marketing, que toma un nuevo cause gracias al desarrollo de la multimedia o tecnología que evoluciona la virtualidad, haciendo que existe un enorme surco entre dos generaciones, donde los jóvenes se sienten radicalmente ajenos al de sus padres. El joven *otaku* está siendo mediatizado mediante el fetichismo, y para poder explicar esta condición Menkes accede a la propuesta del simulacro semiótico de Baudrillard.

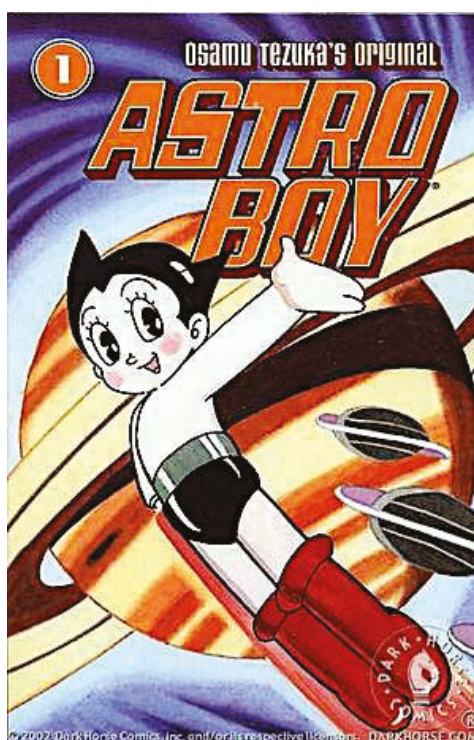


**Ilustración 1.** Inuyasha, un cuento de hadas feudal. Autora: Rumiko Takahashi. Publicado por Shonen Sunday 1996 y 2008.

De igual manera, Miguel Ángel Ortiz e Iván Rodríguez (2012) desde la perspectiva española, se inclinan por el estudio del fenómeno *otaku* desde la mercadotecnia. su aportación principal es la de mostrar cómo se dio el boom del anime, para ello refieren los nuevos formatos de video que se fueron desarrollando, desde la *película* que traducirá, a partir de una *intersemiosis*, las historias del manga o de un anime de otro formato; el *OVA*, primero el *VHS* y luego el *DVD*, que se convertiría en el video

doméstico de alguna serie; el ONA que es la consecuencia de la eclosión del OVA con el *Internet* para la producción *Networks*; y, por último, la producción de las series de televisión, con una duración de 30 minutos, inicialmente de 52 episodios y actualmente se cubre con sólo 12 o 13. Agregando a lo anterior, también nos ofrece el género del anime de acuerdo al público de destino: *codomo* para los niños; *shôjo* adolescente y pre-adolescente femenino; *shônen* adolescente y pre-adolescente masculino; *josei* adulto femenino; y *seinen* adulto masculino.

Según el diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española, el *manga* en su tercera acepción es un cómic de origen japonés. Por manga se entiende a la producción japonesa de historietas, mientras que a sus creadores se les llama *mangaka*. Cobos (2010) señala que el manga es una creación japonesa con influencia de occidente cuyo desarrollo es diferente al cómic estadounidense y a cualquier forma de narrativa gráfica, la autora menciona que algunas de sus características son los espacios narrativos, dibujos en blanco y negro, diseño de personajes con ojos grandes y uso cinematográfico de perspectivas que incluyen onomatopeyas e imágenes auditivas.



**Ilustración 2.** Astroboy. Autor: Osamu Tezuka. Publicado por Kobunsha (japonés) y Dark Horse Comics (inglés) 1952 y 1968.

Vania Papalini (2006) trata de esclarecer los orígenes citando a varios autores, el primero Frederick Shodt señala que los orígenes del manga “se encuentran en la tradición del dibujo monocromo japonés, que se despliega en torno a motivos fantásticos, eróticos, humorísticos, o que simplemente ironiza sobre lo cotidiano” (Papalini 2006: 232). Para Jaqueline Berndt tiene su inicio en 1814 con Hokusai Katsushika, maestro de xilografía quien publicó los 15 tomos del Hokusai Manga. Sin embargo, Papalini explica que según Berndt el manga actual tiene influencia de los dibujos conocidos como *ponchi-e* de la década de 1860 que tenían temas políticos-satíricos y se publicaban en diarios de lengua extranjera como *Japan Punch* del inglés Charles Wirgman. En esa misma época otros diarios japoneses comenzaron a publicar sus propias caricaturas, y el dibujante Rakuten Kitazawa propuso el termino manga “para designar sus caricaturas, las cuales satirizaban las costumbres y situaciones locales” (Papalini 2006: 30). Posteriormente, en 1923<sup>1</sup>,

1 Según Papalini (2006) en 1923 la primera historieta estadounidense en Japón fue “Bringing up Father” de George McManus

las historietas norteamericanas se comenzaron a publicar en diarios japoneses y se volvieron muy populares lo que tuvo un impacto en las caricaturas e historietas de dibujantes locales.

Así el manga actual fusiona los elementos estéticos de los ideogramas y monocromos japoneses, los dibujos de artistas locales en situaciones cotidianas y las historietas de Estados Unidos. “la influencia norteamericana [...] se evidencia claramente en la estructura de viñetas, la serialización de las historias y el uso de globos. Pero a diferencia del cómic, las viñetas japonesas se disponían de arriba abajo” (Papalini 2006: 30) esto por la forma de lectura del idioma japonés (de atrás hacia adelante).

Si bien no hay una sola fuente que confirme los orígenes del manga, tenemos referencias sobre las primeras formas del manga actual el cual se remonta a 1947 con el caricaturista Osamu Tezuka. Según Cobos (2010) Tezuka era fanático de Walt Disney, por lo que sus historietas tenían una gran influencia estética de este animador y su estudio. La consolidación del género manga fue gracias a la creación de Tezuka *Tetsuwan-Atom* mejor conocido como *Astroboy* “que cuenta las aventuras de un niño robot con sentimientos humanos, de ojos grandes y orejas en forma de pico sobre su cabeza negra (muy al estilo de Mickey Mouse)” (Cobos 2000: 4).

El manga se popularizó rápidamente en Japón y se comenzaron a producir masivamente para todo tipo de consumidor a partir a una serie de géneros para todos los gustos y edades, Papalini describe al manga actual como “revistas impresas de una sola tinta, con tapa a color, papel de baja calidad, que contienen entre 10 a 25 episodios de historias distintas que se desarrollan entre 300 a 400 páginas” (2006: 34).

## 2. Animación japonesa: Anime

Según Cobos, “anime es el término occidental con que se conoce a la producción de dibujos animados o caricaturas para televisión hechos en Japón” (2010: 7), pero el término no sólo es exclusivo de la televisión, sino que también se emplea para las producciones para cine, *streaming*<sup>2</sup> o video.

La animación japonesa comienza en lo que Hernández (2013) llama etapa cinematográfica o pre-televisiva que abarca de 1917 a 1960. Las primeras animaciones experimentales constan de obras cortas de menos de dos minutos con el tema central del folclore japonés como la adaptación del cuento *Urashima Taro* de Kiyatama en 1918, el cine japonés retoma técnicas occidentales:

[...] La primera de ellas la animación por medio de celuloide (*cel animation*) inventada en 1915 que sería sustituida por acetatos [...] a la vez que exploraban otros tipos de animación como la animación por recortes (*cut-out animation* o el *stop motion* [...]) De estas figuras pioneras destacaríamos la figura de Seitaro Kitayama (1888-1945) por la variedad de su obra que incluye la mezcla de imagen real y animación, el cine propagandístico y la experimentación. Kitayama crea además el primer estudio de animación en Japón (Hernández 2013: 89).



**Ilustración 3.** Comparativo entre el manga (izquierda) y el anime (derecha) de Astroboy.

2 Según Papalini (2006) en 1923 la primera historieta estadounidense en Japón fue “Bringing up Father” de George McManus



La primera película sonora de animación fue *The World of Power an Women* (*Chikara to onna no yo naka*) en 1932. Con la característica de serial, los primeros anime comienzan con la llegada de la televisión con la emisión de los relatos llamados *Mitshu no hanashi* y en 1963 el famoso manga Astroboy (*Tetsuwan Atom*) de Osamu Tezuka fue adaptado para animación. El éxito de este primer manga adaptado para dibujos animados en televisión marcó un punto de inflexión, ya que así se vincularon para siempre la industria editorial del manga y la audiovisual con el anime. A partir de Astroboy, los estudios de animación como Toei Animation comenzaron a adaptar los mangas que eran exitosos para su versión en caricatura dando origen a lo que hoy popularmente es llamado anime.

A la par, por esta unión surge un nuevo término que algunos autores como Hernández (2013) llaman *Manganime* que hace referencia a toda la producción de caricaturas japonesas basadas en mangas.

La llega a América fue en 1963 cuando los derechos de transmisión de Astroboy fueron vendidos a la NBC para su transmisión en Estados Unidos “Los títulos que fueron claves para esa transición entre productos para rellenar la parrilla televisiva infantil y los lanzamientos estrella llegarían con el estreno de la co-producción *Speed Racer* (*Mahha GōGōGō*, 1960-70), que es simultáneamente emitida en ambos países” (Hernández 2013: 95).



**Ilustración 4.** Speed Racer (Mahha GōGōGō). Título en Latinoamérica "Meteoro". Autor: Tatsuo Yoshida. Versión manga: Shonen Book. Versión anime: Fuji TV.

Por otro lado en el cine Hayao Miyazaki, Isao Takahata y Toshio Susuki crearon los Studio Ghibli que se convertiría en la productora más importante y afamada en Japón y el extranjero con películas como *Mi vecino Totoro* (*Tonari no Totoro* 1988); *El viaje de Chihiro* (*Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi* 2001); *El Castillo Vagabundo* (*Huru no Ugoku Shiro* 2004) entre otros títulos que se considerados películas de culto. Si bien las películas de Ghibli no se basan en mangas, mantienen el estilo y temáticas fantásticas características del anime.

Después de Estados Unidos los productos del *manganime* se expandieron con fuerza en todo el mundo incluyendo México y el resto de Latinoamérica. Uno de los factores que propiciaron el éxito de estos productos según Papalini (2006: 42) está relacionado al clima cultural de los 80 y 90 en el que las historias estadounidenses dejaron de ser innovadoras ya que “juegan creativamente con códigos narrativos, lenguajes y modelos figurativos de épocas previas, con permanentes citas, *collages*, préstamos, guiños y recuperación (*remakes*) de materiales conocidos” según la autora héroes como Batman, Hulk, Spiderman, entre otros perdieron originalidad y conexión con muchos públicos al retratar héroes incorruptibles, puros y separados de la realidad, mientras que las historias japonesas siempre fueron fantásticas permeadas por culturas ancestrales orientales con temas mucho más variados. Además, las historias del *manganime* tienen personajes de todo tipo “No obstante el marco fantasioso del grueso de las producciones japonesas importadas, los personajes se vuelven más verosímiles: son contradictorios, se equivocan, tienen malos sentimientos y sienten impulsos eróticos, pareciéndose notablemente al público y sus vivencias” (Papalini 2006: 43).

La variedad de historias es vasta y aunque en principio se catalogue a una caricatura o cómic como algo infantil, el anime y manga tienen distintos géneros que van desde productos infantiles, hasta contenidos pornográficos. Las principales categorías enumeradas por Cobos (2010)



son: a) *Mecha* o historias de robots y tecnología; b) *Magical girls* donde niñas o adolescentes tienen poderes mágicos; c) *Cyberpunk* que se desarrollan en ambientes devastados y oscuros; d) *Ecchi*, comedias con elementos sexuales; e) *Harem* o historias que tienen como protagonistas a hombres rodeado de mujeres o viceversa; f) *Gore* con tramas sangrientas y violentas; g) *Kodomo* o animación para público infantil, por lo general los protagonistas son niños con sus mascotas; h) *Yaoi* tramas románticas entre hombres homosexuales que pueden o no ser explícitos; i) *Yuri* es lo mismo que el *Yaoi* pero el romance es entre mujeres y también pueden o no ser explícitos; y j) el *Hentai* es la animación sexualmente explícita considerada pornográfica.

### 3. Los procesos transculturales y los productos derivados del *manganime*

Las historias japonesas crearon mecanismos de identificación y apropiación que las han convertido en un éxito global, se puede considerar que actualmente hay un manga y un anime prácticamente para una gran población mundial, en virtud en que en varias culturas se han puesto en práctica. El punto de inicio, el manga, ha sufrido diversas traducciones intertextual e inter-semiótica (sin olvidar las isomórficas y homeomórficas de acuerdo a Iuri M. Lotman (1996), de tal manera que la serie de productos que hoy en día conforman toda una industria han sido procesados dialógicamente para adecuarse a cada cultura, cuando menos es notoria en la mexicana.

