

# In the garden of delights: the dilemmas of Brigitte Bardot in Rio de Janeiro

## *No jardim das delícias: os dilemas de Brigitte Bardot no Rio de Janeiro*

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### ABSTRACT

In this article, we analyze how media reported the visit of Brigitte Bardot to Rio de Janeiro between January and April 1964, seeking to understand the relationship between the phenomenon of fame and culture. The travel of the French star contributed to the development of tourism in Búzios. We investigate the ways the actress positioned herself as a celebrity, negotiating her presence in the media. We also examine the discourses that involved the characterization of Brigitte Bardot as a female sex symbol. The conclusions indicate three striking dualities of the actress' visit to Brazil: the love and hate for media; fame and anonymity; the celebrities and the promotion of consumption.

**Keywords:** Fame, Brigitte Bardot, consumption

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### RESUMO

Neste artigo, analisamos os modos como a mídia noticiou a passagem de Brigitte Bardot pelo Rio de Janeiro, entre janeiro e abril de 1964, buscando compreender as relações entre o fenômeno da fama e a cultura. A visita da estrela francesa contribuiu para o desenvolvimento do turismo em Búzios. Investigamos os modos como a atriz se posicionou como celebridade, negociando sua presença na mídia carioca. Examinamos também os discursos que envolveram a caracterização de Brigitte Bardot como símbolo sexual feminino. As conclusões indicam três dualidades marcantes da vinda da atriz ao Brasil: o amor e o ódio com relação à mídia; a fama e o anonimato; as celebridades e a promoção do consumo.

**Palavras-chave:** Fama, Brigitte Bardot, consumo



## STARS AND CITIES

ON JANUARY 7, 1964, the newspaper *Jornal do Brasil* reproduced, on its front page, the response of *France Soir* to a telex sent the day before to Paris. The message was about the boarding of the actress Brigitte Bardot and her boyfriend, Bob Zagury, to Brazil. The short answer indicated the imminent arrival of the French actress in Brazil: “*Brigitte Bardot doit quitter Paris via Panair do Brasil aujourd’hui lundi fin après midi*”<sup>1</sup>, informed. The news was reported as a scoop and was published on the cover of *Jornal do Brasil* that day: “Brigitte’s flight is late due to bad weather in Europe, but it is expected to arrive during the early hours of today” (Brigitte..., 1964a, p. 1).

The leading newspapers in Brazil – *Jornal do Brasil*, *Diário de Notícias*, *Última Hora*, among others (Barbosa, 2013) – presented the expectation for Brigitte Bardot’s arrival who, in 1964, was one of the biggest stars of the world of cinema. At the age of 29, Brigitte Bardot landed at Galeão Airport for an adventure that would last four months – she left Brazil at the end of April 1964, a few weeks after the coup d’état had occurred in the country. Bardot spent much of her vacation time in a fishing village in Rio de Janeiro, entertaining herself in shopping centers, parties and dinners in the neighborhoods of Copacabana and Ipanema. During Bardot’s time in Brazil, articles, photos and reports about her were published in newspapers and magazines, as well as in radio and TV shows. The first moments were marked by the excitement of journalists, who were committed to discovering the exact time of her arrival to follow her landing and get exclusive pictures of the star, which caused recurrent clashes on media. The leak of private photos, the camp set at Avenida Atlântica in front of the building where she was staying, and the provocations in interviews defined the initial records of Bardot in Brazil. Gradually, however, media revealed a myth that felt at home in the country, especially after her notorious trip to Búzios<sup>2</sup> – which, in that period, was only a poor community next to Cabo Frio. Brigitte Bardot thus became more of a docile figure on the Brazilian media-popular scene.

When Bardot returned to Paris, her statement at Orly Airport about the “Brazilian Revolution” was remarkable: “I loved it, no shots were fired”, she said<sup>3</sup>. The news of Bardot’s visit to Rio de Janeiro evoked relevant moments, situations and characters from Brazil’s recent past; in this article, we reconstitute this media narrative that exposed, in a powerful way, relevant aspects of Brazilian culture. The speeches of the characters in this plot – Brigitte Bardot, Bob Zagury, and many other characters such as columnists, journalists, publicists, and socialites – provided elements to reflect about the relationship between celebrities, media and consumption.

<sup>1</sup> “Brigitte Bardot must leave Paris via Panair do Brasil today Monday late afternoon.”

<sup>2</sup> The official name of the city is Armação dos Búzios.

<sup>3</sup> Commenting on the release of the documentary *Bardot, a incompreendida* (FRA, 2013), on the TV show *Estúdio i*, of Globo News, the journalist Artur Xexéo, for example, lamented the position of Bardot on the revolution in Brazil. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2WbkwfehvU>. The statement, however, holds a strong trace of irony.

This article is part of a project that investigates the role of popular female figures on the last 150 years of Brazilian history in documental resources, especially in printed newspapers and magazines. We analyzed the tours of French actress Sarah Bernhardt in Rio de Janeiro between 1886 and 1905, arguing that her passage promoted a discussion of gender roles in the scenario of Brazilian urban sociability. She established a possible status for the new woman in a country that sought to be modern. Sarah Bernhardt formulated and managed her media representations, incisively using communication and consumption ideals to establish herself in the Brazilian artistic and cultural imaginary (Rocha & Lana, 2017).

