

From *Hebe* to *Encontro*, what's disputed? Matrices of the national talk show¹

De Hebe ao Encontro, o que se disputa? Matrizes do talk show nacional

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ABSTRACT

Despite the growing popularity of the talk show in Brazil, academic interest in its history is still rare. At the same time, the reference we have is associated with the American model consolidated in Brazil by Jô Soares. This paper focuses on the analysis of a second kind of these programs, less known, inaugurated by Hebe Camargo (1950 – *TV Paulista*) and whose contemporary example is *Encontro com Fátima Bernardes* (Rede Globo). Focusing on Cultural Studies and the contribution of the Foucauldian concept of discursive formation, this study recovers television matrices and values that constituted, over almost seven decades of Brazilian TV, this kind of national talk show focused on feminine aspects.

Keywords: Historicities, talk show, Brazilian television, Cultural Studies

RESUMO

Apesar da crescente popularidade do *talk show* no Brasil, ainda é raro o interesse acadêmico por sua história. Ao mesmo tempo, a referência que temos é normalmente associada ao modelo estadunidense consolidado por Jô Soares. Este trabalho privilegia a análise de uma segunda linhagem de programas, inaugurada por Hebe Camargo (1950 – *TV Paulista*) e cujo exemplo contemporâneo é o *Encontro com Fátima Bernardes* (Rede Globo). Com assento nos Estudos Culturais e aporte do conceito foucaultiano de formação discursiva, este estudo recupera matrizes televisivas e valores em disputa que constituíram, ao longo de quase sete décadas da TV aberta brasileira, essa linhagem de *talk show* nacional com foco no feminino.

Palavras-chave: Historicidades, *talk show*, televisão brasileira, Estudos Culturais

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MATRIZES



INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH TALK SHOWS have been an important object of production and consumption in Brazilian television – along with soap operas, newscasts and variety shows – research in the country still does not follow international literature². While Anglo-Saxon references make little distinction between terminologies referring to program types, be they journalistic or humorous, in Brazil, both critics and producers seek to differentiate debate and interview shows, more related to journalism, and talk shows, rather marked by entertainment characteristics³. Ambiguously, such disputes mark regularities in the historical process of the genre in the country.

This paper is a result of research developed by the authors between 2011 and 2016 focusing on a historical and cultural approach to Brazilian talk shows based on Cultural Studies. The results indicate the constitution of methodological tools to assist us in the identification of Brazilian TV matrices, with its conventions and values in dispute. Such instruments presented here are applied in the framework of talk shows hosted by women which had – or still has – conversation as a core strategy, and which trigger and mark what the critics sometimes rejected and sometimes recognized as characteristics of the talk show. In this sense, it is worth noting how apparently ambiguous relations between the familiar atmosphere, the populist and popularesque tone, the entertainment, the values of public interest, authenticity, topicality and other references to journalism correspond to regularities of the Brazilian talk show.

The approach presented comprised a historical analysis with reference to the theoretical field of Cultural Studies based on the notion of structure of feeling, taken as an analysis dimension through which it is possible to understand cultural transformations and articulations between different temporalities operated in a particular program. By means of this theoretical path, the concept of this TV genre as used here exceeds the dimension of categorization or classification of television programming, and acquires a methodological character, i.e. it is appropriated as a tool to operationalize the analysis of programs, their conventions, continuities and discontinuities. For the empirical research, it was necessary to build alternative paths for the analysis of the programs, given the lack of open access audiovisual archives in the country. Thus, in order to recollect Brazilian television memory, we resort to the material available about the programs (especially in video sharing platforms) and to the voices adjacent to audiovisual products (especially television critique). Understanding of the meanings of Brazilian talk show – definitions, values, comparisons – in dispute throughout the history of TV in the country was tracked in opinion pieces, interviews, advertisement, and articles about Brazilian TV shows⁴. It is worth

² Some examples of this approach can be found on Clayman and Heritage (2004); Corner (1999); Ekstrom, (2001); Jones (2008); Livingstone and Lunt (1994); Lunt and Stener (2005); Martinez (2003); Mateu (1998); Önebring (2003); Timberg; Erler (2004); Tolson (2001).

³ A discussion about how *talk shows* combine information and entertainment can be found on Silva (2009). In a similar perspective, the term *infotainment* is appropriate as a dimension of anchoring to the understanding of programs, such as the *talk show*, that have the link between information and entertainment as main communication strategy (Gomes, 2008; Gutmann; Gomes; Santos, 2008). The use of the term becomes popular due to an extension of the contemporary academic debate about the approaching between journalism and entertainment.

⁴ The references to newspapers and magazines will be identified throughout the text by the name of the vehicle, date and pages.

noting that the television matrices approached here do not represent any type of timeline, cartography or classification of Brazilian programs, but rather highlight those that appear to be more relevant in opinion pieces regarding this genre of talk show.

This article begins with an approach on the place of history in Cultural Studies, with Raymond Williams' study (1979, 2011b) in particular, through the notion of structure of feeling. Attached to this, we demonstrate that the historical analysis of TV goes beyond the chronology of programs and focuses mainly on disputes and confrontations between the different definitions, interpretations, comparisons and evaluations that mark what we consider talk show. Therefore, Jason Mittell's contributions (2004) about the meaning of this television genre as a cultural category and his appropriation of Michel Foucault's (2010) notion of discursive formation are relevant milestones for the study of television historicities. Following that theoretical and methodological path, we take the talk show as object of analysis. In this article, we explore an aspect of talk shows established in television programming based on the popular and the image of the hosting women. The difficulty and ambiguity in defining these products, as well as the refusal to legitimate the programs, are evidence that the disputes transform and challenge Brazilian talk shows.