La traducción se vierte desde distintas dimensiones, derivado que históricamente, tal como se mencionó, comienza con la invasión norteamericana al Japón después de la devastación nuclear sufrida al terminar la segunda mundial, etapa caracterizada por el sometimiento a la visión del pensamiento occidental que trataron de exterminar las tradiciones de un abatido pueblo japonés. Quizás en su afán de salvar clandestinamente toda esa mirada orgullosa de cultura, o por ser un proceso natural de conservación a partir del dispositivo de la memoria de su cultura, el hecho es que se aprecian las manifestaciones artísticas y de creatividad narrativa en una clara dialógica intertextual e intersemiótica (dejando pendiente lo interdiscursivo) japonés-norteamericano, entonces vemos que el estilo y la estética de los dibujos animados tienen rasgos (isomorfismo) a las creaciones de Walt Disney, como lo que se comentó de Astroboy, quien tenía una cabeza semejante a la de Mickey Mouse.



**Ilustración 5.** Inuyasha, versión manga.

Pero por otro lado, y debido al impulso que se le da a la cibernética y a la inteligencia artificial, se hace patente, y las historias basadas en la historia samurái se traducen homeomórficamente a la mirada del futuro de la robótica, y se actualiza su tan sagrada mitología, transformándola en una *caricatura*.

Con el tiempo el manga transmutó a un sistema de signos diferentes para crear el anime, así de un soporte gráfico (manga) el anime recrea intersemióticamente las historias en un formato animado con los signos propios del lenguaje



**Ilustración 6.** Inuyasha, versión anime, videojuego y obra teatral.

audiovisual como animación, diálogos, edición, música, actuación, etc. igualmente el anime tradujo en otros sistemas de signos a los del teatro, videojuego, juegos de mesa, juguetes coleccionables e infinidad de *merchandising*.

Más allá de las traducciones y productos creados por los propietarios de las licencias (productos oficiales), están las interpretaciones de los fanáticos del *manganime* quienes crean historias paralelas llamadas *fanfic* del término en inglés *fan fiction*<sup>3</sup>; juguetes y dibujos hechos por ellos mismos “son productos de la cultura, definida como lugar de creación y no de simple reproducción, esto es, hay un espacio indeterminado abierto a la imaginación” (Papalini 2006: 45) y por último está la máxima forma de interpretación-personificación que es el *cosplay* contracción de los anglicismos *costume* (disfraz) y *play* (juego) por lo tanto el *cosplay* hace referencia a un juego de disfraces en el que los fanáticos del *manganime* y derivados crean o mandan a hacer sus disfraces lo más apegado a los personajes originales para asistir a convenciones y puntos reunión *Otaku* término con el cual se le conoce a las personas que tienen como hobby el consumo de los distintos productos del *manganime*, cómics y videojuegos.



**Ilustración 7.** Productos, imágenes y personificación realizada por fans del managa y anime Inuyasha.

#### 4. La semiosfera otaku y cosplay

La palabra japonesa original *otaku* significa “algo ajeno a uno” y también se traduce como “su casa”, “su familia” o “usted” con el nivel más alto de formalismo. Posteriormente el término comenzó a utilizarse como forma de identificación y pertenencia grupal por parte de los fanáticos del anime y manga, las personas no fans los empezaron a catalogar como “raros”, “adictos” y “desadaptados” por eso a la palabra también se le atribuyen estos significados entre las personas ajenas a este grupo. Menke (2012: 52-55) señala que “los otakus son en su mayoría jóvenes aficionados al manga, al anime y/o a los juegos de video, que tienen a convivir entre ellos y para consumir estos productos culturales y sus derivados” la autora también explica que “comienzan por consumir una obra que les gusta o les conmueve [...] Esto provoca que los otakus tiendan a consumir todos los productos de los personajes por los que sienten una atracción”.

Los espacios de reunión entre otakus pueden ser virtuales a través de comunidades de Facebook o blogs; o pueden ser presenciales en eventos masivos conocidos como “convenciones” Álvarez (2015: 47) dice que “tanto en el universo del anime como el de los videojuegos se conjugan en las convenciones de fans, cuya organización en una de las prácticas más representativas

<sup>3</sup> Ficción o versión de fanático. En estas versiones los fanáticos escriben finales alternos o desarrollan historias alternas conversando las características de sus personajes favoritos.

de los receptores alrededor de aquellos productos de la cultura masiva de los cuales se apropian como objetos de culto”, el autor explica que los otakus retomaron la idea de las primeras convenciones en Estados Unidos con temáticas de Star Trek y Star Wars, por otro lado Cobos (2010) explica que los productos culturales japoneses al ser importados, adaptados y liberados en el contexto latinoamericano permean otras estructuras sociales y culturales hasta generar una hibridación. Así se han ido generando convenciones con estructuras comunes (que podemos encontrar en cualquier parte del mundo) y a la vez adaptadas al contexto cultural de cada localidad donde se realizan. En las convenciones los otakus se sienten reconocidos y aceptados por sus iguales “escuchando al aficionado con atención, se descubre que él encuentra, en el objeto de su devoción, una narración, unas imágenes, un clima en donde puede reconocerse” (Papalini 2006: 15), por lo tanto se generan procesos de socialización, así que además de la necesidad de entretenimiento la cultura *manganime* satisface necesidades de socialización. Entre los otaku están los grupos de cosplayers, que como dijimos anteriormente son jugadores que se disfrazan como sus personajes favoritos y encuentran gratificación en los concursos destinados a premiar al disfraz (cosplay) más detallado.

Todo este conjunto de textos políglotas conforman la semiosfera del friki-otaku, el cual por propia práctica de un pequeño grupo de seguidores, ha generado ese continuum semiótico que les permite su identidad, en donde el Cosplayer se posiciona como texto nuclear y todo el mundo friki, como los videojuegos, la venta de productos y otros textos más, incluyendo los que se encuentran tras bambalinas en la frontera de la semiosfera, como K-pop y los youtubers, nuevas modalidades que poco a poco van penetrando y acercándose más hacia el núcleo, aunque aún siguen siendo textos despreciados por los otaku más conservadores, por lo tanto conforman los textos periféricos.



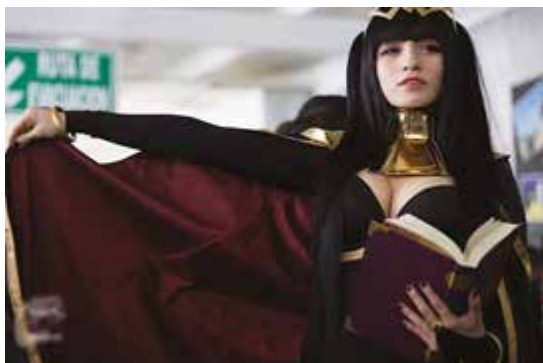
**Ilustración 8.** Cosplayers (de izquierda a derecha) representando a los personajes de Kagome, Inuyasha y Kikyō del anime Inuyasha

pos posmodernos con preferencias hacia simulacros y no realidades. Bogarín, en el caso de los cosplayers que existe una personificación que consiste en tratar a los objetos y representaciones como personas “La imagen infantiloides en la apariencia del fanático abstraído del mundo real (de la normalidad) casa con la descripción estilística antes señalada: un salto de la caricatura al soporte carne y hueso, que aun así implica la verificación de procesos de interiorización (ajuste de la personalidad) por el consumidor” (2011: 74).

Sin embargo, la postura investigación antropológica sobre otaku que partió de este presupuesto, por el momento no debe tomarse con tanta firmeza, no existen los elementos para tal confirmación en virtud de que hay que “entenderlos como sujetos receptores

Por otro lado, Álvarez explica que muchos consideran a los otakus como desadaptados, infantiles, inmaduros, vagos, locos, etc. lo cual es inadecuado desde el espacio no semiótico a la semiosfera otaku, es decir, una “perspectiva prejuiciosa y estigmatizante del exogrupo no fan” (2015: 48), varios programas de televisión y medios refuerzan los estereotipos que hacen que el resto de la sociedad los vea “como vagos que realizan actividades ‘inútiles’, ‘ridículos’ que se disfrazan a pesar de ya no ser niños, ‘enfermos’ que pueden perder toda noción de la realidad al caracterizar personajes ficticios o figuras risibles y parodiabiles” (Álvarez 2015: 48), mientras que otros autores los consideran grupos





**Ilustración 9.** Shika, cosplayer profesional caracterizando el personaje de Tharja del videojuego Fire Emblem.

cuyas prácticas de consumo tienen una lógica específica en la configuración de universos simbólicos propios y la construcción de sus identidades culturales, relacionales y diferentes de otro no fan” (Álvarez 2015: 49). Si bien al principio de la elaboración de este artículo se inició con las hipótesis de la alienación y la inmadurez psico-social, durante una parcial investigación de campo realizada entre diciembre de 2016 y junio de 2017, durante las reuniones que tuvieron los niños-jóvenes en 8 convenciones realizadas en diferentes partes de la República Mexicana, se habló de manera informal con los distintos grupos de la semiosfera

otaku y se cuestionó más a profundidad a los cosplayers, y las entrevistas permitieron considerar que efectivamente hay personas con problemas psico-socio-culturales, la mayoría de ellos ve al cosplayer como una actividad lúdica, que los identifica porque sus textos son compartidos dentro de la semiosfera friki-otaku, y el cosplayer es considerado simbólicamente el más importante porque recordemos que está ubicado como texto nuclear dentro de ese espacio semiótico, y cada quien en lo particular sentían satisfacción por las actividades de esparcimiento, el encuentro y reconocimiento entre amigos y otros otakus.



**Ilustración 9.** Foto grupal de los participantes del concurso de Cosplay de la convención ConComics en Aca-pulco Guerrero, México.

Con entrevistas y cuestionarios, que aún falta perfeccionarlos, se pudo observar, por lo pronto, que aparentemente la mayoría de los cosplayers tienen relaciones familiares “normales”, empleos en la sociedad en general, sus actividades son comunes, como las de ser estudiantes, profesores, ingenieros, fotógrafos, arquitectos, mercadólogos, matemáticos, etc. Todos señalaron sentirse adaptados a sus ambientes fuera de la semiosfera friki-otaku, pero es a través de esta insignia como empoderan sus diferencias con las alosemiosferas que no se incluyen en esta semirealidad “es posible afirmar que dichas comunidades de pertenencia se apoyan sobre la base de valores culturales compartidos reproducidos por las prácticas rituales de las convenciones y

por las identidades de los fans” (Álvarez 2015: 54), por lo tanto la pertenencia a la semiosfera otaku no ha demostrado excluir a sus integrantes de las semiosferas más amplias, aunque sí han sufrido de una actividad contraria, es decir, existe una cierta exclusión y el otaku ocupa un lugar sumamente periférico en torno a la semiosfera de la sociedad-cultura mexicana en general.

### **5. La presencia de alienación y rasgo de trastornos autistas en la semiosfera friki-otaku**

En ese sentido es innegable que la semiosfera friki-otaku, que imita conductas extrañas a su propia cultura, como el reflejar comportamientos, ya sea en estilos alimenticios, de vestido, imágenes, y otras muchas actividades generales, envueltas en textos heterogéneos para la sociedad mexicana, es un serio indicador de que sus integrantes, en todos los grados, han asumido la condición de alienación, sin embargo, tal situación no es un aspecto privativo a esta semiosfera, puesto que hay otras que están sujetadas a la misma estrategia de control, tal como lo menciona Michel Pêcheux (1978), las formaciones sociales hegemónicas construyen las formaciones ideológicas, luego las formaciones discursivas y finalmente las formaciones imaginarias que conducen la producción y reproducción de las prácticas semiótico-discursivas del poder, así que en esos términos la comunidad friki-otaku cumple cabalmente con el condición de alienación, incluso se podría anticipar que como consecuencia, los integrantes de esta semiosfera no tienen una ideología que trascienda, no dan muestras de ser una alternativa de lucha social, es decir, no representa un riesgo para el poder que asfixia a una nación en el lodazal de la corrupción como es el caso de México.

En cuanto a que sus integrantes estén sufriendo algún trastorno de desarrollo psicosocial como el autismo, es muy posible, porque sus comportamientos muestran que están por debajo de los umbrales de los estadios evolutivos psicogenéticos. Pero al igual que como se comentó en el párrafo anterior, no sería algo exclusivo de los friki-otaku, existe el proceso de enajenación en otros muchos ámbitos sociales. Aquí la cuestión será considerar que tal vez el ‘infantilismo’ sea más marcado en esta semiosfera, aunque aparentemente sólo se da al interior, pero de ser así, si el comportamiento exterior es distinto, se podría pensar que habría una despersonalización, lo cual es más difícil, por lo que el infantilismo deberá ser un continuum al interior y al exterior de su comunidad.