Next, we studied the trajectory of Pagu, Patrícia Galvão. We started from the moment when she became known in media as the female figure of the Brazilian modernist movement, and then discussed the two great transformations of her profile – Pagu, the criminal, a political prisoner that was tortured; and more than a decade later, Pagu, the journalist and cultural critic. Between 1930 and 1960, she made innumerable artistic, political and cultural activities, admitting an inconstancy that made her a permanent promise of fragments that could be combined in many ways (Rocha & Lana, 2018).

This article is the continuation of our investigation of this historical frame, now through the analysis of Brigitte Bardot's trip to Brazil. The episode was pictured in two films<sup>4</sup>, but in Academia, as far as we know, no previous study has been done. In Brigitte Bardot's main biography, for example, Marie-Dominique Lelièvre (2014) mentions that in December 1964 the actress and her boyfriend came here to spend the "Christmas holidays in Manguinhos, a paradisiac Brazilian fishing community where they stayed in the house of the consul of Argentina, a fan of underwater dives [...] who owns the only comfortable house in the place" (Lelièvre, 2014, p.159). The biographer thus refers to the return of Brigitte Bardot and Bob Zagury to Rio de Janeiro at the end of 1964, when they only made a stopover before heading to Mexico, where the actress, along with Jeanne Moreau and Louis Malle, would film the soon-to-be-known *Viva Maria!* (Dancigers & Malle, 1965).

When we decided to analyze Bardot's first trip to Brazil, we sought to systematize the data of an event not yet investigated, but one that made a mark on the Brazilian imaginary of that time and was massively explored by magazines and newspapers, radios and television. The material was collected on the website of Brazilian National Library<sup>5</sup>. The date of the trip and the words "Brigitte Bardot" were used as search filters. All the material found was read and then we selected the texts that were related to the trip (in some cases, the texts were about Bardot's films, for example). Following, we reconstructed the

<sup>4</sup> The independent documentary *A Búzios de Bardot* (Pimentel et al., & Joanes, 2013), of Jones Joanes, and the short film *Maria Ninguém* (Fonseca, 2008), of Valério Fonseca.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bn.gov.br/>

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narrative of the event, identifying, among leading newspapers (*Revista do Rádio, O Cruzeiro, Última Hora, Diário de Notícias, Jornal do Brasil, Diário Carioca*), the most important moments.

Through documentary analysis methods, we identified the context of the material, the interests of those who produced the texts, the relationships between the context, the people involved and the facts narrated, and the nature of each document (Cellard, 2008). We now sum up our previous conclusions (Rocha & Lana, 2017; Rocha & Lana, 2018) and problematize, in Bardot's trip, the continuities and transformations in genre, celebrities and the media, especially considering advertising and consumer practices. The first axis of analysis inquires the gender performance: we observe Brigitte Bardot's ambiguities and contradictions when she positions herself as a woman – in the face of men, work, family, politics and culture. The second axis regards the examination of media performance: we study how the celebrated actress strategically manipulated the moments and situations when she would be exposed to the media in Brazil.

The third axis of analysis – which was crucial to our study – brings a new question: Brigitte Bardot's visit to Brazil was the first and definitive step towards the transformation of a place with very high tourist potential into the internationally known and exploited city that Búzios is nowadays. The town, which became autonomous of Cabo Frio in 1995, gave to Brigitte Bardot a homage typical of those usually destined to the founders of places, cities, and nations: a natural size bronze monument of actress' body, wearing clothes that were registered by photographs in pictures published in magazines at the time. The sculpture is located on Ferradura beach, one that is part of the "Orla Bardot". Not only the monument or the name given to this section of the beach reminds us of Bardot's visit but there are innumerable quotes about the actress across the whole city. For example, in the house where she stayed, in Pedras' street, a hotel operates nowadays and emphasizes the illustrious character like one of the "advantages" of its accommodations. A wooden sign announces: "In this house lived Brigitte Bardot in the summer of the year 1964-1965". On its website, the hotel informs that:

In the summer of 64, Marcela and Ramon Avellaneda received Brigitte Bardot and Bob ZaguryZagury, in the little house located in Pedras' street, obligatory "consulate" of friends that the couple hosted. The small fishing community, with its wild beauty and the warmth of its people, from that moment onwards would be turned into the place where citizens of 47 different nations have chosen as their "pied à terre", receiving tourists from all over the world throughout the year ("Brigitte", n.d.).

According to the text, after Bardot's visit, the small community became a relevant location of the world-class tourism. Although very different from urban centers, Búzios has gained a cosmopolitan air, a city where it is possible to consume a luxury lifestyle of the high standards of capitalism. The tourism potential that was developed in Búzios has led the website Trip Advisor to declare that, "If there is a 'beach economy', Búzios is its Wall Street. The city's beaches (over 20), international galleries, clubs and boutiques attract the elite of travelers" ("Sobre", 2019). The small population and the high income brought in by the tourists suggest that the visitors of Búzios come from the higher social classes. The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2017) indicates that Búzios is the seventh richest city in the state of Rio de Janeiro – with a population of about 30 thousand inhabitants, the 52<sup>nd</sup> among the 92 of the state. Approximately 70% of Búzios's income comes from external sources, and its main economic activities are tourism and fishing.