Thinking of Brazilian talk show historicities means to think about agencies of hegemony. The notion of discursive formation shifts the focus of the analysis to the historiographical disputes found in the discourses produced about these programs. Hence, in this historical and cultural approach of TV, the television critique takes the place of a cultural practice that contributes methodologically to the identification of the different meanings disputed over television and its productions in different historical times. Critiques are not a mere exposure of an opinion or personal point of view, they reflect the cultural and historical context in which discourses are disputed (Silva, 2016).

From this framework, we delve into a broad time frame – from the 1950s to the 2000s – to track down tensions regarding the definition of the genre. What definitions of talk show circulate in the Brazilian press? What aspects are highlighted by critique and production as conventions? What aspects are discarded? In order to answer these questions, we resort to mainstream media in the country: newspapers *O Globo*, *Jornal do Brasil*, *Folha de S. Paulo*, and *Estado de S. Paulo*; magazines *Veja*, *IstoÉ*, *IstoÉ Gente*, *Amiga TV*, *Manchete*, *Contigo*, and *Marie Claire*; websites *Terra* and *Observatório da Imprensa*⁵, as well as historical documents and books available in national collections: the Multimedia Archive of São Paulo Cultural Centre, Museum of Image and Sound, Brazilian Cinemateque and Museum of Television, all located in the city of São Paulo.

⁵ It is worth mentioning, also, the web site TV Pesquisa, available at: <<http://www.tv-pesquisa.com.puc-rio.br/>>, organized by the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, which has transcripts of articles on a wide variety of issues.



TOWARDS A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS IN THE CULTURAL STUDIES FRAMEWORK

The Uses and Values of Literacy (Hoggart, 1973), *Culture and Society* (Williams, 2011a), and *The Making of the English Working Class* (Thompson, 1987) are considered groundbreaking works of Cultural Studies, published in the late 1950s and early 1960s. With separate pathways and purposes, the three authors find in history a common path to think about culture in its process of formation and transformation.

If history appears to be an axial assumption in the formulation of the concept of culture as a process, today it still appears as a privileged place for the analyses of various cultural products. Lawrence Grossberg (2010) defends the project of Cultural Studies as an analysis of contexts experienced in discursive and material terms. The author believes that political discourse in contemporary times starts with the dispute of the nature of the modern, as a means of rebuilding a *past* that still strongly marks the present. Through this perspective, we understand Cultural Studies as a rich field for the constitution of approaches about the historicity of communicative and cultural processes.

In *Culture and Society* (2011a), Williams reformulates the concept of culture in such a way that it would remain as a central concept of Cultural Studies. Taking culture as an entire way of life involves considering the strong links between life and material structures. Thus, it is possible to notice that at least two elements are relevant for Williams' notion of culture: 1) the link between personal experience and structure; 2) the possibility of changes in the order of culture, which became an intellectual project for the author – as well as political: the possibility of the emergence of a new class, new power relations. In order to also consider these elements – and so many others – Williams sought, throughout his work, to define an analytical concept that articulates such dimensions, that would allow a concomitant look into its structure (the more rigid aspects of society) and the one lived in daily life (the more flexible, able to understand mutations). For such, he formulated the cultural hypothesis he named structure of feeling.

The structure of feeling articulates forms of expression in the social context. Therefore, in the analysis proposed by the author, it is possible to apprehend social changes by means of works and vice versa. That is because, according to Williams, conventions are born from the structure of feeling, i.e. the elements recognized consensually (and tacitly) in a certain historical period. As Gomes explains, Williams understands that

changes in artistic conventions are never casual or the result of mere technical choices, all the changes in methods of the various forms of art are primarily related to changes in the structure of feeling of a given society. A convention, in

this sense, is always a method created to give expression to a new way of feeling (Gomes, 2011b: 40).

Seeking to analytically operationalize the structure of feeling, the dominant, residual and emergent categories proposed by Williams (1979) are employed to describe dimensions of the different temporalities that constitute a cultural process. In understanding what is legitimated as dominant in contemporary times, it is necessary to consider the alternative and resistant ways that have developed in parallel and before it. These forms are seen as residual, that which was hegemonic in the past and still acts in the present as residual and/or emergent, a dimension that would enable transformation, breaking ties with that which is dominant in favor of new conventions. Thus, by appropriating Williams' examination concepts regarding the modes of historical constitution of the talk show, the difficulty lies in grasping the transitions and displacements of meanings, values and practices in the production and reception of television programs, observing how a particular structure has been or was experienced. This cultural analysis allows us to see the moments of tension and domination, the disputes within a genre and its conventions.

Our emphasis in Cultural Studies also allows for interdisciplinary research and to correlate concepts from what the products, processes and phenomena studied indicate. The need to understand the disputes that circulate on the talk show and around the definitions and values of the programs, coupled with the fact that we have little access to audiovisual fragments of these products, is what made us use the concept of discursive formation, by Michel Foucault, in association with the television genre, as proposed by Jason Mittell (2004).⁶ In empirical terms, the formulation was productive to our study for allowing the shift from a focus on the historiographical analysis to the disputes of meanings about talk shows found in discourses, especially regarding the television critique. With access to this material, it was possible to direct the focus towards grasping the displacements that operate together with what we socially reinforce as *convention*.