Por su parte, en cuanto a la presencia de los rasgos del espectro de trastornos autistas se podría decir que el DSM-5 amplió la alteración psicopatológica para identificar secciones del trastorno y no evaluarlo en su forma general, es decir, al parecer con la presencia de los mecanismos de los videojuegos se ha atrapado en un mundo virtual a muchos de los niño-jóvenes, alejándose del contacto con su realidad cultural, por lo tanto, la enorme riqueza del lenguaje, producto de la experiencia asociada a la praxis social, se está anulando, lo que induce a considerar que la conducta de estos sujetos podrían presentar ya algunos trastornos autistas. Es necesario realizar estudios más profundos para confirmarlo.

Por último, se podría decir que de acuerdo a los procesos sociales que se han dado, a la semiosfera friki-otaku no la respalda una memoria de la cultura profunda e histórica, lo cual la ubica simplemente como una moda. Los integrantes de friki-otaku por su dimensionalidad no se le puede considerar ni como una tribu, ni como una comunidad aculturalizada o contracultural, todo parece indicar que será pasajera, quizás se transforme en otra semiosfera, con ciertas características que guarden algunos de sus textos, pero será muy difícil que la dialógica mex-jap genere nuevos textos y se integren la semiosfera de la sociedad mexicana.

De cualquier forma, el trabajo de investigación hasta ahora ha cumplido el hecho de abrir nuevas ideas, ampliar los objetivos, las preguntas y las hipótesis en términos de complejidad y, desde luego, continuar con la investigación.



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**FROM THE SESSION  
“MODELLING IN DIGITAL  
HUMANITIES”**

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# A COGNITIVE SEMIOTICS APPROACH TO THE ANALYSIS OF STREET ART. THE CASE OF ATHENS

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## **Abstract**

This paper is part of my ongoing doctoral research centered on “Street Art and Cognitive Semiotics” at the division of Cognitive Semiotics at Lund University. More concretely, in this article, a fresh approach, based on a constructive (verbo-) pictorial argument, is taken to attending the relationship between a cognitive semiotics approach and street art signs in a programmatic way. This study is based on fieldwork research that was carried out during several periods in central Athens between 2014 and 2017, including photo documentation and semi-structured ethnographic interviews with street artists. In the following, my intention is first to outline a cognitive semiotic conceptual toolbox for street art understanding furnished mainly by Sonesson (2008, 2013, 2014). Second, three concrete examples indicative of these attempts are examined and analyzed semiotically.

## **1. Introduction**

Cognitive semiotics consists in the integration of methods, models, and theories from three research fields: linguistics, cognitive science, and semiotics as apprehended from the point of view of the sociocultural lifeworld, the world of our experiences (Sonesson 2014; Zlatev et al 2015).<sup>1</sup> More concretely, in the specific case of picture understanding, several attempts have been made by thinkers such as the psychologist James Gibson (1986), the philosopher Edmund Husserl (1939), the French structuralist semiotician Jean-Marie Floch (1990), and the group consisting of Belgian semioticians known as Groupe  $\mu$  (1992). Gibson was a leading psychologist who wrote about picture perception from the perspective of perceptual psychology, Husserl was a phenomenologist, and the French and Belgians were semioticians who contributed profoundly

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<sup>1</sup> Lifeworld is the English translation of the German term *Lebenswelt*, which was first introduced by the phenomenologist Husserl.

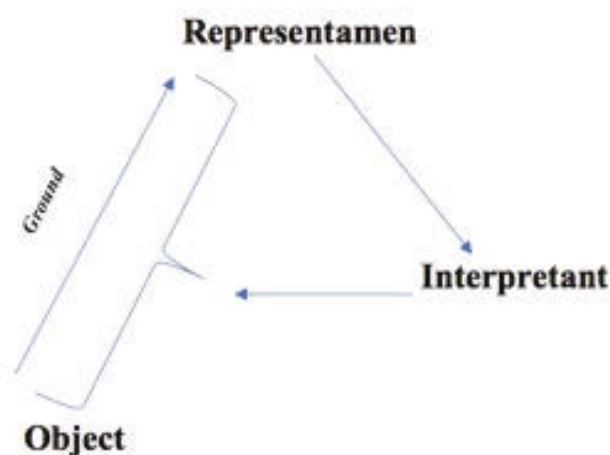
to the specific field of pictorial semiotics and rhetoric, respectively. The analysis in this paper builds on the theory for the analysis of pictorial signs proposed by Sonesson (2008, 2013, 2014), which is inspired by the work of Floch (1990), Gibson (1986), Groupe  $\mu$  (1992), Husserl (1939), and Peircean semiotic theory (1931-35).

## 2. Theoretical framework

The cognitive semiotics of the picture sign, though concerned with an object of a very different nature, can provide all these general rules, methods, guidelines and expertise to study pictures, the same way as linguistics does for language (Sonesson 2014). This further points to the general purpose of this study: a fresh approach, which is to be taken on street art research from a cognitive semiotic strand, which functions as a potential frame for detailed experimental and empirical research in the field of rhetorical figures, permitting me to provide thorough justifications (at least to some extent) for meaning construal. The cognitive semiotic conceptual toolbox, which I am going to describe here, includes the following “tools”: 1) the distinction between grounds and signs, 2) the significance of iconicity and indexicality in terms of the distinction between expression and content, primary and secondary iconicity, iconic and plastic orders, and abductive and performative indices, and 3) the model of rhetorical operations.

### 2.1. Grounds and signs

In the Peircean sense, the concept of semiosis (σημείωσις in Greek, ‘semiosis’), which is perceived as a long-standing process, involves a three-part relationship between the representamen, its object, and its interpretant. Based on this definition, and as commented also by Iliopoulos (2016: 249), “a sign is meaningful if and only if its relation to what it stands for is interpreted”. What interests me here is the relation between the representamen and its object. According to Peirce, the representamen is something, which “stands for that object not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I sometimes called the ground of the representamen” (Peirce CP 2:228).



**Figure 1.** The relations between the Representamen, its Object, and its Interpretant. The semiotic “grounds” as dynamic forces for building up sign functions (adapted from Iliopoulos 2016)

In this case, three fundamental relations can occur between the representamen and its object, namely iconicity, indexicality, and symbolicity, and which may be taken as the “ground” (Figure 2).<sup>2</sup> If the representamen corresponds to expression and object corresponds to content, then

<sup>2</sup> It is important to clarify that “ground” is still not a sign. “Ground” is a dynamic function that pre-exists to the sign function.

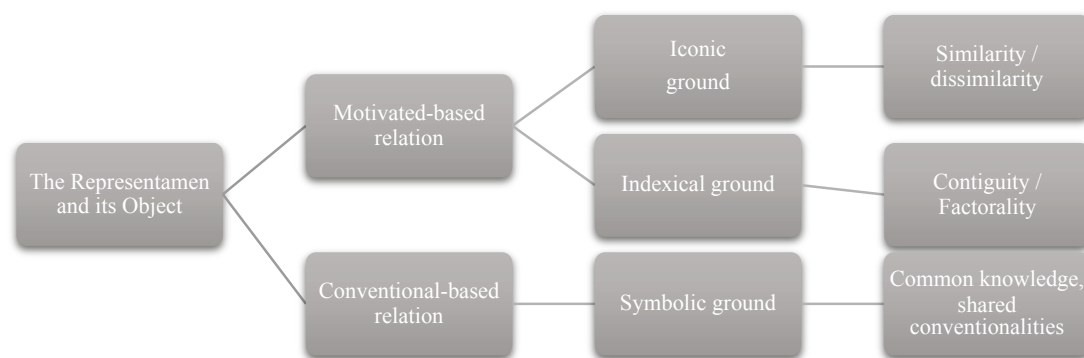
the first property of iconicity is based on distinct relevant elements between the representamen and its object. An example could be the property of “being Greek” shared between two elements from the point of view of their Greek origin. This corresponds simply to an observation, or in different words to the property of iconicity. When the comparison between both properties (iconicities) takes place, then, the iconic relation of “Greekness”, which corresponds to the iconic ground, is established as a similarity based comparison, thus being a relation, which in Peircean terms, is already a kind of Secondness. They become iconic signs if and only if one can stand for the other due to their in-between similarity based extension.

On the other hand, indexicality (δείξις in Greek, ‘pointing’) by definition exists as a relation to something else from the beginning of its presence corresponding to the indexical relation (or indexical ground), which does not necessarily depend on the sign function. This means that indexicality is conceived as an indexical ground, which is still not a sign, unless it becomes part of any sign relation. Having introduced iconicity and indexicality, it becomes clearer that iconicity has some kind of being as a single property, such as “being Greek” for example, but literally, it does not exist, if no comparison between the representamen and its object takes place, whereas, indexically is always there pointing to the indexical relation, in terms of the indexical ground, being independent from the sign relation. Lastly, in the case of symbolicity, there is only the symbolic (conventional) ground between the representamen and its object, which gives birth to the symbolic sign. Table 1 below displays schematically the different kinds of semiotic grounds and how these semiotic grounds could be elevated to the three sign functions (relations), namely iconic sign (icon), indexical sign (index), and symbolic sign (symbol).

	Firstness = Iconicity	Secondness = Indexicality	Thirdness = Symbolicity
Firstness = property	Iconicity	—	—
Secondness = ground	Iconic ground	Indexicality = Indexical ground	Symbolic ground
Thirdness = sign	Iconic sign = icon	Indexical sign = index	Symbolic sign = symbol

**Table 1.** Grounds and signs (adapted from Sonesson 2015)

At the level of “ground”, the first two cases of iconic and indexical grounds are considered motivated, and thus the representamen is related to its object either via similarity in the case of the iconic ground, or via contiguity (spatiotemporal relation) or part/whole relation (henceforth factorality) in the case of indexical ground, respectively (see Devylder 2016; Sonesson 2008 for reviews). On the other hand, the case of the symbolic ground is conventional, and thus the representamen is associated to its object via common knowledge shared by the sign users (Figure 2). Examples of conventional symbolic signs could be the euro sign (€) or the dollar sign (\$).



**Figure 2.** The representamen and its object. Motivated-based and conventional-based relations



Our research questions can now be made more explicit:

1. How and to what extent can these motivated (iconic and indexical) and conventional (symbolic) based relations between the representamen (expression) and its object (content) be applied to street art signs?
2. What are the meanings of a given street art sign and how do these meanings manifest themselves within the rhetorical structure of the picture sign?
3. How are these meanings affected by the sociocultural context?

At this point, it is crucial to mention the criteria that would need to be fulfilled in order for something to be a sign (Sonesson 2013: 316), as exemplified by the case of street art:

1. In the process of experiencing street art signification [semiotic process] there is always a **subject** involved.
2. The street art sign, which is going to be signified, must contain at least two parts: **representamen (expression)** and **object (content)** – (expression could stand for a street art work and content could stand for the depicted thing).
3. They are **differentiated** by the subject – (the street art work is here and now, whereas the depicted thing is spatiotemporally extended).
4. They are **asymmetrical** in relation to each other:
  - a. **Representamen (expression)** → is **directly experienced** (the street art work is directly experienced).
  - b. **Object (content)** → is **in focus** from the subject's perspective (the depicted thing is in focus, not the street art work itself).

## 2.2. Expression and two layers of content: primary and secondary content

As I argued above representamen could stand for the expression and object could stand for the content, respectively. In this case, starting out from the street artworks found in my collection, I think that we should make a distinction between two corresponding layers of content: one (henceforth *primary content*) that even if it is not directly experienced, nevertheless can be interpreted by the subject without previous sociocultural and/or historical knowledge of the lifeworld, and a second one (henceforth *secondary content*) at a higher level, which is in focus, and thus being crucial for the subject to have distinct sociocultural and/or historical knowledge of his particular lifeworld, at least for a certain period of time. This is explained in detail in Section 3.

## 2.3. Primary and secondary iconicity

Two cases of iconicity are important to distinguish: primary and secondary iconicity (see Sonesson 2013, 2014). In the case of primary iconic signs, the expression can easily be understood in terms of the content (without being confused with it) without external sociocultural knowledge (no conventions needed). On the other hand, the case of secondary iconicity is a bit more complicated since the similarity between the expression and content is not clear enough. Then, either an explanatory (often verbal) label or extrinsic sociocultural knowledge is needed in order to specify the similarity between two parts (expression and content). The case of secondary iconicity could be related to the secondary content, which I introduced in the subsection 2.2. It is crucial to have the sociocultural knowledge about how EU currency and Greek flag look like, for example, in order to grasp the idea of EU and Greece.

## 2.4. Iconic (pictorial) and plastic order

Another relevant characterization involves the two orders of the picture sign (Groupe  $\mu$  1992; Sonesson 2008, 2014). The iconic (or better pictorial) order corresponds to the depicted thing that is associated to something that can be perceived in experience (the depicted object of the Lifeworld experience), and the plastic order corresponds to the multitude operations of colours, forms, shapes, textures, materialities and so on negotiated through pictures (the visual treatment in other words) of the picture itself (Sonesson 2014: 31).