When she visited Búzios, Brigitte Bardot created a city marketing *avant la lettre*. The term "city marketing" appears for the first time in the 1980s in a study of the Dutch city of Apeldoorn (Braun, 2008). For Erik Braun, city marketing is often directly associated with the occurrence of some event, which is then employed as a propaganda strategy. Thus, when used to promote cities, city marketing would denote both the expansion of the marketing domain and an approach that allows cities to think from fields such as geography, economics, demography, and others. City marketing would not only be a simple expansion of the marketing field, it would imply a holistic view "directed at the promotion of a *harmonious city*, able to satisfy the requirements of different users, its citizens, investors and visitors" (Braun, 2008, p. 32).

City marketing creates a unique image for each location, a strategy that associates it with branding: "As a matter of fact, the branding of places and cities has become particularly popular in recent years. . . . A brand is more than a label or umbrella of products" (Braun, 2008, p. 35). The impression that the visitors gain from the city, through souvenirs and memories, or the image that a tourist conceives when planning a trip to a place that he has never visited, is related, above all, to a set of representations and values that transcend the idea of a simple label for a product. City marketing creates customers, which means, in this case, visitors and investors. Thus, the presence of the international star contributed to two central aspects of this process – image and customers – although the term city marketing did not exist at that moment.

In the 1960s, Daniel Boorstin (1992) analysed the relation between celebrities and tourism. According to the author, celebrities are "pseudohumans" – false as they are created as an image to be reproduced and sold – and similarly,

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tourists are fake travelers since they seek only the comfort of consumption experiences. The groundwork of Boorstin's definition is the revolution caused by a set of communication inventions – telegraph, rotating press, photography, telephone, phonograph, cinema, radio and television (nowadays he would certainly add the internet and social media). For the author, these inventions raised the expectations of individuals to the accessibility of the world and, at the same time, expanded the perception of human power to control the world. Pseudo-event is an event that was only created to be reproduced by the media and is filled with an inner and self-referential sense. Pseudo-events would become the epicenter of this new vision of reality, defining illusions while also distorting the reality of the world.

Thus, pseudo-events related to media had spread to all spheres of culture, from tourism to the book market, from the arts to morality and ethics. In this sense, traveling became a completely different experience from what it was previously. The traveler who sought the distance from the familiar in his journeys and the consequent transformation of the self after the adventure became the tourist who wishes to satisfy the “curiosity about whether our impression resembles the images found in the newspapers, in the movies, and on television. ‘Is the Trevi Fountain in Rome really like its portrayal in the movie *Three Coins in the Fountain*?’” (Boorstin, 1992, p. 116). Thus, when planning a trip, tourists search for images, for false events, for the comfort of meeting what has already been seen.

From this perspective, the development of Búzios as a place for tourism is directly associated to Brigitte Bardot's fame, who promoted the interest of visitors and investors in a community that until then did not exist beyond the few fishermen who lived there. When she stayed for four months in Búzios paradisiacal community, in contact with nature, she showed in Brazil her famous image of the star of the beach of Saint-Tropez, in the southwest of France. Saint-Tropez had similar characteristics to Búzios: a coastal community of fishermen, little inhabited and relatively unknown, marked by exuberant nature and simple life. Saint-Tropez became the tourist resort of the French jet set after receiving media attention due to the presence of Brigitte Bardot.

Until the arrival of Brigitte Bardot, Saint-Tropez was a quiet place inhabited by fishermen and visited by intellectuals: decades before, in 1925, famous journalist Colette had bought a house in Saint-Tropez. Bourgeois families, like the Bardot's, gradually arrived at the place, still too rustic to attract the elites. A scene capture by Willy Riso's camera in 1958, however, contributed to the transformation of Saint-Tropez: in the picture, Brigitte Bardot appears in plaid shorts, staring at the photographer with a cheerful, confident look, and slightly wild blond hair; her spontaneous beauty spread across the world (Lelièvre, 2014).

Willy Riso's photograph gave authenticity to the idyllic Saint-Tropez region, where, shortly before, Roger Vadim had shot the film *And God Created Woman* (Lévy, Morgenstern, & Vadim, 1956). Ginette Vincendeau (2016) argues that one of the most iconic images of Brigitte Bardot – and certainly one that was responsible for her rise to the international star level – is the opening of the film. Juliette, Bardot's character, is presented to the spectator sunbathing completely naked in a garden, lying face down.

Next, she gets up to greet a visitor, the ageing playboy Carradine (Curt Jürgens). A drying sheet hides her body but now we see, in medium close-up, her mischievous face and her long blond hair blowing gently in the wind as she bites into an apple (Vincendeau, 2016, p. 98).

Thus, the myth Bardot was created after images of sexual attraction, rebellion and hedonism, reproved by Juliette's adoptive mother who abruptly interrupts their conversation to criticize the daughter's lack of commitment to work.