Associated with the perspective of Cultural Studies, genres are cultural forms subject to contextual changes, which takes us away from the concept of typology of television programming and supports the idea of production of meaning, whose discursive, mediatic and cultural specificities are in permanent transformation. Raymond Williams (1979) argues that, for the recognition of a genre to occur (in his case, literarily), it is necessary to consider two facts:

first, the existence of clear social and historical relations between some literary forms and the societies and periods in which they were originated or practiced; second, the

⁶We know the differences of affiliation, method and goal of research between Raymond Williams and Michel Foucault. However, it is important to emphasize that, in the historical development of cultural studies, the notions of discourse, power and position of subject by Michel Foucault were important methodological tools for the analysis of social representations. Therefore, this study approaches Foucault's assumptions from the approach proposed by Jason Mittell, who considers the television genre also as discursive formation and allows an approximation with the disputes visible in television critics.



existence of undoubted continuities in literary forms through and beyond societies and periods with which the products have these relations (Williams, 1979: 182).

Williams calls attention to the mobile, mutant and flexible nature of genres that articulate with culture and society. When we consider the television genre as an operationalizing concept of historical analysis of the talk show, and not as a category for defining this type of program, we reject the idea of rigid structures and stress the centrality of displacements, discontinuities and disputes. Jason Mittell (2004) shares this same assumption, defining television genres as a cultural category: a set of culturally established conventions subject to constant transformations. Thus, the concept acts in this research not as way for identifying a type of program or whether a program is a talk show or not, but as a place to verify disputes, tensions, continuities and ruptures through the programs and their modes of definition, making us recognize them as such.

Methodologically understanding genre as a cultural category means paying attention to the amount of intertwining texts and contexts present. The contextual dimensions of conventions are highlighted in this intertwining, that is, in programs, in the content that circulates and refers to them in newspapers, magazines, parody, social media, letters from readers, in the academic critique, in the awards, etc. (Mittell, 2004). And if, as Mittell argues, genres are not cultural consensus and are a spiral of textual and contextual elements, of active discursive practices, we bet on the idea of discursive formation as an analytical dimension through which it would be possible to grasp the displacements and ruptures that operate together with what we socially reinforce as conventions.

Considered a transition work, *Archeology of Knowledge* (Foucault, 2010) clarifies that history cannot be just a chronology or a unit, but a series of displacements and ruptures that constitute specific knowledge. Thus, regularities are not organized over time in a linear, progressively deductive and permanently static way, but are built by continued crossings.

Although he approaches language studies and some of its concepts, such as sign, meaning, and enunciation, Foucault considers discourse a way of constructing knowledge through language, and this discourse makes itself present in practices governing knowledge and, therefore, approaches Discourse as both constructed by society (it is from actions that we approach discourse) and by its constituent (the one who defines how to act). The author combines language and everyday practice, as a way of acting and speaking. The author's analysis is focused, above all, on the conditions of existence of these statements, that is, the contextual situation that allows us to speak and how to speak, setting limits and silences.

It is at this point in particular that Cultural Studies authors approach Foucault's contributions. With regard to the notion of discourse, Stuart Hall considers that

[...] Just as a discourse defines acceptable ways of talking and writing intelligibly about a topic and of conducting oneself, so by definition it also limits and restricts other ways of talking and writing in relation to the topic or constructing knowledge about it (Hall, 1997: 44).

For Foucault, discourse does not appear in a single text, but in a series of articulated texts and practices. Not only is the discursive uniformity relevant, but also the silences and what is not being said and that generates ruptures and disputes around the act of being able to speak. When a discourse reaches some level of crystallization and is dominant, a discursive formation is occurring. This does not happen detached from social relations, but rather concatenated with them, establishing forms of power distributed in the social fabric.

Based on this and articulated to the concept of structure of feeling, we sought to identify the disputes, the game of repeated dispersion that has answered for the recognition of the talk show in Brazil. That is, we sought to identify order, correlations, positions, settings and reconfigurations that allow us to understand which aspects are historically disputed by critics, producers and the audience as conventions (Silva; Gutmann, 2015). The structure of feeling helps us think about this process by valuing the tangle of different temporalities and understand the dominant elements in transformation, alternative forms constituting and disputing hegemony with new forms. In turn, discursive formation is employed as resource to read such elements in paratexts⁷ and catch disputes. It works as an analytical concept for understanding the stability of certain enunciations, silences, and tensions. The concepts are articulated in the analysis, as we shall see, but seek to give account of different and complementary properties in the historicity of the Brazilian talk show.

TALK SHOW IN TRANSITION

Brazilian television in the 1990s experienced a moment of ambiguity: while the channel Manchete TV brought innovation to Brazilian TV drama, especially with the soap opera *Pantanal*, SBT TV reinforced the more popular nature of its programming through the import of Mexican soap operas and continuous investment in talk shows. At that time, Globo TV also invested in talk shows as a means of maintaining its position as top-rated TV channel. They launched

⁷ For now, we take paratexts, term originally developed by Gerard Genette (2009), as discourses that limit a text (in this case, the programs). Although we acknowledge the conceptual complexity of the term, for the methodological purposes of this article the idea of paratexts allowed the creation of the look for the definitions of program that appear in ads and advertisements, vignettes, program schedule, etc., as well as comments, values, analysis and also definitions built on the program, that appear, for example, in interviews, articles, and television critique.



Domingão do Faustão and bet in a new trend with *Linha Direta*, a crime stories program which mixed journalism and drama (Ribeiro; Sacramento; Roxo, 2010: 217). Therefore, the TV kept the strategy initiated in the previous decade: the popularization of content in various formats. Talk shows did not escape this trend: although one of its matrices has been established around political humor, as consolidated by Jô Soares, a fair portion of the programs that spawned their elements and started to be associated with the genre at that time had variations of popular nature (populist, popularesque) as a legitimization strategy⁸.