## 2.5. Abductive and performative indexicality

Another crucial distinction that exists between two different types of indexical configurations could be well applied to the case of street art: the case of abduction and the case of performativity (Sonesson 2014). First, accepting the fact that indexicality (indexical ground) is found even before the indexical sign being independent of it, the indexical (contiguous) relation between the representamen and its object presupposes an earlier connection based on earlier experiences. This is the case of abductive indexical signs. Second, the indexical (contiguous) relation is created when the street artist, in our case, puts together different elements to build up the representamen (expression), causing a connection. This is the case with the performative indexical signs. Both types of indexical significations, as has been stressed by both Sonesson (2008) and Iliopoulos (2016) can co-exist, also in the case of the street art sign.

## 2.6. Rhetorical operations

A philosophical model of pictorial rhetoric, which is inspired and indebted to Groupe  $\mu$  model, and is dissociated into four categories (rhetorical dimensions), namely *the dimension of indexicality*, *the dimension of iconicity*, *the dimension of symbolicity*, and *the dimension of socio-cultural categorization* has been elaborated by Sonesson (2008).<sup>3</sup>

All these four categories are based on the fundamental axes of cognitive, perceptual, and ontological understanding of the lifeworld (Sonesson 2008). The first category, *the dimension of indexicality*, is related to the indexical grounds of contiguity and factorality; contiguity in the sense of (conceptual) proximity and factorality in the sense of part/whole relations, admitting the hypothesis that we expect to experience the lifeworld in terms of parts and totalities (Sonesson 2008: 19). The second category, *the dimension of iconicity*, is the rhetorical operation, which is related to what we perceive in terms of too much or too little resemblance, always in relation to the sociocultural lifeworld. The third, *dimension of symbolicity*, refers to shared conventionalities, and the last one *the dimension of socio-cultural categorization*, is related to three pictorial subcategories (pictorial kinds), which are quite relevant to street art: the rules of construction of the picture relating expression and content (*constructional*, production), the socially intended effects (*functional*, reception), and the social channels of circulation. The analysis, I am going to do next, traces the ways in which these semiotical categories could be related to street art, at least to some extent (see below Tables 2, 3).

## 3. A cognitive semiotic interpretation of street art signs: 3 exemplary cases from Athens

I now consider the case of street art, in order to illustrate how the cognitive semiotic conceptual toolbox as outlined in Section 2 in a strictly “Sonessonean” sense could be applied to some indicative examples of street artworks.

<sup>3</sup> These categorical dimensions have been built up on both the Peircean trichotomies of Iconicity, Indexicality, and Symbolicity, as they have been discussed in Subsection 2.1, and the Groupe  $\mu$  rhetorical model. I would say that Sonesson’s main contribution here is both the integration of Peirce’s semiotic theory and Groupe’s  $\mu$  rhetoric, as well as the elaboration of the fourth dimension of socio-cultural categorization, which may indeed be quite relevant to street art.

As such, it is worth noting that the sociocultural and historical contextual boundaries, the linguistic barriers, and the high level of creativity and redefining of symbols render street art quite unique in opening up new ways of research. I further discuss in what ways street artworks, which constitute (verbo-) pictorial compositions, do bear some degrees of rhetorical figurativity and significance regarding the meaning construal.

The criterion on which I selected these three examples is that they are exemplary cases of (verbo-) pictorial signs (namely street artworks) photographically documented during the period between 2014 and 2017 in central Athens (Stampoulidis 2016), and they share the following characteristics: a) (verbo-) pictorial synergy and figurative potential, b) the verbal intertext (if any) in English, and c) the contextual information being crucial for their interpretation.<sup>4</sup> The following three street artworks are used as the exemplary cases in this article.

### 3.1. Politician blended with a dog



**Figure 3.** Politician blended with a dog. Creator: Lotek, Political Stencil. Photography Georgios Stampoulidis © in December 2016

Let me now have a closer look at the first dimension of indexicality and in particular by taking into account the notion of factorality. More concretely, Figure 3 illustrates: either an unexpected presence of an animal body and an unexpected presence of a human head, or an unexpected absence of a human body and an unexpected absence of animal head (due to combination). This example with the Dutch politician blended with an animal body is a stencil artwork, which corresponds to the representamen (expression).<sup>5</sup> Its socio-political intended effects correspond to the object (content). Nevertheless, the content of Figure 3, for instance, could be disassociated into two corresponding layers of content, as discussed in Subsection 2.2: 1) the primary content of dog-man at a universal cross-cultural level (the subject does not need any particular sociocul-

<sup>4</sup> I have decided to include only examples with verbal intertext in English in this study for the sake of unity and clarity.

<sup>5</sup> Figure 3 portrays the Dutch politician Jeroen Dijsselbloem.

tural and/or historical knowledge to interpret the sign relation), and 2) the secondary content at a higher historical/conventional level that may be that of political corruption, which is perceived as the aforementioned socio-political intended effects (the subject needs to carry some, at least, previous sociocultural and/or historical knowledge to interpret the sign relation). To this extent, representamen (expression) and object (content) entertain a doubly asymmetrical relation also in the specific case of street art. This means that even if the materialities of street artworks come first to one's perception directly, what it actually matters at the end, being in focus, is their intended effects (secondary content), which are being only indirectly present. Here, it is indispensable to have some background knowledge about politics to understand that the human head stands iconically (due to similarity based extension) and indexically (due to contiguous and part/whole relation) for a politician who is associated to a dog. This knowledge is abductive, but their combination is performative, since this contiguity and factorality do not exist outside the sign relation but are created by it.

### 3.2. Policeman blended with a pig



**Figure 4.** Policeman blended with a pig. Creator: Unknown. Photography Georgios Stampoulidis © in May 2015.

Figure 4 illustrates: either an unexpected presence of human body and an unexpected absence of human head, or an unexpected absence of animal body, and an unexpected presence of animal head (due to combination as well). As shown, in both examples until now (Figures 3, 4), parts of several (at least two different) totalities or entities (the totality of human body and the totality of animal body) are blended masterfully into one unexpected unity triggering rhetorical effects. The second example with the police man blended with a pig is an artwork made with spray-paints and paintbrush. The human body with an unexpected animal head corresponds to the representamen (expression). Its socio-political intended effects correspond to the object (content). Here, there is a need to grasp the idea about police men being pigs current not only in a wide range of street slogans but in much recent popular culture. This is the abduction, which, in this case, justified by performativity, being created the time that the sign relation itself is constructed.

### 3.3. Human body parts blended with mechanical gears



**Figure 5.** Human body parts blended with mechanical gears. Creator: N\_Grams. Photography Georgios Stampoulidis © in January 2017.

Figure 5 is the case, where unexpected parts (in this case *gears* instead of *human heads*) are added to a certain entity (in this case *human body*) creating an unexpected factor, triggering rhetorical effects as well, in terms of the lifeworld ecology. This street artwork is a paste-up artwork made by means of a coloured piece of paper (acrylics on newspaper) and pasted on the wall. The human bodies with unexpected gears as human heads correspond to the representamen (expression). Their socio-political intended effects correspond to the object (content). In this case, it is crucial to have some previous socio-political knowledge involving the crisis context in Greece, the part played by EU in Greek politics recently, thus resulting in high taxation, and generally in Greece's present debt problem. So far, the abduction, as knowledge, which is based on earlier experiences, is specified by the performative combination of human body parts and mechanical gears, which may be taken to suggest the bureaucratic nature of the EU.

### 3.4. Discussion

As I have shown indexicality with the notions of contiguity and factorality is very much relevant to street art at least from the perspective of assuming a general knowledge about the human biology incorporated within the human lifeworld. All three examples are characteristic pictures for the unexpected combination of two different entities (based on the way that is expected to be experienced in the lifeworld), in which an unexpected presence as well as an unexpected absence of factorality is found.



The next case is the dimension of iconicity, in which as noted above the presence of either too much or too little similarity is compared to what we actually see in the picture and how this is perceived within the lifeworld. All three cases of street artworks, which are exemplified here (Figures 3, 4, 5), indicate less similarity (resemblance) than expected, always in terms of the lifeworld ecology. As a matter of fact, this logical opposition in terms of “anthropological universals” (Sonesson 2008) as seen in these three examples produces rhetorical effect:<sup>6</sup> 1) human head of a Dutch politician is blended with an animal body of a dog, 2) the animal head of a pig is blended with a human body of a police man, and 3) human bodies have gears for head instead of human heads.




The last category of the dimension of socio-cultural categorization approaches pictures as “social objects” (Sonesson 2014: 33). In all three cases, the viewer is invited to consider three operational subcategories that matter depending on their use. The construction category consists of the plastic order (visual treatment in other words) of the picture itself, which encompasses different colour usages, drawing styles, shapes of textual captions, textures, and other materialities, as well as the iconic (pictorial) order. All three examples have mainly socio-political intended effects based on humor, political satire, and sarcasm. They are circulated in public space, mainly on walls (or on any other public surface).

In addition, since I am interested in the rhetorical structure of pictorial signs, and more specifically, in how meaning is construed in street art signs, what should be examined here is if in these three exemplary cases, the signs, in the strict sense of the term, satisfy Sonesson’s criteria (section 2.1).

To begin with, the (verbo-) pictorial representations depicted in the Figures 3, 4, 5 consist of at least two distinct parts: the representamen (expression) and its object (content). Nevertheless, the representamen (expression) and the object (content) would not overlap in spatiotemporal settings. This means that the different kinds of constructing qualities of those pictures (colour patterns, shapes, size, textures etc.) are detected only during the time the subject perceives the (verbo-) pictorial representations, while their socio-political intended effects are spatiotemporally extended. This reveals the different kind of nature of the representamen (expression) and the object (content): the representamen (expression), which is always material, is perceived as the specific methods of stencil, spray-paint, brush paint, and paste-up in the case of street art, whereas the object (especially the secondary one) is perceived as the socio-political intended effects.

Before I conclude this section, I would like to point out the typology of abductive and performative indexicality, which is present in these three examples (Figures 3, 4, 5). If, in all these cases, this contextual information would be missing, it would not be possible for potential recipients to construe any meaningful considerations. Interestingly, what is shown, at least in the last two examples (Figures 4, 5), apart from reinforcing the (verbo-) pictorial integrity, is the presence of verbal abductive indices as well (e.g. in Figure 4 the verbal intertext *A.C.A.B.*, which is very much symbolic, is an anti-police acronym, which generally means that “All Cops (police men) Are Bastards” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A.C.A.B.>, accessed 16 October 2017) - and in Figure 5 the EU sign, which is associated to European Union, or the question mark, which is associated to the uncertainty of new Greek generation’s future, presumably).

6 Sonesson (2008: 33) claims that “anthropological universals may be the case in which the contrary terms are subsumed under universals known to every human culture, such as the opposition of the features female + child and male + adult [...] in fact, there may be an even stronger case, in which abstract contrary terms which are anthropological universals appear directly in the picture”. In our case, all three examples bear some kind of sedimented universal contradiction: human body parts + animal body parts as depicted in Figures 3, 4 or human body parts + mechanical gears as depicted in Figure 5.

<b>Iconicity</b> (more or less similarity / dissimilarity than expected) logical oppositions		
<b>Symbolicity</b> (applied to common knowledge and shared conventionalities)		
<b>Indexicality</b> (applied to abductive and performative indices) contiguity and factorality		
Applied to factorality		
Unexpected presence, unexpected absence, or combination		
Unexpected combination of different wholes triggering rhetorical effects	Unexpected parts of a whole triggering rhetorical effects	
 <p>(Figure 3)</p>	 <p>(Figure 4)</p>	 <p>(Figure 5)</p>

**Table 2.** Iconicity, Indexicality, and Symbolicity applied to street art (adapted from Sonesson’s integrated model of rhetorical operations 2008, 2014).

Categories	Figure 3	Figure 4	Figure 5
Mode of construction (stencil, spray-paint, brush, marker pen, paste-up, sticker)	stencil	spray-paint, paintbrush	acrylics on newspaper, paste-up
Function (socio-political, aesthetic)	socio-political intended effects based on humor, political satire, and sarcasm		
Channels of circulation (public walls, façades of state buildings and / or university buildings, cultural historical monuments)	public walls, façades		

**Table 3.** Pictorial kinds applied to street art (adapted from Sonesson 2008, 2014).

#### 4. Conclusions

The cognitive semiotic conceptual toolbox outlined in this article (Section 2) is a theoretical framework to investigate the meaning-makings in the specific case of the street art genre. To briefly recapitulate, what has been proposed in this work is that the distinction between the grounds and signs, the Peircean notions of iconicity (Firstness), indexicality (Secondness), and symbolicity (Thirdness), as well as Sonesson’s integrated model of rhetorical operations could be adequately applied to street art signs.