In this sense, more than a shooting location, Saint-Tropez was a crucial landscape for the creation of the erotic profile of Bardot's myth. Juliette's character was portrayed by the hedonism of a life continuously in contact with the untouched nature of Saint-Tropez's beaches and with her own body: unkempt hair, half-naked and sun tan. Bardot's sensuality was thus typified as instinctive and natural.<sup>6</sup> Willy Riso's photograph and the film *And God Created Woman* mixed reality and fiction. These images were essential to the rise of Bardot's fame and the stimulation of tourism in Sanint Tropez.

In this sense, as Edgar Morin (1989) shows, the once unattainable movie stars had become human beings. "They are no longer happy demigods, they are Olympians in the sense that Homer showed us, subjected to the torments and passions of ordinary mortals, with marital problems and petty conflicts, although still endowed with a super personality" (Morin, 1989, p.128). This transformation did not extinguish the magical character of the stars, but confused dream and reality: "Marilyn Monroe e Brigitte Bardot became total, multidimensional women; screen goddesses and simple girls glittering sex and soul" (Morin, 1989, p. 19). It was precisely this kind of star – both real and divine – that put Saint-Tropez on the tourism circuit, from the unprecedented city marketing.

In 1958, Saint-Tropez became a fashionable place for a small elite of young people, the Nescafé Society, which leaves the Côte d'Azur for the old billionaires. . . . The young women of the Nescafé Society dress like Bardot, shorts and sandal, or barefoot

<sup>6</sup> The unreality of the utopian daily life of the protagonist of the film became, two years after its launch, a little real. On May 15, 1958, Brigitte Bardot settled in Saint-Tropez, acquiring the well-known property La Madrague "for 25 million francs, equivalent to 370,000 euros today" (Lelièvre, 2014, p. 77).

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and tan, slim pants with wide and colorful tops of Manine Vachon, topped with cloche straw hats. (Lelièvre, 2014, p. 97).

The biography of Brigitte Bardot describes the “epicurean” atmosphere of Saint Tropez. During the day, the city is “dead”. “No one bathes, the beaches are made for sunbathing. Life begins at five in the afternoon, with the aperitif at Sénéquier” (Lelièvre, 2014, p. 98). At night, small nightclubs are improvised in the basement of restaurants.

The hotels are crude: no room service, just a key taken in the concierge. One thousand rooms for 20 thousand tourists. . . . Saint-Tropez becomes a sensational concept, the Jerusalem of leisure society, carrying a promise of sex, optimism, eternal adolescence, and having the effigy of Bardot as the golem. (Lelièvre, 2014, p. 98).

Most of the successful *intelligentsia* who lived in Saint-Tropez before the media repercussions around Bardot did not approve the transformation of the community. “*Saint-Tropez, c’est fini*”<sup>7</sup>, grieved the writer Françoise Sagan, who represented the village’s old style of pleasure: quiet, desert, simple and relatively unknown (Lelièvre, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> “Saint-Tropez is over.”

However, despite the similarities, Búzios was not a European town. Located in Brazil, a country still in the process of modernization and urbanization, Búzios had no electricity or sanitation services, and its residents did not speak the actress’ language, having habits, values and customs very different from the ones of the inhabitants of Saint-Tropez. Instead of intellectuals and bourgeois seeking peace, there were only fishermen in Búzios – the Carioca elite visited the community during the day and returned to their mansions in Cabo Frio at night. By staying for so long in Búzios, in a simple, dimly lit house surrounded by natural landscapes, Brigitte Bardot thus exhibited an adventurous and different personality of what would be expected from a glamorous and successful actress.

Brigitte Bardot’s individual idiosyncrasy defined the course of her personal and professional career. In 1973, at the height of her performance as an actress, she announced the end of her career. She decided to be an animal-rights activist and thirteen years later she developed The Brigitte Bardot Foundation. Since then, she has retired from public life and moved to Saint-Tropez, living on the La Madrague property until today. Like Búzios, Saint Tropez honored Bardot with a 2.5 meters high and 700 kg bronze statue in 2017. Brigitte Bardot, who stands as a nature activist, has helped transform Saint-Tropez and Búzios into tourist resorts – for better or for worse. Paradoxically, her own celebrity status



was used by city marketing to mark on the tourism map places once preserved (and later considered lost paradises), transforming them in the sophisticated and predatory dynamics of contemporary tourist consumption.

### FIRST DAYS IN BRAZIL

In a black wig, like the one she wore in Paris and other places when she did not want to be recognized, Brigitte Bardot tried to arrive at Galeão Airport as an unknown person, but “the sweater denounced her” (Barreto et al., 1964, p. 7). Journalists, photographers and curious people, noticing a Volkswagen vehicle parked next to the plane, ran towards the car, “frightening the young woman to whom fame became a torment” (p. 8). She faced the crowd “terrified” and “crying” (Agitação..., 1964, p. 8).

The events that occurred when the French star arrived were dramatic. Brigitte Bardot and her friends used various tricks, all of them useless, to ward off those waiting at the airport. At last, after long minutes of anxiety, a car entered the inner lane and picked up the visitor, who did not appear before the customs authorities and left the Galeão without the luggage, as a clandestine. (Cercada..., 1964, p. 1)

When the location of the actress in Rio was discovered – her boyfriend Bob Zagury’s apartment, “at Avenida Atlântica, 1998, 10<sup>th</sup> floor” – journalists, photographers and fans tried to invade the building. To confirm the frisson and persistence to discover Brigitte Bardot, *O Cruzeiro* magazine dedicated a full page to the images of the “encirclement” to the actress, when “some hundreds of thousands of people waited in front of the building where she was” (Agitação..., 1964, p. 8), staying there for about 72 hours.