Departing from this context and the theoretical and methodological assumptions discussed above, we traced the TV matrices that forged the main elements, regarding the talk show, of programs such as *Hebe*, *Hebe por Elas*, *Silvia Poppovic*, *Casos de Família* and *Encontro com Fátima Bernardes*. This analysis is neither concerned about creating a timeline of television programming nor about mapping programs. We rather seek to unravel the spots of tension, continuities and ruptures that constituted forms of the *talk show*.

Present in the ground zero of television, Hebe Camargo corresponds to various television matrices: the female hostess, the variety show, and the late-night talk show. In the 1950s, Hebe participated in musicals and soap operas, gaining sympathy and recognition from the audience. From her televised living room, the hostess consolidated herself on television and established a style that would last decades on TV screens. *O Mundo é das Mulheres* (The World is for Women) exhibited by TV Paulista (now Globo TV) in 1955 had as proposal to have five hosts interviewing one representative from the male political field. As a well-known singer for her trajectory on radio stations in São Paulo, Hebe had musical acts and gained notoriety as interviewer.

According to *Veja* magazine, *O Mundo é das Mulheres* performed “simplistic interviews”, book releases, shows, fashion shows, social promotions (Os Ditadores..., 06 Apr. 1969). The conversation marked the space created by the hostess and the living room style was criticized, especially if compared to interview programs hosted by women with a more journalistic approach such as *Dia D*, by Cidinha Campos, broadcast on Record TV channel at the time. At that moment, it is clear television critics desired to distinguish between journalistic interview and forms of entertainment interview.

For Hebe, it was a style of interview that marked her trajectory and had been consolidated with the Sunday show *Hebe Camargo*, in 1966, on Record TV. Maintaining essentially the same proposal – “interviews, music acts, some debate, all based on the lady’s sympathy “receiving her guests on a couch” (Sanchez, May 4, 1984) – Hebe and her guests created a typical living room chat. The strategy was to build a scene of familiarity being led by the hostess (interviewer) and

⁸The term popular evokes meanings that vary greatly depending on the theoretical or conceptual approach. It is not the aim of this article to discuss and explore the notion of popular, neither carry out an analysis of the representation of the popular in these programs (that can be seen in França, 2006). The goal, here, in the limits of what opinion pieces and programs show, is to retrieve elements that cut across the formation of the matrix of the talk shows.

It was the critics and the instance of production that called attention to elements of popular programs present in this variation of programming and, by that, could not be absent from our analysis.

her friends (interviewees), placed there as familiar subjects. The program was exhibited by Tupi TV, Bandeirantes TV and later established on SBT, where it stayed from 1986 to 2010 and had its name shortened to *Hebe*.

Through her program, Hebe Camargo consolidated on TV a performance marked by the role of the woman. A glamorized female that evokes the place of celebrity and, at the same time, of the family woman, housewife, defender of morals and good customs. Her body represents somehow the object of female desire, through her ostentation of expensive and sophisticated clothes and accessories, her always neatly combed blond hair, and dresses that accentuated her body curves. At the same time, she stands, in her lines, as a person of the people, a Brazilian woman who identifies with the feelings of ordinary people.

This relationship between familiarity and informality had as strategy the performance marked by the public-private symbiosis, by which the hostess positions herself in her discourse, giving her opinion on topical subjects, and through explicit cuddles with celebrities. Hebe was an author of catchphrases (such as “cute”, “cuteness”), and had the habit of kissing her guests in the mouth, the famous *Hebe’s* smooches that functioned as stamps of legitimation.

In her show, she explored debates with themes considered popular, such as eroticism, gossip, separations and macumba, usually in a discourse of defense of public morality associated with patronizing policies of the masses. The live audience was a crucial piece of the show, operating as a representation of the spectator that exercised fascination on Hebe. In that sense, the process of popularization of this model of talk show in Brazil, which has *Hebe’s* show as matrix, is influenced, at first, by a charismatic dimension of the host, based on explicit distinction strategies. Hebe spoke towards the masses and to the masses, but she positioned herself as a celebrity. Her speech, body posture, and clothes forged the populist practice of audience seduction via ostentation of the conservative hegemony of capitalism.

The conventions institutionalized by *Hebe’s* show positions the host as a television reference – her program was the most watched in all TV networks she worked at – and had different nomenclatures. Despite textual marks indicating a proximity with the dominant model of talk show (a notorious hostess, a live audience, informal interviews, music, celebrities), critics would sometimes criticize it and insert it in uncertain categories: variety show, female show, talk show. The centrality of intimate issues and the domestic environment gave visibility to this (other) matrix of talk shows, now with less emphasis on journalistic practices and more focused on the popular traditions of Brazilian TV. From Hebe, and because of her, it is possible to think of how this matrix, distinct from the hegemonic model established by Jô Soares, has assumed its



then singular model, being established in the national television scenario as an alternative model of talk show.

This scenario of cultural dispute around the definition of the television genre reinforces the prerogative of the authors here addressed: that the genre does not emerge only from textual resources, but from the discursive places and values assigned to them in the threads of conjuncture. Thus, dominant and alternative models coexisted together in the program schedule of Brazilian TV, challenging the limits of one another. At the same time, understanding the meanings on the talk show through Foucault's conception of discursive formation helps us capture dispersions, disputes that configure shared meanings about programs and their relations, presented below. By taking Hebe as mediatic matrix, whose elements of dominance are, over time, disputed, ratified and also reconfigured, we corroborate the hypothesis of cultural structure of feeling, by Raymond Williams, as we understand conventions as live structures that alter, alternate and constitute, in a given moment, different temporalities. For this conception, we seek here to understand transformations happening in a continuous process that articulates dominant, archaic, residual, emergent and new elements.