As I hope to have demonstrated in this article, the application of the particular cognitive semiotic conceptual toolbox based on the analysis of pictorial signs as proposed by Sonesson (2008, 2013, 2014), inspired by the work of other thinkers and applied to the case of street art, could meaningfully justify the appearance of rhetorical figures, as divergences to our expectations, which are grounded in our lifeworld perception. As I have shown, street artists often make use of iconic, indexical, and symbolic configurations, namely in terms of unexpected absences

and presences, in order to create the aforementioned rhetorical effects. Ultimately, the issues that have been raised in this study concerning the “expected interrelation” between the outlined skeleton of the cognitive semiotic conceptual toolbox (Section 2) and street art semiotic interventions are workable and many aspects remain to be further investigated in order to enable a more integrated analysis of the phenomenon.

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**FROM THE SESSION “TO  
WATCH, TO ACT, TO DIRECT”**

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# SEMIOTICS (OF CINEMA)'S NOT DEAD

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## **Abstract**

Declaring in an academic environment that one deals with semiotics of cinema, or with semiotics and cinema, is always a risk, often met with sceptical grimaces. The term “semiotics of cinema” evokes an era which is perceived as being antiquated, crystallized on the names of Eco and Metz and on a structuralism which many, perhaps justly, consider outdated. The problem is not to be underestimated: if semiotics does not possess the tools with which to approach the cinema fully in its epistemic horizon, then it has failed from the start, since much of the sense we experience daily has a filmic basis. Asserting the death of semiotics of cinema thus amounts to endorsing the death of semiotics itself. It seems suicidal for a discipline to exclude itself from one of the domains which it should regard as fundamentally preeminent. In order to overcome this impasse, therefore, it could be worth starting a programmed dialogue between the semiological apparatus and the instruments of film studies and aesthetics, abandoning a hegemonic propensity which is anachronistic in this era of crisis of the human sciences. The purpose of my contribution is to propose some theoretical bridges that demonstrate how this debate would be fruitful in order to attest how semiotics has never been more alive.

## **1. Where we left off**

Ample debate has taken place over the possibility of analyzing cinema from a semiotic perspective, but without any stable conclusion being reached. One of the first names that is commonly cited in this regard is that of Christian Metz, who started the ball rolling in 1964 with his article *Le cinéma, langue ou langage?*, in which he speculated whether a cinematographic grammar could be mapped out. Cinema, in fact, since it is based on the juxtaposition of a plurality of codes (Metz 1971), can elicit – as we well know – numerous problems. And if there were no univocal grammar, how could we then treat it? Should it be excluded from the semiotic horizon? And if so, what should we then do with a discipline the purpose of which is to study sense, but which is unable to deal with the realm of the filmic, that is, with one of the hinges on which contemporary society revolves?

This theme has been transversally handled by many authors, whom we cannot but mention here, from Umberto Eco (1968) with his interpretative and codical approach, to Gianfranco



Bettetini, who from the French theories of the Sixties simultaneously cast a glance backwards at Peirce who treated Saint Augustine as the first “audiovisual semiotician” when he postulated the icon, and forwards, sliding the issue from the text to the conversation between enunciator and enunciatee (1984), that is to say, towards the pragmatic dimension. Or again Francesco Casetti, who first divided the problem into three forms of possible analysis (textual, structuralist and semiological) (1990), saying perhaps that the filmic sign is something fluid, which needs to be illuminated by various lights in order to be comprehended, and then more recently moved towards the horizon of Screen Studies, in accordance with the theory (in my opinion a very valid theory) that the history of media, and that of culture, can be read through screen surfaces.

The discipline of semiotics of cinema itself seems always to have been aware of the accusations levelled against it. In Pierluigi Basso’s book *Confini del cinema (Borders of cinema)* (2003), we can read of an “anti-reductionist gaze”, in other words, of the necessity to avoid “debasement” of film with a semiotic deconstruction which undermines its essential wholeness, its intrinsic transcendental-ity. This, indeed, is the great battle which semiotics of cinema has had to wage and continues to have to wage even today, in an era in which it is often repudiated: the reaffirmation of its necessity, but also the demonstration of its ability to deal with film and maintain its essence intact.

On thinking about the matter, however, it seems to assume broader confines. Why are these accusations directed only at semiotics of cinema specifically, and not at the discipline in general? At bottom, if a film by David Lynch can be seen as “oppressed” by a semiological analysis – “raped” by it – then could not the same be said for a painting by Marc Chagall or a poem by Thomas Hardy? The truth is that, in fact, a particular resentment is channeled towards semiotics of cinema because of the film, maybe a more “ineffable” textual entity than others, but also that nowadays the whole of semiotics is considered, as it were, obsolete. During the film studies convention *Contemporary Cinema and Media Aesthetics* (November 24-25, 2016, Roma Tre University) I happened to tell a fellow speaker, evidently very exuberant, that I dealt in semiotics. He replied sardonically: “still?”. In fact, from his point of view he was not wrong, since he probably came from a domain of expertise which made him consider semiotics as a sort of meat grinder, mercilessly mashing everything with the same mechanism. In reality, however, it seems to me that some progress has been made which, paradoxically, enables us to understand how the principles of the past are as valid as ever.

Semiotics proposes itself as a metalanguage that is autonomous, but also intrinsically open to other epistemic horizons. It is no accident that Metz, once having defined film as a *Grande Syntagmatique* (1966), felt the need to approach it psychoanalytically through Freud and Lacan. He understood that the mirage of semiotic hegemony has to be confronted with other viewpoints, for extracting sense from the text, even from the filmic text.

Thus, I would like to subdivide this paper into three passages, which I trust will, in the end, be seen to be interrelated. First, I should like to take a look back at one of the first aesthetic theories of film “analysis”, to demonstrate how these were – I am not sure how consciously – markedly semiotic. I will then move on briefly to a specific case of a contemporary text, to show how semiotics poses as an essential discipline for mediation between the object of study and other subjects. Finally, I will present what I consider to be one of the possible contemporary approaches which make semiotics of cinema a living, pulsating subject.

## 2. Semiotics and *Photogénie*

The first theory to which I am referring is that of photogenicity, a term first used in a cinematographic setting by the writer Colette in 1917, that is, when the first so-called “attractional” phase of cinema (Gunning 1990) was coming to an end. Photogenicity was and is, loosely, that prop-

erty whereby a determinate subject comes out particularly well when photographed or filmed (also on television, if one thinks about telegenic quality). Louis Delluc and Jean Epstein debated this issue almost coetaneously, from two diametrically opposed perspectives. For Delluc, photogenicity resides in the things and in the beings of the world, which might never be photographed or filmed. It is then the camera operator's task to capture the photogenic quality of these subjects without degrading it with excessive enthusiasm. On the contrary, Epstein views photogenicity as a supremely cinematographic quality. The cinema captures this quality and at the same time engenders it. Thus, while for Delluc the aim of film is to "naturalize" itself in order to comply with photogenicity, for Epstein the film must in some way transform reality, embellish it and produce visions which go beyond the natural. This is what was once referred to as *filmic specificity*. For Delluc photogenicity exists *a priori*, for Epstein it is *a posteriori*.

Epstein's theory would clearly seem the more sustainable, nevertheless it must be underlined how both in reality rest on distinctly semiotic bases. For Delluc (1917) photogenicity, even though it resides in the entity, requires a determined textualization in order to emerge, and that is, the camera operator's ability to highlight certain *aspects* – as Peirce would say – of the filmed object, and transcend others. For Epstein the film does not directly reproduce reality, but transforms it, exactly as foreseen by semiotic epistemology. The film camera *signifies* reality and, as Epstein says, cinema is "highly supernatural". In what way? In that, it stylizes nature, approaching it by means of devices, which are stylistic, therefore rhetorical, and therefore semiotic. Among these devices, Epstein cites, for example, the use of slow motion, which may intensify the dramatic effect of a scene, or superimposition. In fact, if one watches a masterpiece like *Cœur Fidèle* (*Faithful Heart*) from 1923 (a year in which Epstein engages in much reflection on photogenicity), one witnesses the staging of a classic melodrama imbued with hyper-mediation. Myriads of interpellations or gazes in camera – which in semiotics would be called enunciational debrayage – succeed one another, not like those of early cinema, for which they were codified, but as stylistic markers to emphasize the supernatural structure of the film. Therefore, a downpouring of superimpositions and slow motion. The great power of these "figures" is that of signifying the non-filmable transcendentality of cinema through style, and for instance Marc Vernet, in 1988, systematizes gaze in camera and superimposition as "figures of absence".

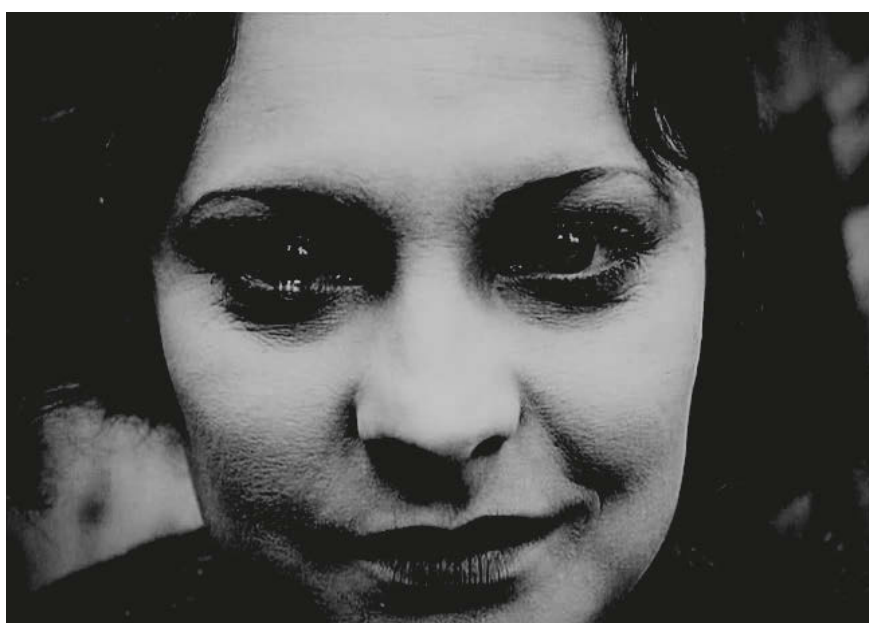


Figure 1. Screenshot from *Cœur Fidèle*

In Epstein's photogenicity, therefore, an aesthetic dimension and a semiotic dimension co-habit larvally, in an epoch in which semiotics of cinema was largely the preserve of the Russian formalists who had already clearly intuited this semioaesthetic "crisis" (which will then become increasingly formalized by the Prague Linguistic Circle as well – think of Mukarovskij's book (1936) in which aesthetic value and norm are associated). Yet this commonality had already been clear many centuries before, for instance to Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten who had underlined the rhetorical foundations of artistic discourse.<sup>1</sup>

Epstein's photogenicity, in other words, seems to me to be an *ante litteram* version of the aesthetic semiotics developed, for example, by the Prague Linguistic Circle. Let me point out once again that the great semiotics authors, from Lotman (1973) to Eco, have widely reflected on the theme of the aesthetic sign and how it becomes an aesthetic text. Thus, semiotics of cinema in reality is nothing but the formal facade, which systematizes aesthetics of cinema, and each needs the other, if a fundamental incompleteness is to be avoided.

This demonstrates how the first aesthetic theories of cinema already concealed in reality a semiotic matrix, based on the recognition of determinate visual, but also narrative, tropes.

### 3. How to study a film unfinished

Nevertheless, this aesthetic semiotics of film also interfaces with other disciplines. The example I wish to bring to your attention today is that of an exceptional film which is still little known. *A Film Unfinished*, made by Israeli director Yael Hersonski in 2010. Contextualizing this film is no simple operation. It is based on the re-semantization of a 1942 film entitled *Das Ghetto*, shot by an SS troupe in the ghetto of Warsaw. *Das Ghetto* was an incomplete film, without opening or closing credits, which disappeared in an archive after the dissolution of the ghetto and was only found again around the 1960s. The film contains a series of scenes inside the ghetto, which alternate images of Jews living in a sort of luxury with images of begging, starving Jews. For about forty years, historians, in an excess of semiotic zeal, based their interpretations of certain social instances inside the ghetto on this film. In 1998, however, a further reel was discovered, which constituted the completion of the preceding one, and which demonstrated how all the preceding shots were fruit of a series of manipulations effected by the Nazis, who were acting not so much with documentary intent as for purposes of propaganda, in order to demonstrate the innate ignominy of the Jewish people, unable to feel pity even for their own kind. It is this finding that prompts *A Film Unfinished*, where Yael Hersonski combines the two reels, alternating them with various testimonies and demonstrating the Nazis' intentions, which until 1998 had not emerged from *Das Ghetto*.