The doorman at the entrance of the building, José Antônio Mendonça, who successfully blocked the building’s invasion, gained fifteen minutes of fame: *Diário Carioca* reported details of his performance in the January 8 edition. He followed a number of procedures: “closed the building’s door, took off the door knob lock, and only allowed known visitors to enter. He accompanied other visitors to the door of the apartment to which they were going” (BB. . ., 1964a, p. 12). José Antonio was also the main character in the article of reporter Mário de Moraes, occupying half a page of the prestigious magazine *O Cruzeiro*. “Zé was pushed, kneaded, bruised and, kicked, he lived three intense days. More exalted reporters promised him a future beating. Others, more alive, tried to corrupt him. . . . Nothing done.” (Moraes, 1964, p. 89). Brave and incorruptible, the doorman Zé resisted everything.

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Meanwhile, Brigitte Bardot “suffered a nervous breakdown, shortly after arriving at Avenida Atlântica where she is staying, she expressed the desire to return immediately to France due to the siege of the press and the fans” (Cercada..., 1964, p. 1). She had to be seen by doctors, who identified a “deep nervous depression” (Agitação..., 1964, p. 8).

It was not the first time that Brigitte Bardot had been hunted by journalists and fans. In her biography, there are countless similar episodes: in different cities and countries, she disguises herself from the press, escapes from the back of buildings, requests police support, hides herself and repeatedly complains about her lack of privacy (Lelièvre, 2014). Bardot’s surprise at the harassment in Brazil suggests that the actress believed that in Rio de Janeiro few people had access to the media and knew her trajectory. *Diário Carioca* reported that the actress was upset with Bob Zagury, as she “noticed that her fiancé – who lives in Brazil – had not said the truth when he suggested the Rio’s trip to rest, claiming that “there is no one who cares much for these things of artists and few ones say your name” (BB..., 1964a, p. 1). In fact, the fans and the Brazilian journalists were not only very well informed of her arrival in Brazil, but also of her usual angry behavior of being recognized in the streets.

Ibrahim Sued revealed that the star, in the beginning of her career, did everything to attract the attention of the press, even dating all (!) the French photographers, to see her name and photograph on the newspapers! He also wrote that BB now has psychic problems, suffering from an agoraphobia – which explains her crying when she arrived in Rio surrounded by so many people. (Agitação..., 1964, p. 8)

Two photographs illustrated the article. The first shows Bardot smiling and at ease with the cameras; the second, (and larger), shows her with a frightened look and walking fast (Agitação..., 1964, p. 8). An ironic caption elucidated the images: “Two moments of the star that now fears multitudes.”

The attorney Almir Costa Seixas demanded a *habeas corpus* in favor of Brigitte Bardot, without her knowledge. Judge Hamilton Morais e Barros summarily denied the request, under the justification that “Brigitte Bardot’s case is not a question for *habeas corpus*, because justice cannot prohibit the interest of the press” (Brigitte..., 1964b, p. 5). In the decision, the judge lamented the disturbance and defined that the police should guarantee Bardot’s freedom to come and go. The journalist Pomona Politis, in her well-known column on *Diário de Notícias*, also requested a “*habeas corpus*”: “Let’s free Brigitte”. “By mistake, Brigitte Bardot must be disappointed. A famous artist, who means so much to her admirers, loses the right to intimacy and, sometimes, to her personal happiness.” Bardot would not

be anonymous in Brazil. However, it was still possible for her to reconcile with Rio de Janeiro and enjoy her stay here, which is precisely what happened later. The journalist Pomona Politis appealed that “we, the Cariocas, who are proud of having a happy city, could give Brigitte an opportunity to be what she was. Let’s allow her freedom to move, drive a car and shop” (Politis, 1964, p. 3).

News suggest that the Brazilians demonstrated to know the status of celebrity: fame brings blessings and encumbrances, rights and duties. As a star, Brigitte Bardot should perform in front of the Brazilian public whom were curious about her visit to the country or, otherwise, she should return to Paris, as Bardot herself had suggested. Wishing to stay in Brazil, a press conference was held at the Hotel Copacabana Palace. The interview was arranged by Bob Zagury, “with substantial help from Jean Fauste, *France Press* correspondent in Brazil, and Oscar Ornstein, director of public relations at Copacabana Palace”, and sought to end the “open war between the famous celebrity and the Rio de Janeiro reporters” (Barreto et al., 1964, p. 7).

Before the interview, Brigitte Bardot posed for photographs in the hotel’s well-known pool area, “while down the street, in Avenida Atlântica, traffic was bottled up as the drivers, attracted by the crowds, stopped to see Brigitte” (Brigitte..., 1964b, p. 5). Guidelines and prohibitions surrounded the participation of journalists. Oscar Ornstein warned: “no questions about her private life will be answered.” In detail, *Diário de Notícias* described: “Brigitte wore a green dress, an immense floral brooch on her chest, green shoes, and her beautiful blond hair” (Brigitte..., 1964b, p. 5).