The nomenclatures variety show or talk show had the function to distinguish a kind of conversation in relation to journalistic interview. Since the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, journalists sought the consolidation of news space on TV, a strengthening process of the interview as a place of authority and journalistic recognition, as can be seen in the excerpt below:

It is strange what happens in Brazilian TV. While some are fighting for regulation for journalists, other professionals in the business keep breaking the law. That happened, believe it or not, during the "Moacir Franco Show", where the humorist-host-singer, acting as journalist, casually interviewed the former president of the Union of Journalists, Audálio Dantas [...]. (Folha da Tarde, 2nd August, 1978: 20).

This way, for television critics it seemed necessary to find a different definition that could configurate another way of understanding and consuming interviews on TV. When Jô Soares inaugurated the nomenclature talk show in Brazil, in the 1980s, taking advantage of a moment television culture was being widespread worldwide, the term seemed appropriate to convey this variation (interviews permeated by attractions). However, it was not used by the press and TV stations at first to define *Hebe's* show. This would only happen in the 1990s.

Despite the fierce dispute with journalism, other programs hosted by women appeared in the program schedule to discuss social problems that were

not covered by recognized interview programs, which preferred political topics. Vida Alves claimed to be in the forefront of television by airing the program *A Hora e a Vez da Mulher* (Excelsior TV, 1970), discussing controversial themes for the society of that period, such as divorce and the third gender (Silva, 2012). Her guests were people who lived the situation discussed and/or experts in the subject in question.⁹

The context for the multiplication of this model, in the 1980s and 1990s, is closely related to the new social position women acquired, gaining certain space in the labor market, but still having the everyday life as a reference for television conversation. That moment of political openness allowed to discuss more controversial subjects which were censored before for attacking directly patterns of behavior of the Brazilian patriarchy and certain conceptions of morality. In this new scenario, Hebe Camargo's show also reconfigured itself to catch up with the new expectations about television and the female figure. With two weekly programs in the 1990s on SBT channel, *Hebe* (premiered in 1986) and *Hebe por Elas* (in 1991), the hostess discussed the political and social problems of the country in a less cordial tone than before, criticizing, often with severe tones, forms of government and corruption from the first years of democracy (Silva, 2012). With this new posture, the Paulista Association of Critics of Art considered the program *Hebe por Elas* "an alternative for those who seek information and entertainment" (Reis, 1993, online), resembling *Jô Soares Onze e Meia* in quality.

According to a report by *Jornal do Brasil*, the origin of *Hebe por Elas* is *Canal Livre*, a show with a different trajectory in television. *Canal Livre* premiered in 1980, broadcast by Bandeirantes TV channel. It was an interview program with strong journalistic content, but from the 1990s it had an evening version with a debate nature. Hosted by Silvia Poppovic in its first years, *Canal Livre* aired news stories, interviews (or polls) and, then, a debate with the aim of provoking controversial subjects and introducing heated discussion (Tavares, 03 Apr. 1988).

Also in the 1980s, *TV Mulher* (broadcast by Globo Network between 1980 and 1986¹⁰) invested in the conversation and subjects associated with the female audience projected by Brazilian TV at that time. Placed in the morning program schedule, it had in its first version journalists Marília Gabriela and Ney Gonçalves Dias as hosts. The show featured known journalists as legitimation strategy, along with experts, a characteristic of the field. Sexologist Marta Suplicy caused controversy at the time for approaching the subject of the female orgasm and making use of the terms penis and vagina in her lines. The interview conducted by Marília Gabriela brought, in a given moment, elements of journalism and entertainment, which leads us to recognize *TV Mulher* as a reference for the

⁹Testimony given to the project Memory of Brazilian TV, the Museum of Image and Sound, São Paulo, 1980.

¹⁰In 2016, Viva TV Channel presented a new version of *TV Mulher*, hosted by Marília Gabriela.



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insertion of emerging elements in programs that followed it. Ney Gonçalves Dias, in an interview for UOL website, states:

On the ending of the program Gabi interviewed a person for up to 20 minutes. Everybody wanted to be interviewed by Gabi. She was able to bring [to the program] lawyers, judges, singer Elis Regina... She attracted a lot of people from several fields (Pimenta, 2016).

Thus, as a dominant element, the reproduction of a domestic environment and everyday subjects constituted approximation strategies with so-called women's interests, and the debate nature of the program, based on journalistic parameters, started being absorbed and disputed as convention. Although politics was a recurring theme in these programs, the main subject would turn to private life, as defined by Clodovil, host of the show *Abre o Jogo* (1992, *TV Manchete*): "I'm looking for the thing that is inside the house, the affection, the family, the only place where you will not be stabbed in the back" (Souza, 31. out 1992).

This kind of talk show offered an alternative to the dominant model consolidated by Jô Soares: it broadened the traditional notion of public sphere, targeted to the *intelligentsia* (a characteristic of Jô always emphasized by the critics and the audience) directed to political themes, the sensitivity of domestic life, interpersonal relations, and the hardships of daily life in experienced and felt aspects (Silva, 2012: 13).