*A Film Unfinished* superimposes the enunciation according to various levels. In it can be found the images from *Das Ghetto* as conceived by the Nazi *intelligenza*, contextualized however in the light of the recovery of the "revelatory" reel, but also a series of other formal devices useful for defining the film's primary intention, which is not solely documentary, but also and above all interpretative. Hersonski does not arrange the shots in a linear fashion, but edits and interpolates them with a series of other contents, for the purpose of furnishing a heightened reading of the event which conveys a reflection on the idea of historical research itself and of its sources and, from the point of view of semiotics, on the relevance of *intentiones* in the text. The same images, if edited differently, speak differently.

The authorial syntax reported entails serious reflection on the intentional instances, which support the filmic text. To sum up, vertically the authorial grammar is the following:

1 Cf. Tedesco 2008, 35.

Yael Hersonski “directs” a film which:

- is based on the work of a troupe, embodied by cameraman Willy Wist who
- has been enlisted by a squad of Nazi superiors, first among them the so-called “Gold-pheasant”, who
- base their work on a series of narrative programs, emblemized by Joseph Goebbels’ communications policies designed to demonstrate the legitimacy of the extermination projects, which
- incarnate Nazi ideology, the ultimate symbolic author of *Das Ghetto*.

However, a transversal sectioning of the film also permits the identification of certain instances that are in some way meta-authorial. The survivors contribute spontaneously to the creation of content and re-semanticize the images, both charging them with emotive valence and emphasizing their strongly revisionist purpose. Yet, the very Jews filmed in the ghetto, aware of being filmed, not only actorialize *Das Ghetto* but in some way authorialize it, sanctioning an intention – and that is, a desire to signify – that is diametrically opposed to that of those who commissioned the film: on their side there is the hope that cooperation may result in salvation, while on the other there is the Nazi plan to deceive.



Figure 2. Screenshot from *A Film Unfinished*

*A Film Unfinished* is therefore a text subject to intentional *Gestalt*, where the authorial summation surpasses the single parts that compose it. Nevertheless, it is the text itself which has the last word in the end, which speaks with its own intention, and again *A Film Unfinished* demonstrates this clearly, if one starts to interpret it from its pulsating heart, and that is, the Nazi ideology: the authorial intention is inscribed in the text, configuring the mechanisms of cooperation between author and addressee (Eco 1992). Every authorial stratification entails an additional intentional layer, which dialogues in a semi-autonomous manner with the others. The symbolic “buyer”, that is Nazism, orders a propaganda film in the ghetto of Varsavia with a result in mind which is decodified by Goebbels (flesh-and-blood signifier of Nazi communication), who in turn is decodified by the hierarchs on site, who are decodified by cameraman Wist, whose hand traces all the *intentiones* which precede him, but also adds something, even if minimal, of its own to the text. Wist does, however, also admit that he has comprehended the buyer’s project, as have numerous Jews in the ghetto, of whom Adam Czerniaków (1989) writes with bitter irony, referring to them as “stars” or “professionals” with different degrees of “photogenic qualities”.



Thus, the director not only employs the montage to reveal the deception of *Das Ghetto*, and implicitly that of filmic fiction and documentary – and of document – *per se*, but also makes use of a multitude of stylistic aids. There is, first of all, the utilization of audio, which contrasts with the original silent shots of *Das Ghetto*. *A Film Unfinished* boasts the presence of three sound components: the voices of the afore-mentioned actors and of the commentator, a soundtrack, and the almost constant crackling of the film projector. It is worth pausing awhile to consider these last two elements. Both blend with the images in an organic manner to the point of constituting a single signifier. Israeli composer Ishai Adar's soundtrack is made up of gloomy tones, and presents a particular analogy with the *Theme from Schindler's List*, composed by John Williams for Steven Spielberg's 1994 film.

It is not easy to find the music score for Ishai Adar's theme, but if one listens to Williams' main motif and that of *A Film Unfinished* one notices the marked similarity, save for the dissonant tones of the latter. Given the thematic affinity of the two films, and the global fame of Spielberg's, it is possible to postulate an intentional relationship between the two soundtracks, and it appears – despite the risk of being accused of over-interpretation – that the dissonant twist in Adar may be seen as an attempt to detach himself from the universe narrated by Spielberg. Spielberg, in fact, despite the tragic nature of the events described, concludes his film with a scene in color of the Jews who survived the Holocaust placing a stone each on Oskar Schindler's tomb, whereas Hersonski places the story of Czerniaków's suicide at the end of her narrative, and associates the "end of the Jews" in the ghetto with the reinstallation of the films in their archive by means of a visual simile (moreover in black-and-white, after a brief passage in color shortly before the finale). Along with the soundtrack, as mentioned before, the film reel manifests its presence throughout. As the film moves forward, the sound of the projector becomes progressively less perceptible, reaffirming the nature of memory, especially of the textual kind. This is reiterated by the insistent use of announced utterances. The film begins and ends with the manipulation of the very reel that the spectator is about to view; the viewing is meta-textually inscribed in a frame where it is repeatedly possible to see the projector; a meta-spectatorial system (the survivors/witnesses) acts as a counterpart to the viewer, creating a further short circuit. Thus, once again there is the restatement of how memory is a process of construction, and how texts must be decoded in the light of their intentions, and not as *true* in themselves. Hyper-mediation (Bolter and Grusin 1999) is also to be seen in the massive use of slow motion and still images, with further enunciative markers on certain highlighted details (essentially the images of the camera operators among the Jews).

This rough analysis demonstrates the utter importance of treating the filmic text, in this case a document or documentary, in the light of a semiotic analysis, which can reveal its internal functioning. Without a semiotic analysis, all the components observed above would remain unexpressed. At the same time, however, the importance for semiotics to interface with other disciplines has also emerged, in the cases considered up to now with the disciplines of aesthetics and history, so as to be able to have at one's disposal the necessary contextual (or, if we wish, inter-textual) elements. However, the heart of the analysis seems to me to be semiotics itself, which supplies the meta-language, the data and the fundamental hermeneutic models for the disciplines with which it co-operates.

#### 4. New perspectives

Coming now to the present I would like to cite the work of a scholar who, in my opinion, brilliantly combines the semiotic approach with a transdisciplinary outlook. I am speaking of Slavoj Žižek, whose work on cinema (for example 2001, 2004, 2006, 2010, 2011, 2011),<sup>2</sup> although he is often accused of being too "bricoleurist", seems to me may point in a fertile direction. This author's research is multi-focal, but here I wish to concentrate on what he has to say about the

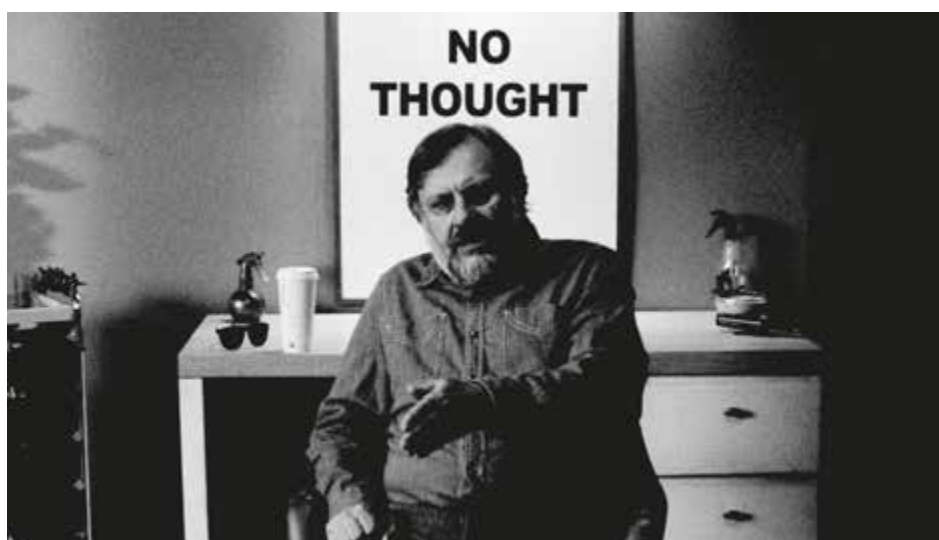
2 Those cited are only some of the works dedicated to the cinema which, in fact, transversely spans all of Žižek's work.



interpretation of society in an ideological key and about the psychoanalytical approach. The premise is that Žižek's work is always based on the text. He produces his analyses starting from texts, in good part cinematographic ones. In other words, his is an atypical semiotics of culture, which traces the great ideological morphologies within the textualities produced by society. Essentially, he re-proposes Michail Bachtin's concept of ideologeme, in its turn re-worked by Julia Kristeva, for whom the text is a device of "translinguistic productivity" where "several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another" (Kristeva 1980: 36). The cinema as a key to the interpretation of society, able to tell us how cultures function, is one of the great paradigms which mark the bases of Žižek's theorizing. In fact, if we think back to *A Film Unfinished*, we can see in it an unfolding of numerous intentional and, this implies, to some extent ideological layers, able to tell us much about determinate cultures. Here is where the importance of semiotics – and of semiotics of cinema – resides, in the ability to identify the rhetorical and discursive mechanisms useful for mapping the ideals of the cultures which have produced and which receive a film, through a series of sections which:

1. must not undermine the transcendentality of the finished work,
2. may act beyond the question of whether a film is or is not based on a univocal grammar, treating it from manifold angles.

Over and beyond Žižek's writings, I should like to mention two films, directed by Sophie Fiennes, in which he is the protagonist. These are *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema* from 2006, and *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology* from 2012. In my view, both these films furnish evidence that semiotics of cinema should move in a transdisciplinary direction, perhaps with a more decided focus on determinate dynamics of sense. Both movies portray Žižek moving within reconstructed sets from more-or-less famous films in the history of cinema. In *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema* he actually speaks from poor Linda Blair's bed in *The Exorcist*, from the stage in *Blue Velvet*, from the white space in *Matrix*, from the cellar in *Psycho*, and so on. What is proposed here is a Lacanian interpretation of the current construction of desire with the film camera as starting-point, an interpretation which Žižek draws from the films themselves, treating them as symbolic spaces. The same thing, if we think of it, which Michel De Certeau did in the case of films of demonic possession (2002). The focus, therefore, is psychoanalytical, but on a semiotic matrix, and Žižek focalizes both on the narrative dynamics of the texts which he is examining, and on their formal or meta-formal ones, as in the case of the interpretation of the spatial construction of the Bates Motel in *Psycho*.



**Figure 3.** Slavoj Žižek in *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*, speaking from the world of *They Live* (Carpenter 1988)

Often, however, the analyses, which refer more strictly to the internal mechanisms of film remain unexpressed, and the focus is essentially narratological. This is a choice of Žižek's that one might object to since, as I attempted to demonstrate previously, stylistic components play a fundamental role in the construction of sense. In *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*, the focus shifts from psychoanalysis to ideological analysis, and the methodology of the film-video-essay is the same. The texts are analyzed from within, by literally being entered. Inside them are scattered the ideologemes (a word which Žižek does not use) with which it is possible to map imaginaries.<sup>3</sup> The connections are intertextual, and from a socio-semiotic point of view social phenomena, too, become texts to be read as if connected to films.

## 5. Conclusions

There is much that could be said on this subject, and I have only scratched the surface a little. Nevertheless, this brief journey through time and through theories had the aim of demonstrating that there exists a living space for the semiotics of cinema, a discipline which on account of its methodology can truly tell us how sense emerges from film. It must not suppurate in analysis for its own sake, but propose itself as an instrument that is always open to the horizons of interpretation of other disciplines. Semiotics must identify what is to be read in a text, and the procedures according to which it is to be read. Subsequently, dialogically, it must decide according to which aspect.

During the *Virality of Extreme Images* (May 23, 2017) symposium at the University of Potsdam, I had the opportunity to view a propaganda video produced by Isis to indoctrinate young viewers. Not so surprisingly, this video showed no images of battle. On the contrary it contained, both in its form and in its narrative content, many of the *tòpoi* on which the big Hollywood blockbusters are based: aliens (already in themselves blasphemous) and apocalypses, rapid disjointed montages, and so on. This is where the importance of semiotics, and of film semiotics, lies. It can identify the *tòpoi* in which such videos are grounded, comprehend their structure, understand where they derive their ideological power from, and connect it to the current troubled circumstances. For reasons, which we cannot discuss here, cinematographic texts, and more generally filmic texts, occupy a privileged position in this complex and fluid environment. In conclusion, all this goes to show, that semiotics of cinema must not die, but is indeed more important than ever.

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<sup>3</sup> On the idea of ideologeme in cinema cf. Surace, forth.