*Jornal do Brasil* noticed, in a full-page cover reporting on the January 11, 1964 edition, that Brigitte Bardot had reserved tickets at *Panair do Brasil* to return to Paris. “Just before finishing the interview. . . she said smiling to the journalists, ‘Now I am ready to leave at any time’” (Brigitte, 1964b, p. 5). The press conference, then, was clearly a bargain between the star and the press. The words “war”, “battle” and “armistice” were often used in these early reports; the contact with the journalists sought to seal peace. Questions were asked in Portuguese, and translated by Oscar Ornstein, as well as the responses in French given by the actress.

The *war and peace* speech highlights a first scene of the celebrity production script: the love-hate relationship with the media. Media coverage of Brigitte Bardot’s arrival in Rio de Janeiro, sustained by the spirit of sensationalism, demonstrates a tabloid-style media production permeated by traps (Turner, 2009). In general, stars express indignation and discontentment due to having their intimacies invaded but, ambiguously, they are well aware that they need gossip and self-exposure for their own survival. The visibility pack between celebrities



and the media often links moral shame, humiliation and bellicose vocabulary, which are followed by the public as entertainment (Freire Filho & Lana, 2014).

Leading newspapers and magazines – *Jornal do Brasil*, *Diário de Notícias*, *Cruzeiro*, *Revista do Rádio* and *Última Hora* – reported Bardot’s interview at Copacabana Palace and highlighted that the actress preferred a common life to star life. In *Jornal do Brasil*, she would “trade everything – career, fame and money – for a single day of complete peace and quietness” (Brigitte..., 1964b, p. 5); in *Diário de Notícias*, “she left it all to be a housewife” (Brigitte..., 1964b, p. 5); in *O Cruzeiro*, “she would exchange all her glory for a quiet life with her beloved ones” (Barreto et al., 1964, p. 13); in *Revista do Rádio*, “[Bardot] admitted that she would trade fame and fortune for a quiet life” (Flashes..., 1964, p. 10) and, in *Última Hora*, “she wished to be anonymous and become a housewife. In fact, she knows how to do everything a housewife does” (BB..., 1964b, p. 2).

The *desire to be common* highlights a second scene of the celebrity production script. According to Edgar Morin (1989), the consolidation of sound cinema caused the decline of the ancient stars of the Olympus to the Earth. Brigitte Bardot is thus a remarkable character of this moment: she is an authentic new Olympian, which means, semi-divine – partly an exceptional figure, partly a banal figure. Intensified today by the demotic turn<sup>8</sup>, the feeling that celebrities are just like anyone else was consolidated in the 1960s, a time of intense transformations in media techniques.

In *A History of Beauty*, George Vigarello (2006) argues that, in the 1950s-1960s, the atmosphere of hedonism and pleasure, which marked the postwar period in Europe, contributed to the sexual liberation of movie stars. A greater presence of sensuality – necklines and freer postures – came to characterize the performance of the actresses. The eroticism would guide, from that moment, the construction of characters lived by Ava Gardner, Jane Russel, Suzy Delair and Marilyn Monroe. Brigitte Bardot, according to Vigarello (2006), brought a very personal brand – fantasy – to this new status of the “liberated star”. “Animal metaphors symbolize Bardot, especially feline allusions, adding to the ‘outer’ aspects, indices of a more primitive, and even instinctive nature” (p. 171). Brigitte Bardot – with thick lips and unkempt hair – had a “wild”, “uncontrolled” and “unreflective” beauty, which revealed “dark zones” of being. “The danced movements, the lascivious disclosures, a very particular dose of natural and anarchy, would leave the instinctive for better ‘childishness and animality’” (p. 172).

Brigitte Bardot most naturally personified the new images of the female body, such as parted lips and large breasts, as the sexual fantasies she awakens relate to the uncontrollable and spontaneous nature of her body, to her attitudes and her world view. “Brigitte lives in her rhythm, chooses her loves, abandons

<sup>8</sup> Term used by Graeme Turner (2009) to designate the importance of ordinary people on media.

them or keeps them according to a rule that belongs only to her. The solitary and devilish dance in *And God Created Woman* is the physical symbol of this: . . . dark gaze, distant grimaces, independent attitudes, different from the traditionally feminine smile” (Vigarello, 2006, p. 172). For the author, feminism, at that moment, found meaning in Bardot, who claimed the pleasure and the forgiveness of female desire. The “Lolita syndrome”, identified by Simone de Beauvoir (1960) in Brigitte Bardot’s character presents feminist qualities: the possibility of the woman following the free course of her desires establishes dissonances in the field of forces of gender relations.

Brigitte Bardot’s open, natural, spontaneous sexual aesthetic – adopted in the days after the interview, when she, for example, was photographed in intimacy scenes with Bob Zagury – does not match the image of the quiet housewife at the press conference. The headlines in the media could, on the one hand, place the star in a more appropriate framework to the conservative Brazilian society; and on the other, it could be part of the script mentioned above: Brigitte Bardot would be an ordinary woman, and there would be nothing interesting about her life to be observed. By stating loudly and clearly that she preferred the peace of anonymity, Brigitte Bardot would be demonstrating that she had not planned to come to Brazil to act as a star, but rather to be Bob Zagury’s wife.