If, on the one hand, the television critique shows a prejudiced image of the housewife (alienated, with no interests beyond the stove), the proliferation of these programs in television programming enabled a new positioning of women, more connected to what happens of relevant in the world, as attests a report by *Jornal do Brasil*:

Broadcasters have chosen this type of content [...] they have as principle the theory that the evening audience is no longer the housewife that once was only interested in cooking, beauty and cutting and sewing. Women's frivolity was replaced, it seems, with a type of viewer who is interested in more relevant things of the modern world (Reis, 1992, online).

This repertoire enabled the conditions for journalist Silvia Poppovic, at the beginning of the 1990s, to establish the late afternoon debate in television programming, reconfiguring the conventions of the talk show. As she states: "this is a schedule that I established. When I started it, nobody cared to the late

afternoon slot. I showed that it was possible to do serious things in this period” (Apolinário, 1992, online). As discussed by Silva (2012), the nomenclature late afternoon program also ended up assigning a specific type of program that, through the debate of everyday life themes, turned the ordinary person into the main character.

With a television trajectory quite distinct from Hebe, Poppovic took her experience in television journalism, especially as a hostess of the program *Canal Livre*, to the program *Silvia Poppovic*. By integrating the afternoon slot, the hostess imported the interviewing style to provoke her guests into a debate. The controversy would happen because of the subject and the divergence of opinions.

The program went through a reformulation that confirmed, but also reconfigured elements brought by Hebe, Vida Alves and Clodovil. In 1993, it took the late afternoon conversation about everyday life as central mark, as summarized by *O Globo*:

Debate out, testimony in. Impartiality out, emotion in. The new format of the program “Silvia Poppovic”, on air for three weeks, at Bandeirantes Network, aims to move the audience with testimonies of people that have lived the issue that serves as subject of the day. No sensationalism, according to the hostess (Apolinário, 1993, online).

So, the modes of reproduction of these programs allow us to see different temporalities articulated with different gradations. If, at this moment, the authority is no longer disputed by the figure of the hostess-celebrity (an element now residual in Williams’ terms), but rather by the journalist persona, the themes of popular interest remain as a dominant element. In *Silvia Poppovic show*, experts and ordinary people shared the stage in the discussion, seeking to elucidate matters of daily life, such as twins, I beat cancer, open marriage and love in the office (Apolinário, 1993, online). Poppovic also inherits from Hebe the strong presence of the live audience, but assign it another value, allowing the audience to interact with participants. The living room environment is an element of dispute. It is still present in *Hebe por Elas*, but in *Silvia Poppovic* it is identified as an archaic element. A new scenic characterization conveys relief, focused on the live audience as background and the creation of the scene as a sort of arena.

With *Hebe por Elas* and *Silvia Poppovic*, the Brazilian talk show starts to dialogue with another international trend. In certain moments, the television critique characterizes Poppovic as a mixture of Hebe Camargo – from whom she inherited the “sympathy, simplicity and empathy with the viewer” – and



From *Hebe to Encontro*, what's disputed?

Oprah Winfrey, hostess of a long-lived and successful talk show in the United States, for her expertise in leading the debate and give “relevant opinions on themes being discussed” (Silva, 18 March 1990). Poppovic explains the origin of the bet in this model:

Two years ago, I spent some time in the United States and watched various programs of testimonies. But there they are shorter and, often, issues fall into behavioral deviance. [...] I have two hours, I can go further or do something much more relaxed. My posture is not having prejudices, treating issues naturally. The audience at home will feel involved, not discriminated against. People say it's an electronic divan (Scalzo, 07 May. 1995).

If, in the 1980s, disputes happened between journalism and entertainment in the search for a distinction of the talk show, now the tension involved the popular and sensationalism, of which the hostess sought constantly to escape. In many interviews given at the time of rebroadcasting the program, in 1993, Poppovic insisted that she was not doing sensationalism, but seeking to discuss issues of public interest. Thus, another type of distinction is remarkable: the popularesque and tasteless debate programs – as considered by the critics – and the serious ones. That meant a work of production whose emphasis was on the exposure of private life without appeal to the popularesque. It also meant the competence to lead the conversation in scene. To escape sensationalism, Silvia Poppovic's team reinforced in their discourse the journalistic criteria for the selection of themes, and the hostess stood for: “I don't trivialize a story or make perverse use of personal dramas” (Na Pauta..., 1995, online). Hence, the idea shared culturally on the talk show in Brazil validates itself, since Hebe, and not from a set of consensual characteristics, but for disputes and dispersions, in Foucault's terms. The recognition here happened by contrast and tension, which reinforces the understanding designed in this paper of the sense of historicity.

Silvia Poppovic show, broadcast live, was constructed for five guests, a witness, two experts, four reporters that hinder live commenting on affairs, and the participatory live audience. The hostess made another shift compared to Hebe: celebrities played a reduced role in her show. As another element of discontinuity, the audience is not mere scenic element, the people represent themselves and are depicted as protagonist. For the design of the program, the sharing of private life on TV would be a way to help other people, as said one of the participants: “showing this [story] on television should help people see that someone has a similar story” (Scalzo, 1995, online). The exposure of details from the private life of ordinary

people looking for solutions became a kind of social function of the genre to keep and breed in television programming, as a new convention.

The programs gave special emphasis to live broadcasting as a means of authenticating the reports. Both Hebe and Poppovic appeared to be more comfortable with live action: and they believed that even mistakes should be part of the television scene, and not avoided, as reports Silvia: “the hostess must know how to incorporate variants that occur and turn them to her advantage. [...] I always let things happen” (Silvia..., 1993, online). This way, live broadcasting would also give status of legitimacy, topicality and unpredictability to the scene, reinforcing journalistic values and constituting a dominant element of this type of talk show. Poppovic recalls that a participant revealed during the program he was a HIV carrier (Reis, 20 Aug. 1995).