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# “TOM’S GONE. HE LEFT THE FILM”. WHEN FILM CHARACTERS FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE SCREEN START TO INTERACT

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## **Abstract**

Though the quote in the title is from Woody Allen’s 1985 film *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, the phenomenon that characters from a film-within-a-film relate to their audience or vice versa is much older. As early as 1924 the projectionist in *Sherlock Jr.* (played by Buster Keaton) stepped inside the movie just shown. In his case it was only in a dream, but several examples throughout film and television history present the screen as something permeable that the characters can easily go through.

After embedding this stylistic device in a general model of filmic reflexivity, the paper will start from films or television shows in which on-screen characters and their own audience talk to each other. On a scale of increasing interaction between the two worlds, a next step shows objects changing sides. Ultimately, the screen that used to be a “fourth wall” becomes completely pervious and characters are able to cross the boundary and move from one world to the other. The various audiovisual texts will be categorized and discussed with regard to the role the *screen passage* plays within the diegesis. The paper will end with a presentation of the aesthetics modes chosen to visualize the actual passing through.

## **1. When movies refer to themselves — A comprehensive model of filmic self-referentiality**

Screen passages are very special examples of filmic reflexivity. Filmic reference to itself as a medium is as old as the medium itself. It can be found in every genre and different levels of reflexivity can be observed. In much the same way, there is not just one single function of these textual strategies. In order to deal with the topic in a comprehensive way, a model has to be developed which covers the entire range of observable textual strategies and practices relating them to the double nature of film as a *sign system* and as a *socio-cultural system*.

The approach I have chosen for my model<sup>1</sup> is based on the work of the Italian semiotician Ferruccio Rossi-Landi (1977 [1975], 1985): his concept of sign work and a schema of social reproduction derived from the fundamental process of production–exchange–consumption. And film is also subject to this fundamental cycle of *production* — *exchange (or distribution)* — *consumption (or reception)* culminating in the *product* (on top) (Fig. 1), both in the material (including the economic) and in the semiotic sense.

On the production side is the most obvious form of self-referential discourse, often called film-in-film.<sup>2</sup> After a film has gone through the process of distribution there is the second prominent moment of the cycle: film reception — going to the movies, watching a film.

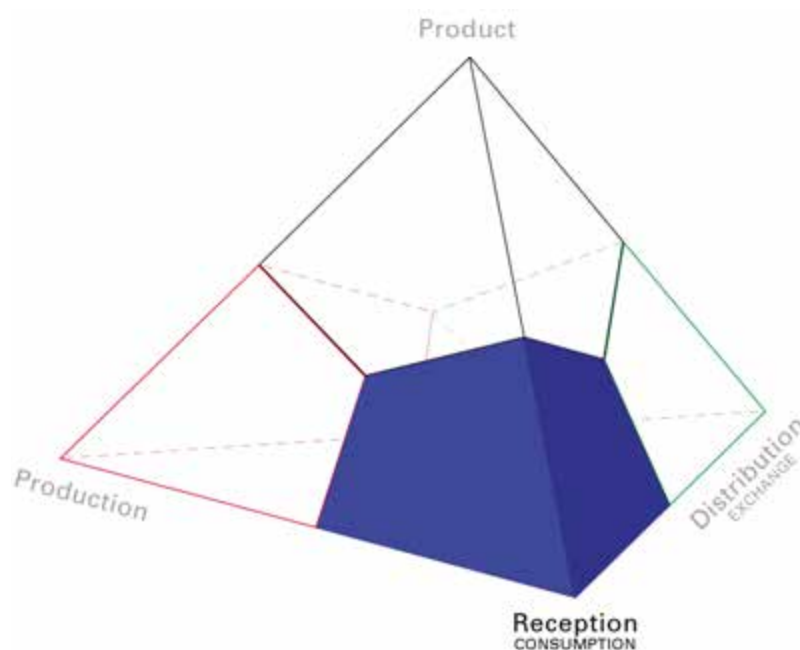


Figure 1. Model of filmic self-referentiality.

## 2. Reception: a film is (supposed to be) shown

*Consumption* or *reception* in the “world of the audience” is the third stage in the cycle. Stories deal with the people watching a film either by going to the movies or at home, but also with the movie theaters as such, the people working there, the showing of a film. Filmic references to the whole cycle including reception are indeed almost as old as film itself. In 1896 two Frères Lumière films with the main title *L'Entrée du cinématographe* were released: one (no. 250) shows the audience leaving the Empire Theatre on London's Leicester Square, the other one (no. 275) presents the premises in Vienna. Just five years later, we step inside the movie theatre and watch the screenings in two films and their topic is my point of departure: a very special relation between a patron and the movie on the screen.

Like the first, partly lost film *The Countryman and the Cinematograph* (R.W. Paul, GB 1901)<sup>3</sup>,

1 For an overview on the model, cf. Withalm 2007.

2 An 1899 film of the Lumière Brothers showed the audience for the first time a cameraman shooting a parade of decorated cars (*Concours d'automobiles fleuris*, FR 1899, n° 1009).

3 R.W. Paul described the film in his catalog of works: “This amusing novelty is a representation of an animated photograph exhibition and shows the stage, proscenium and screen. The first picture thrown on the screen is that of a dancer, and a yokel in the audience becomes so excited over this that he climbs upon the stage, and expresses his delight in pantomime as the picture proceeds. The next picture (within the picture) is that of an express train, which rushes towards the yokel at full speed, so that he becomes frightened, and runs off at the wings. The last scene produced is that of the yokel himself, making love to a dairy maid, and he becomes so enraged that he tears down the screen, disclosing the machine and operator, whom he severely handles” [<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/444455/synopsis.html>, accessed 26 March 2017].



*Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (Edward S. Porter, US 1902) shows a simple guy, a yokel, who goes to the movies for the first time. At one point he mistakes the events on the screen — a kissing couple<sup>4</sup> — for reality, tries to grab the guy and tears down the fabric. In his film *Les carabiniers* (FR/IT 1962), Jean-Luc Godard lets Michel-Ange (Albert Juross) behave in the same way when he watches a young woman in the bathtub. But the screen can also be destroyed from the other side, from behind. In the *Man From U.N.C.L.E.* episode “The Never-Never Affair” (Joseph Sargent, US-NBC 1965, s1-ep25), an enemy agent is shot and crashes through the screen, just as a guy on a motorbike escaping a chase in *Another 48 Hrs.* (Walter Hill, US 1990) did.

### 3. “Is there a doctor in the house?” — Film characters talking to their audience and vice versa

True, all the men in the previous examples interact with the movies, so to speak, but in a very material sense, and they remain in the “real world”. However, the next examples show the very onset of actual communication, of dissolving the boundary: the members from the two separate worlds seem to see each other and are able to communicate.

It starts with the girl Red, usually known as Little Red Riding Hood, and the Wolf in *Little Red Walking Hood* (Fred [Tex] Avery, US 1937). Right in the middle of their chase and fight, the Wolf asks her to stop because a man and a woman, or rather their shadows, move slowly from the right to the left at the bottom of the picture, “Hey, Red, just a minute, let’s wait till *these people* here get seated, and we’ll go on with this thing.” Already a year later, in *The Mice Will Play* (Fred Avery, US 1938), a patron in the audience is able to speak to the on-screen characters and even save the life of one of the protagonists. Four little boy mice sneak into the laboratory of Dr. I.M. Nutts, start to fool around and try out the various medical devices. While one looks through a telescope, three mice carry a syringe to pierce Johnny in his buttocks. They start counting “one, two, ...”, but before reaching “three” and finishing the act, the silhouette of a woman appears on screen. She throws her hands high in the air and yells “Don’t do that!”. The three of them drop the syringe, pouting, “We never have any fun”.

*Thugs With Dirty Mugs* (Fred Avery, US 1939), a cartoon spoof of the 1930s gangster movies, has members of the two worlds talking to each other. When the shadow of a man enters the screen from the bottom, the gangster boss on the screen — named Killer Diller and “played by Ed.G. Robemsome” — draws a gun, points it directly towards the audience and yells, “Well, you sit right down back there ’til this thing’s over, see!”. The poor man does as ordered, but in one of the following scenes, he tips off Captain Flat Foot Flanigan as to the next plans of the gang.

### 4. “Is there any spinach in the house?” — Objects changing sides & dangerous interactions between screen and audience

Since interaction takes place in several progressive stages, at the next stage objects can already pass through the screen. Unfortunately, in most of the cases it turns out to be quite perilous when the boundary between the two worlds becomes permeable.

The first example is yet another Tex Avery animated cartoon. In *Daffy Duck and Egghead* (Fred Avery, US 1938), Egghead sets out to shoot ducks but is disturbed by the black silhouette of a man on the screen. Egghead whispers, “Sh! Sit down! There’s a duck in here. Sit down!”. The guy, however, stands up a second time to change places and when he gets up for the third time, Egghead just shoots him. In a later cartoon, *Bacall to Arms* (Robert Clampett, US 1946), the spoofed Bogart character (Bogey Gocart) from the feature film *To Have– To Have– To Have–* etc. shoots the horny Hollywood Wolf because he was flirting with Laurie Becool.

<sup>4</sup> According to the *Edison Films Catalog*, he “evidently thinks he recognizes his own daughter” [no. 135, September 1902, 81–82; <https://www.loc.gov/item/00694324>, accessed 31 October 2017].

However, dissolving the barrier is not at all confined to Warner cartoons of the 1930s and 40s. *Circuito chiuso* (Giuliano Montaldi, IT 1978) opens right before the afternoon showing of a Spaghetti Western in a neighborhood cinema in Rome. During a classic shootout towards the end one of the gunslingers (played by Giuliano Gemma) fires his gun. A man in the audience screams and falls to the side, dead. The film-on-screen claims two more victims in the audience before it finally stops on its own. Ballistics reveals in the end that the bullet came from a gun dating back to 1863.

Contrary to these last films, the lethal shooting in *Smorgasbord* (aka *Cracking Up*; Jerry Lewis, US 1983) does not start in the film. Warren Nefron (Jerry Lewis) tries to commit suicide in a hotel room and has chosen a rather complicated way: a rifle is propped up on a table with the trigger connected to the doorknob, Warren places himself between the muzzle and the TV set, and phones the room service for a bucket of ice. Unfortunately, the door is locked. Warren has to get up and open the bellboy. A shot, the television screen cracks, and one of the on-screen gunslingers is dead. The second one aims at Warren and the bellboy, and fires. A second crack on the screen appears and the young man is gunned down.

## 5. Screen passages to and from

### 5.1. “I ought to be in pictures”. From the seat into the movie

Film has fascinated its audience from the very beginning of motion pictures, and people dreamed of being in the movies. Hence, (day)dreams of characters who envision themselves to be within a film was a device used fairly often to amalgamate the world of those watching a film-within-the-film and the world of the film-within-the-film they were watching.

Nobody can actually enter a film scene, except in a dream, like in the famous *Sherlock Jr.* (Buster Keaton, US 1924). Buster is a young man who is “employed as a moving picture operator in a small town theater”, as explained in a title, but he really wants to be a detective. He is in love with a young woman (Kathryn McGuire), but his rival (Ward Crane), a bad guy, has stolen a watch from the girl’s parents. Buster is falsely accused and forbidden to see her again. He goes back to his picture show and starts the film. Up in the booth he dozes off, his dream self leaves his body, looks back on his sleeping self, and steps out of the booth. Down in the theater he walks up the aisle, steps onto the stage, and enters the screen. First there is the door of a house, but within a second the scene quickly changes — something characteristic both for a dream state and a movie — and “the Boy” (as the character is called) is subject to a quick montage. In the film-within-the-film titled *Hearts and Pearls*, Buster can finally act out his dream persona, the renowned detective Sherlock Jr., and succeeds in solving the mystery of a stolen string of pearls. Back in reality, the case of the stolen watch is also solved, and the two lovers are reunited.

To enter a movie plot in a dream is one thing, to really step into the film on the screen, to perform a so-called “screen passage”, is quite another thing. But when bullets manage to change sides, why should not people be able to do so too...? Some of the characters do not enter the film of their own free will, but are somehow “transported” into the movie. All of a sudden they find themselves in the middle of a film, confronted with strange and foreign worlds.

In the case of the eleven-year-old Danny Madigan (Austin O’Brien), a golden magic ticket that once belonged to Harry Houdini makes the boundary between the worlds of *Last Action Hero* (John McTiernan, US 1993) pervious, and allows ignited dynamite sticks to bust through the screen into the movie theatre during the private screening of the latest Jack Slater movie. The explosion hurls Danny into the film and onto the back seat of Slater’s (Arnold Schwarzenegger) convertible racing through Los Angeles.