The deal between journalists and star was partially fulfilled: in the level of harassment decreased but a few days after the press conference on January 14, *Jornal do Brasil* announced that Brigitte was seen wearing a bikini “at Manguinhos’ beach, near Cabo Frio” (Brigitte..., 1964c, p. 1). In those days, Brigitte traveled along the coast of Rio de Janeiro – also through Itacuruçá and Ilha Grande – aboard *Singoala*, one of the most modern yachts anchored in Brazil at that time, owned by the Swedish businessman Ragnar Janer. There was a “yacht dispute” to gain the privilege to take Brigitte Bardot. “The industrialist Dirceu Fontoura had offered to Brigitte Bardot his yacht *Atrevida*. The journalist Roberto Marinho entered the match with his *Miss Globo*. But Brigitte preferred *Singoala*” (Figueiredo, 1964, p. 8).

The trip on board of *Singoala*, which lasted for about a week, did not leave a good memory: when they returned to the capital, Ragnar Janer sold photographs of the couple “BB/BZ” to the press. Bardot and Bob then distributed to all media, even to those who had not divulged the pictures, a harsh public letter addressed to Janer. They confirmed that they had received the offer of several other boats to take them on the cruise. They chose the *Singoala* since Janer’s offer was not conditional on his presence on board. “Your yacht is just a small sailing boat with a single cabin that you used, forcing us to sleep on the deck”, wrote the couple. In the images, Bob and Brigitte appear hugging and lying on the boat.

# A

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The photograph shows the couple with their eyes closed, something emphasized in the letter: “the photographs taken by you without our consent on your boat are photos that you have robbed our intimacy. We trusted you, and we deceived ourselves”. In the last words, Bardot and Zagury provoked: “Have you acted like this in face of financial necessity, since your little boat needs to be renewed? We now expect the whole world to know exactly who you are and how you act”.

An international intrigue had formed. The case reverberated for several days in newspapers and magazines. Fan letters defended Bardot, and columnists discussed the situation in different sections of many newspapers. *O Cruzeiro* ironically considered that there were no Brazilians involved in the dispute. “As we said, BB is French, yes, but Ragner T. Janer is Swedish. And Bob Zagury, Brigitte’s ‘Brazilian fiancé’, is Moroccan. And Adolpho Bloch, editor of the photographs that insulted BB’s intimacy, is Russian. And Denis Albanese, the yacht’s pilot . . . is Italian. And Augusto, sailor of the said, is Portuguese” (Belém, Solari, & Viola, 1964, p. 16). For the magazine *O Cruzeiro*, certainly interested in more unpublished images, there was some exaggeration in the indignation of the couple; however, the subtext indicates that it was important for Brazil to be part of a global scandal.

The star thus had her footsteps watched in Brazil – when she had dinner at a steakhouse in Laranjeiras, the owner called the journalists, who ran to take pictures. The columnist Carlos Leonam commented: “a friend who witnessed the situation said that although he had nothing to do with the story, he also felt bad for BB and her companions. Before the confusion began, there were those who approached the table to examine the girl, looking at her like as rare animal” (Leonam, 1964, p. 3). According to Carlos Leonam, the steakhouse’s owner could have adopted more appropriate promotion strategies. “Imagine the scene: you go out to dinner with your family or a group of friends on a quiet summer night. Suddenly, not satisfied with the preference, the owner of the restaurant decides to promote himself at your expense. Would you be satisfied?” (Leonam, 1964, p. 3).

Thus, a third scene of the celebrity script was under way: the free promotion of people, places, and products through Brigitte Bardot. Even Brazilian President João Goulart wanted to see Brigitte. “After it was announced that Brigitte Bardot started a 7-day Brazilian trip aboard a yacht, ‘Ibrahim Sued informs’ that the President would welcome BB’s visit to the Rio Negro Palace” (Sued, 1964, p. 1). Just about to be deposed, João Goulart seemed to see Bardot as a good promotion opportunity for his government. The star’s presence in Rio de Janeiro thus reveals three scenes from the celebrity production pathway: the love-hate relationship with the media, the paradoxal desire to be a star and to be common, and the

celebrity endorsement of promotions and consumption. This third scene that is outlined here is taken to extremes nowadays; for example, it is normal for a celebrity to charge a fee to go to a party and, on the other hand, be freely exploited to promote events, people and places.

### ***DOLCE FAR NIENTE***

After a few days in the capital, Brigitte and Bob depart again for a trip to the countryside of the state. The exact destination was ignored, but the now-famous doorman of the Avenida Atlantica building, José Antônio Mendonça, told journalists that they had probably gone to Cabo Frio. From that moment (the end of January 1964) on, the news about Brigitte Bardot became more sparse and shorter. *Jornal do Brasil* announced: “the summer in Cabo Frio remains very sparkling. . . . The great curiosity of the season is still Brigitte Bardot” (Peter, 1964, p. 2). The comments became brief, so it seemed that the everyday normality and peace with the media were finally achieved.