Although *Silvia Poppovic* show had great prestige and fair critiques for a few years, at the end of the 1990s another displacement process is identified. If the debate of daily life issues had the purpose of sharing experiences, “controversy became the ultimate goal of discussions” (Silva, 2012: 13). Poppovic adopted self-help models, creating in her program an environment for “washing dirty laundry” and a kind of televised group therapy (Scalzo, 1995, online). The ideal of offering a quality debate on public interest starts to give space to the controversies around family arguments.

In this new configuration, other evening shows arise, between the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s. *Márcia* (SBT and Band), *Encontro Marcado* (Rede TV!), *Jogo da Vida* (Band) and *Casos de Família* (SBT), among others, demonstrate the new moment of the debates, even more focused on the private and domestic sphere with topics as “he just wants to save money, my husband is gay, my mother doesn’t understand me”, as well as marital problems. In television critique, these are programs qualified with expressions like tele-arguing or tele-help, as a way of characterizing the debate converted in fights and a space for live counseling. The living room atmosphere proposed by Hebe reappears, but now simply as a domestic space ideal for receiving ordinary people as guests. At the same time, the scenic space of the conversation also reproduces forms of the scenario of Silvia Poppovic; if the audience is no longer background of the scenario, the camera frames now highlight live audience and the insertion of the hostess in this space. We have a process of continuity and discontinuity that activates, as a dominant form, conventions of different temporalities. The role of the ordinary world, established by Poppovic, is reinforced as convention. But, instead of the experts, the hostess takes the role of counselor, mediator, judge, friend, a strategy that reconfigures the sense of familiarity so present in the performance of Hebe Camargo as interviewer.



The emphasis on domestic life conflicts while searching for a positive solution, the figure of the mediating hostess that acts as counselor and ratifies her authority by her journalistic trajectory, the conversation focused on the drama of ordinary people marked the addressing of the program *Casos de Família*, hosted by Regina Volpato (SBT, 2004-2009). The hostess defined herself as the one who knows “how to hear both sides of the conflict and make people search for a way out. We avoid giving solutions, because every person knows best about their life. [...]. I'm happy to do something positive” (Moreira, 2005, online). Credibility and seriousness, in allusion to journalistic values, are terms commonly employed by her to qualify the program and, at the same time, distinguish herself from her competitors. At the time, the controversial program *Tarde Quente* (Rede TV!) was indicted by prosecutors for hiring people to interpret the testimonials and display them as if they were real.¹¹ So, an essential value to the authenticity of *Casos de Família* was the veracity of the cases reported by the participants. As distinction strategy, Regina Volpato uses the discourse of *truth* as credibility criterion and resorts to her trajectory as a journalist at BandNews. The live audience played a more active role, dialoguing with the hostess and her interviewees, constituting a kind of personification of the public sphere in scene, which represents a strong element of continuity of this type of talk show.

¹¹The same program was forced out of the air by prosecutors, in 2005, for showing of flagrant cheating and broadcasting them live, in “Test of Loyalty.”

More recently, this type of debate gains space again in the morning hours when, in 2012, the famous anchorwoman of the *Jornal Nacional* of Globo Network abandons the bench of the oldest newscast on Brazilian TV to host a new daily show on the network: *Encontro com Fátima Bernardes*. Similarly to *TV Mulher*, *Silvia Poppovic* and *Casos de Família*, which were anchored by journalists with history in television journalism, in *Encontro*, Fátima did not leave behind her professional status, but sought to create a lighter relaxed performance for her new attraction. Being built as celebrity by national magazines or, within *Jornal Nacional*, as a muse of the World Cup coverage of 2002, Fátima Bernardes' image summons both the seriousness of journalism and the role of mother and wife (now divorced), taking the domestic place in the morning programming.

Her program, however, has been developed in a series of changes and refusals. Initially, the network sought to adopt the nomenclature variety show to define the attraction and, at the same time, reject any proximity with a *talk show*. In this respect, Fátima Bernardes was decisive:

Oprah [Winfrey] is a respectable name. Now, I don't need to be a new Oprah. I want to be Fátima. Her program is very focused on the *talk show*, very engaged in causes. That is not what I want to do (Marthe, 2012, online).

The production team of the show highlighted, at the premiere, the concern with issues of public interest in a model based on the binomial information and entertainment. To establish this place, it had comedians in the production of the script and in the scene of presentation, such as comedian Marcos Veras, but also journalist Lair Rennó from Globonews. In the initial definition of the program, they avoided the term *debate* and the nomenclature talk show. However, as it reached stability in ratings and a more comfortable position for the hostess, textual elements of Brazilian talk shows became increasingly explicit: celebrities sharing space with ordinary people, exploitation of testimonials, live audience, and musical acts.

In the first stage of the program, the scenario built in 360 degrees reinforced the insertion of audience in scene, which allows us to identify a mediatic matrix present in the evening show *Silvia Poppovic* and that was also recalled *Casos de Família*. Like its predecessors, the place of the debate of media agendas with the participation of ordinary people characterized the addressing of the new attraction. The conversation, however, sought consensus and conciliation, and not controversy and dispute.