Also a bit on the mysterious side are the means by which Kwai Chang Caine (David Carradine) enters a martial arts home movie in the episode “Flying Fists of Fury II: Masters of Illusion” of *Kung Fu: The Legend Continues* (George Mendeluk, US-WB 1995; s3-ep18). Since Caine, as a Shaolin priest, is known to the seasoned viewer as being able to go back in space and time, or enter limbo (a twilight zone between here and the other world), why shouldn’t he be able to step into a film? The main plot of the episode centers on mysterious accidents on the set of a martial arts movie about the life of the famous fighter Li Fong, whose soul is apparently caught in an old film reel. Caine tries to save this restless soul by stepping into the film. With the help of Lo Si, The Ancient (Kim Chan), he will have the power “to meld, to be one with the film” and enter the screen. Though the film catches fire, Caine is able to leave the film/screen just in time.

In other examples the protagonists are using some strange gadgets that cause the transition, like in *Pleasantville* (Gary Ross, US 1998). David (Toby Maguire) and his sister Jennifer (Reese Witherspoon) fight for the new strange remote control, are swirled into the TV set, and have to learn to cope with life in black-and-white when they land in a TV marathon of David’s favorite 1950s sitcom.<sup>5</sup> In the case of “The Tale of the Midnight Madness” (*Are You Afraid of the Dark*, s2-ep2, D.J. MacHale, CA-YTV 1993), it is a film reel (an old silent movie about a vampire, very much in *Nosferatu* style) left by a mysterious man at the Rialto, an old movie theater, in order to save it from closing. One evening *Nosferatu* (Christopher Heyerdahl) steps out of the film and bites the manager. Pete (Eddie Robinson), a student working at the cinema, manages to enter the screen — while his colleague Katie (Melanie Wiesenthal) starts the last reel — and to destroy the vampire in the traditional way through exposure to sunlight.

Contrary to all these examples, the censor (Janusz Gajos) in the Polish film *Escape From the “Liberty” Cinema* (*Ucieczka z kina “Wolność”*; Wojciech Marczewski, PL 1991) does not need any mediating object. The film is set in the last days of the old communist regime in Poland. It tells the story of a local censor and the events he has to cope with that take place at the “Liberty” cinema just across the street from his office. During an afternoon projection, the characters, or rather the actresses and actors of the screened Polish melodrama titled *Daybreak*, suddenly start to ad-lib, and refuse to continue with the plot.<sup>6</sup> One character asks to speak to the censor. When he comes, Malgorzata (Teresa Marczevska), the leading actress of the film-within-the-film, confronts him with his former life before he became a censor and all the ideas long forgotten. In the end, he even manages to walk into the off-screen space of the film into a new kind of reality: a foggy roofscape where he meets actors who complain heavily about the way he has censored them and cut them out of movies over the years.

## 5.2. “People from a piece of film have decided to go AWOL”. Out of the movie and into the real (?) world

Screen passages can go in both directions. Many film characters leave their world of celluloid and step out of the screen. The best-known example is possibly Woody Allen’s *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (Woody Allen, US 1985). Cecilia (Mia Farrow) uses the movies to escape from her bleak everyday life in the 1930s in general, and her abusive husband in particular. Her current favorite film, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, tells the story of a bunch of rich New Yorkers, and the adventurer and hobby-archeologist Tom Baxter (Jeff Daniels). In the middle of a scene in a luxurious

5 Other examples are *Amazon Women on the Moon* (episode *Murray in Videoland*; Robert K. Weiss, US 1987), *Stay Tuned* (Peter Hyams, US 1992), or in the “The Terror of Tiny Toon” episode of *The Simpsons* (*Treehouse of Horror IX*, s10-ep4.2, Steven Dean Moore, US-Fox 1998).

6 Actually, it quotes *The Purple Rose of Cairo* not only with regard to the story line, but also in an almost material sense. A film critic has the idea to show the US movie. During the screening the two projectors get mixed up and, accidentally, the two movies are projected one over the other. Eventually, Tom Baxter, the character from the 1930s film-within-the-film *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, ends up in the late 1980s clinic from *Daybreak*.

Manhattan penthouse, Tom suddenly turns away from the conversation with his friends, looks straight into the audience and addresses Cecilia, who is puzzled about whether he really looks at her, “My god, you must really love this picture. – Yes, you! You! – This is the fifth time you’re seeing this”. And – very much to the shock of the on-screen characters and the patrons in the audience alike – he leaves the film and steps out of the screen.

The “Demon of Illusion” (Robin Atkin Downes), so the name of the character, is the reason for the invasion of villains from old horror movies in “Chick Flick”, an episode of *Charmed* (Michael Schultz, US-WB 2000, s2-ep18). He wants to destroy the three Halliwell sisters, the most powerful good witches of all time: Prue (Shannen Doherty), Piper (Holly Marie Combs) and Phoebe (Alyssa Milano). When Billy (Chris Payne Gilbert), the good movie character, starts a fight with the demon, they accidentally fall out of their movie. The demon releases several movie killers into present day San Francisco. Finally, the sisters learn that the demon “is travelling in the print”, which means they have to go into the movie with the help of Phoebe’s potions and destroy him. They find the demon, and can leave the film in the last minute before Prue causes the filmstrip to melt in the projector.

Though not actually demons, the two characters from an old film in the episode “From Out of the Rain”, are as lethal in their actions. In this episode of the British sci-fi show *Torchwood* (s2-ep10; Jonathan Fox Bassett, GB-BBC 2008), Ianto Jones (Gareth David-Lloyd) takes his colleagues Owen Harper (Burn Gorman) and Gwen Cooper (Eve Myles) to the Electro, an old cinema from his childhood. The program of old local street scenes is suddenly interrupted by pictures of a circus and a sideshow. The projectionist is unable to turn off the projector, but eventually the film stops. Ianto is convinced that Captain Jack Harkness (John Barrowman), their boss at the Torchwood Institute, was among the attractions. When the friends leave, shadows pass behind him, and, later, others from the mysterious sideshow called the “Night Travelers” follow. According to Jack Harkness, the Night Travelers “left a trail of damage and sorrow wherever they performed”. The two sideshow characters keep on stealing people’s breath, tears and saliva, and summon all their colleagues.

## 6. Screen passages: plotlines & film aesthetic devices

Passing through the threshold between the two worlds is not confined to any particular genre or period of film history. As different as they are, there are some common traits. Let’s start with the characters stepping out of their film-within-the-film. Most of them are perfectly aware that they are characters from a movie they’re leaving – much to the surprise and anger of their fellow characters. Various members of the rich in-group in *Purple Rose of Cairo* argue with Tom Baxter to stay on. Without him, the story cannot continue. Tom, on the other hand, has to find out that life in the “real” world is not at all like life in the movies. Learning how to make love “without fading out” is just a minor problem compared to the fact that his movie money is not worth a dime.

Within his movie, it was difficult to convince Slater in *Last Action Hero* that he *is* just a movie character. However, as soon as he and Danny step out of the film into New York, he literally has to learn the hard way that real life is very different: smashing a car window with his bare hands does hurt, guns have to be reloaded, and getting shot outside the movie can be lethal. Danny figures that the only chance to keep him alive is to bring him back into his film. At the theater, there is still the world of Jack Slater on the screen where nothing can harm him, but no way to enter it. Help comes finally from the Grim Reaper, who has passed through the screen of Bergman’s *Det sjunde inseglet* (*The Seventh Seal*, Ingmar Bergman, SE 1957) earlier in the movie. Danny panics, but Death (Ian McKellen) has not come to take him or Jack away. Following Death’s advice, Danny finds the stub of the magic ticket and takes Slater back into the movie where his chest wound is no longer fatal.



Movie characters are used to know what to do and what to say, or, as Billy in "Chick Flick" explains to Phoebe, "I am those lines. That's how I was written. [...] Everything I've ever known, understood, touched, it's all been scripted". With one of them gone, the script does not help anymore, they have to improvise, rewrite the film. When Billy points out that he only knows what's been written for him, one of the sisters figures out that probably the villains can only be killed in the same way they found death on screen. Now they know how to make the movie psychos disappear.

Captain Jack Harkness and his team in the *Torchwood* episode are also confronted with difficulties fighting bad guys. Finally, he also goes back to the fundamentals of film to destroy the deadly Night Travelers. He captures them again on film and exposes the undeveloped film to light.

"Trapped" is a good word that describes the situation both before and after the screen passage. It may define the fear of those stepping into a film, because there is always the danger that they cannot get out in time before the film ends, as Lo Si has warned Kwai Chang Caine in the *Kung Fu* episode. The same problem happens to Pete in "The Tale of the Midnight Madness" and the two Halliwell sisters in "Chick Flick". They all need assistance from outside. In all these cases the physical film strip running through the projector is crucial. For instance, Prue Halliwell rewinds the film to give her sisters time to jump out before the end.

Sometimes also the film characters feel, or are really, trapped in the film, like Li Fong in the amateur film of his training in "Flying Fists of Fury II", or the Night Travelers in *Torchwood's* "From Out of the Rain". Captain Jack Harkness explains to his colleagues why the villains left the film in the first place: "If cinema killed the travelling show, maybe this is their way of fighting back, their only chance to escape before every old movie theatre and piece of film has gone. What better way to get revenge?"

Since film is more than story arcs and dialog lines, the question, what does it actually look like when characters step out of or into a film, is central to the discussion. Both the complexity, and the extent of special effects used to show the passing through the screen, depend primarily on the budget of the production in question. As a consequence, if a film (or an episode of a television show) contains multiple passages, sometimes only a few are actually depicted in detail. The rest happens, so to speak, "off-screen". In the case of "Chick Flick", the events are accompanied by a whoosh sound. However, not showing the act can also have dramaturgical reasons, as at the beginning of "From Out of the Rain", when Ianto sees only moving shadows out of the corner of his eye.

Since in many examples the film-within-the-film is in black-and-white, the character has to change in the moment of transition. When entering the movie, the characters decolorize, like Pete, Caine, David & Jennifer, or the Halliwell sisters, and Phoebe Halliwell comments her changes right away: "Check me out! I'm retro". Those stepping out of grayscale, on the other hand, change into color, like Tom in *Purple Rose of Cairo*, or the Night Travelers in the *Torchwood* episode. The sole exception is Billy in the *Charmed* episode. Since he remains in shades of gray, Phoebe has to apply make-up to his face and hands to help him blend in. In *Pleasantville* it's the other way round; when color hits the small town (as a metaphor for sexuality and love of life), David has to help his mother with gray make-up.

In most of the examples mentioned, the characters about to leave the film are slowly detaching from or peeling off the screen, thus becoming three-dimensional. Whereas the screen appears to have the quality of a soft plastic foil for those who are able to leave the film, for all the others it is rather a pane of glass separating the two worlds — again, the moment of being trapped. Right after Tom has decided to jump off the screen and talk to Cecilia, one of his friends from *Purple Rose of Cairo* tries to follow him, but when moving towards the screen, she feels her face pressed against the invisible barrier. The same happens to Phoebe and Piper in "Chick Flick". The moment they try to get out of the film, they bang right into the screen.



Both actions — stepping into and stepping out of a film — are sometimes visualized in specific ways. In two examples (the “Flying Fists...” episode of *Kung Fu: The Legend Continues* and “The Tale of the Midnight Madness”), the passage through the screen is viewed from the side in an extreme acute angle<sup>7</sup>. Both in *Last Action Hero* and in the *Charmed* episode, a similar point of view is chosen at one moment. The “Midnight Madness” example, however, includes yet another camera movement. When Pete approaches and touches the screen, the camera moves in a quarter circle arc to the right until the two worlds — movie theater and film — are shown as parts of a split screen: the movie theater is on the left in color, the old film in shades of gray is on the right side. When Pete reaches through the screen, first his hand and then his body turn black-and-white. *Escape From the “Liberty” Cinema* even goes one step further. The camera completes a semicircle as soon as the Censor has entered the film, until it shows the film from behind the screen.

With the use of CGI, filmmakers have many more techniques at hand. In *Pleasantville*, David and Jennifer start a fight over the new strange remote control and accidentally push a button. Suddenly, they start to dissolve into patterns of the horizontal lines television images are composed of and are sucked into the television screen. The image starts to wobble until the siblings are fully integrated into the sitcom world.

A very special special effect accompanies all screen passages in the film *Last Action Hero*. Whenever something or someone changes sides, no matter which way, the movement is introduced by a blueish glow, haloing the characters with a kind of Kirlian effect. Oscillating between a magical and a physical perspective, this visualization is definitely appropriate. Movies are made of light and energy after all...

## 7. A short and very personal coda

The closest moment to a screen passage I have ever experienced was the poetic use of 3D at the very end of Tim Burton’s *Alice in Wonderland* (US 2010).

Throughout the film, Absolem, the Blue Caterpillar (voiced by Alan Rickman), was one of the central characters, who popped up several times and interacted with Alice (Mia Wasikowska). The last time she met him he turned into a chrysalis. At the end, when Alice is onboard the trading ship, a blue butterfly lands on the shoulder of her blue coat. She looks at the butterfly, greets him with “Hello, Absolem”. He flutters away, right towards the screen, out of the screen, and into the audience, dancing over our heads, while the screen slowly fades to black before the end credits appear.

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