*O Cruzeiro* would publish another edition on Brigitte Bardot only on April 4, almost three months after the war of letters; the *Revista do Rádio*, with smaller reports, also spent a good amount of time – about a month – without mentioning Bardot. In *O Cruzeiro*, the photos were shot by Denis Albanese and “selected by the star, being distributed to the leading newspapers and magazines. They tell how BB and BZ are spending their Brazilian vacation time on the beaches of Cabo Frio” (Belém & Albanese, 1964, p. 8). Finally, the French actress declared to be happy with her vacation in Brazil.

In Búzios, the Bob Zagury’s promise became true: no one knew Brigitte Bardot. In the documentary *A Búzios de Bardot* (Pimentel et al., & Joanes, 2013), the communities’ inhabitants who met the actress elucidate the relations of love and hate between journalists and Bardot. According to the historian José Wilson, creator of the *Brigitte Bardot Memorial*, the fishermen of Búzios became friends with the actress and, when they noticed the approach of reporters, they warned her and so she could hide. The diver Vilson Santos, for example, narrated: “nobody knew about Brigitte, if she was famous, if she was not, then suddenly, that group of photographers and reporters started to arrive wanting to see her, so we became curious about who she was.” The documentary suggests that not only Brigitte Bardot, but celebrities in general were not known in Búzios at that time, nor was Búzios part of a world that built or admired celebrities.

The actress lived like a local, and despite wearing very small bikinis, she preferred to remain discreet. She ate fish on the beach, played with children, walked with the locals: the portrait drawn by the interviews suggests a harmonious

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integration of Bardot with the place. After undergoing the tiring ordeal – the script of fame –, the celebrity could finally live in the garden of delights...

Brigitte did not spend her time “stuck in a golden cage”. On the contrary, she lived in a “happy hut”, expression used by Roland Barthes (2006/1957) to describe the trajectory of Sylviane Carpentier, Miss Europe 1953, who renounced her career in the world of fame to marry the electrician Michel Warenbourg, her childhood friend. Búzios was this parallel universe where Brigitte Bardot could be herself without paying the price of being famous. In the report of *O Cruzeiro*, her routine was scrutinized: she woke up between “eleven o’clock and noon, having a breakfast on an outdoor table in the grassy garden in front of the house. She was usually wrapped in a towel, which she then spread on the floor and lied on it for a sunbath in the most natural way, as naked as in ‘*And God Created Woman*’”. The actress thus felt “safe in her shelter, away from curious eyes and cameras, having only Bob as a witness” (Belém & Albanese, 1964, p. 12).

Bob Zagury, a Moroccan, also enjoyed the *dolce far niente* in Búzios, the conspicuous leisure (Veblen, 1965/1899). And Bob Zagury had become very powerful, at least among Brazilian males. Since the couple’s arrival in Rio de Janeiro, it was announced: “the ‘playboys’ of ‘Castelinho’ would honor their leader Zagury for the ‘conquest’ of Brigitte Bardot” (O que..., 1964, p. 4). The Brazilian boyfriend of the international star had scored a great goal and became the perfect male of the season: not only did he win the world’s most wanted woman, Brigitte Bardot but, by bringing her to the country, the Brazilian public could witness his conquest.

In Brazil, Bardot presented a duality, a remarkable feature of her short but intense media trajectory. The freedom of an adventure in an unfamiliar community coexisted with the girl who would just like to travel with her boyfriend, dreaming of a common life. Although her great fame stopped Avenida Atlântica for three days, she circulated unknown among fishermen or in the carnival of Rio de Janeiro, when she paraded anonymously on Avenida Presidente Vargas. With her pocket full of money, living a few months without electricity or running water did not bother her. She proudly declared to be a Flamengo fan, but over her stay in the country, she emphasized her differences with Brazil.

In 2014, the recluse Bardot surprised the organizers of the Búzios-France cinema exhibition, sending them a letter, written with her own hand.

St. Tropez – November 2014

Long live Búzios!

It was in this little lost and unknown city that I was the happiest. It had nothing, not even electricity – but sublime and wild landscapes, and deserted beaches, dream



beaches! “Feradura”, “Juan Fernandes”! But that was a long time ago... Búzios has changed nowadays, like St. Tropez, and became a fashionable resort, known all over the world and very trendy! I am very proud to inaugurate this ‘Mostra 2014’, which will show 4 of my movies. I have a great love for Brazil and Brazilians, I am like them, I like to dance, to sing, I like the sun, the sea and above all, I like animals, do not forget that. I send all my love from far... “me gusta da você”! Brigitte Bardot... (“Bardot”, 2014)

Brigitte Bardot’s actual seclusion and animal-activism made her star identity and public figure even more ambiguous. Without giving interviews, she seems to erase the magnetism and charisma that accompanied her for so many years. The Brigitte Bardot Foundation does not maintain any project or initiative in Búzios. Her visit to Rio de Janeiro staged a play in three acts and an epilogue, one that defines the typical trajectories of celebrities. Many of them repeat this play everyday across the world: their duality with the media, their desire for anonymity and their pain to feel exploited. The happy epilogue was to live, even for a brief moment, the garden of delights in Búzios. ■

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Article received on July 10, 2018 and approved on February 28, 2019.