In 2013, the domestic environment of the living room, where the hostess welcomes her famous guests for an informal chat, a dominant form in Hebe's programs, is incorporated into the scenario of *Encontro*. Within this simulation of *private space*, Fátima Bernardes reflects, in a relaxed conversation with celebrities and experts, on issues of public interest from a more familiar point of view. Talking about traffic involves not only the presence of experts to analyze urban mobility, but also the testimony of celebrities on how they suffer with long delays, lack of public transport, etc. The audience loses voice as the program is reformulated, becoming a scenic element, another reference to Hebe's programs, recovering a residual dimension. Musical acts are permanent in the program and an incentive for the hostess to take an informal posture. Fátima Bernardes, for several times, showed up dancing to the sound of her guests, crouching to the ground, what converted her in a target of jokes and memes on social media. In a program broadcast in 2016, she fell on stage after trying to do a capoeira move.

Faced with so many changes, Fátima Bernardes started suggesting approaching American talk show models, which had been rejected by her at the premiere of the show. In an interview to *Veja* magazine, Fátima admitted she was a fan of two great references of daytime talk shows of the United States, Barbra Walters, from *The View*, and Oprah Winfrey (Cerqueira, 30 Apr. 2014), admitting using elements similar to those of these talk shows, in particular the chat between celebrities and ordinary people.



This way, while it reinforces the place of credible journalist, with information on the issues discussed and commented live by the voice of the expert – a dominant element in Silvia Poppovic's performance, but that also acts as an element of distinction to Regina Volpato, in *Casos de Família* –, Fátima Bernardes recovers and reframes the motto *The World is for Women*, subsequently institutionalized by Hebe Camargo in her solo programs. In the program *Encontro*, the hostess reinforces the domestic issues relating to taking care of the house, the family, cultural pleasures, as well as those related to the empowerment of women in the labor market. The approach of the subject of adoption in the episodes during the week of the premiere, for example, translated the overlapping strength of the roles of mother and wife, an architecture that puts the woman as a significant being filled by cultural meanings attributed to the mother, such as personal resignation, sweetness, kindness and unconditional love (Maia, Sacramento, Vilas Boas, 2017).

In this direction, despite bringing a cleaner version of afternoon shows, *Encontro* recovers elements of their popular matrices: she is a celebrity hostess, who sings and dances in scene, a defender of the family and good customs, befriending with celebrities. She represents the figure of the housewife, multitasking, divorced woman, reconciling the domestic life with the work routine. She establishes debates from the testimonials of celebrities and ordinary people. She uses journalism as distinction strategy, giving space for topics and frameworks of public relevance. She conveys authenticity with the presence of experts and the live broadcast of the program. Based on Fátima and the modes of convening matrices of the talk show, it is possible to attest, in the present, the intertwining of different temporalities and residual aspects that tell us about the cultural history of the talk show in Brazil.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The empirical research that originated this article focused on traces of this type of Brazilian talk show hosted by women that could demonstrate not only its origin, but, above all, its transformations and continuities. It is important to emphasize that the term talk show was not previously defined by researchers from a set of characteristics given a priori, but showed up in the evaluative disputes, in intertwining definitions and in formal elements related to the programs here analyzed, mainly evidenced by television critique, by the testimonies of the hosts in interviews and articles, photographs of the programs and, also, from excerpts of the attractions recovered from YouTube.

It was possible to observe the social meanings pertaining to the talk show in Brazil, transformed in various contexts: the talk show sometimes appeared as a space of distinction and refusal of journalism, sometimes as alternative space to

traditional journalism to explore issues relevant to Brazilian society, other times it was nothing but mere entertainment focused on the daily life of celebrities and ordinary people. We understand that these transformations of the talk show point out not only to internationalization elements – although they are also present – but also to the constitution of new conventions nationwide, especially in its popular matrix.

What happened in the programs here taken as reference – and that can be verified in others not cited in this paper – indicate the power of the concept of structure of feeling, created by Williams as cultural hypothesis and appropriated here as place of constitution of a historical and cultural analysis of these communication phenomena. The hypothesis works in this research as a framework dimension of our look on history. Hence the effort of discussing historicities of the talk show and not a chronology of programs. Also noteworthy is that, in this case, it is not the programs that validate a theoretical concept, but the way of approaching these programs, which we see here in a diachronic movement.

Thus, we sought to demonstrate that the conventions (structures) experienced during this historical process were constituted, at a given moment, by different temporalities. Therefore, the analysis proposed in this article seeks to identify the elements that configure the constitutive matrices of the talk show – the presence of the live audience, the music, the famous hostess, etc. – in their confrontations with journalism – and the values of authenticity, topicality, public interest, and live broadcasting – and with popular programs. It is possible to note that an element established as dominant is the subject directed towards the private sphere that was reproduced throughout the history of *talk shows* from this matrix, as well as the closest aspect of journalism. However, this intimate setting presents to the viewer an opposition between the exploitation of private life, appropriated by late afternoon shows, and testimonials that illustrate problems of everyday life, an approach closer to public interest.

We do not talk about *stages* or simply of convention replacement, but disputes for hegemony, a continuous process of comings and goings, an intertwining of continuities and discontinuities, dominant elements that become residual and are then recovered as dominant, new elements that constitute conventions, i.e.: we speak of “process”, in Williams’ terms.

What this article sought to demonstrate was how conventions cut throughout history, being consolidated and transformed, opening trends that summon old and new conventions. The disputes spotted in opinion pieces ratify that the concepts of structure of feeling, discursive formation and television genre allow us to see the fluidity of the social processes that involve the formation and reproduction of the talk shows that, for now, also express themselves as a place for understanding the history of Brazilian TV. ■



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