

TELENOVELA AS A COMMUNICATIVE RESOURCE

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**It's hard to think of contemporary
Brazil without thinking of novelas**

(Antonio La Pastina, professor from Texas A & M University) *

RESUMO

O presente artigo reflete sobre o caso da telenovela brasileira a partir de dois eixos. O primeiro demonstra como a telenovela no Brasil se incorporou, ao longo de sua história, à cultura do país, tornando-se um de seus elementos mais distintivos e aquele que, possivelmente, melhor caracteriza hoje uma «narrativa da nação». O segundo defende a hipótese de que por ter conseguido alta credibilidade, a telenovela brasileira tornou-se um espaço público de debates de temas representativos da modernidade que se vive no país, convertendo-se assim em um «recurso comunicativo». Este, quando ativado, possibilita compartilhar os direitos culturais, a diversidade étnica e a convivência social, logrando maior consciência e motivação para práticas contra os conflitos e desigualdades que marcam a sociedade. O objetivo é entender mais e melhor como uma narrativa pensada para o entretenimento de mulheres pode chegar a essa condição. Para finalidade de exposição, cada um desses objetivos é tratado em uma das duas partes em que se compõe o artigo.

Palavras-chave: telenovela brasileira, narrativa da nação, recurso comunicativo, fórum de debates, imaginação melodramática

ABSTRACT

This paper reflects on the case of Brazilian telenovela from two main points. The first one demonstrates how the telenovela in Brazil has been incorporated, throughout its history, to the culture of the country, becoming one of Brazilian's most distinctive elements and which possibly best characterizes a "narrative of the nation". The second one defends the hypothesis that, for having achieved high credibility, Brazilian telenovela has become a public space to debate representative topics of nowadays modernity, converting itself in a «communicative resource». This one, when is activated, allows sharing the cultural rights, the ethnics diversity and the social coexistence, achieving greater consciousness and motivation to act against the conflicts and inequalities of society. The goal is to better understand how a narrative designed to

* PARTLOW, Joshua. Brazil's Novelas May Affect Viewers' Lifestyle Choices. *The Washington Post*, Monday, June 8, 2009.

Available at: < <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/07/AR2009060702401.html>>.

women's entertainment can reach this status. For purposes of exposition, each one of these goals is discussed in one of the parts that constitute this paper.

Keywords: Brazilian telenovela, narrative of the nation, communicative resource, debate forum, melodramatic imagination

PART I

THE TELENVELA TELENVELA AS "NARRATIVE OF THE NATION"

Nowadays, to speak of culture in Brazil is to speak necessarily about the "Brazilian telenovela".¹ Forty six years after its introduction, it is possible to state that the telenovela conquered the public recognition as an aesthetic and cultural product, becoming a central figure in the Country's culture and identity. It also can be considered one of the most representative phenomena from the Brazilian modernity, for combining the archaic and the modern, for merging anachronic and modern imaginary narrative devices and for having its history strongly marked by the dialectics nationality-mediatization. This condition reached by the telenovela is responsible for the quality, if not unique, at least peculiar, of being a "national narrative" that became a "communicative resource" that arrives to communicate cultural representations that act, or at least tends to act, in favor of the social inclusion, the environment responsibility, the respect of the differences, the citizenship formation.

THE TELENVELA IN THE SOCIAL AND BRAZILIAN TELEVISION SCENARIO

The central presence of the television² in a country located in the periphery from the occidental world could be described as a paradox, and more in a nation that throughout its history was represented reiterative as a society with strong contrasts, between wealth and poverty, modernity and archaism, south and north, the coast and the inland, the countryside and the city. And in fact, the television is linked with

¹ The telenovela (or *novela*) as we know it today, as television fiction's format, appeared in 1963, and could be defined as a fictional narrative of long serialization, shown daily and that ends around its 200th chapter, that is, it is aired six days per week and has an average length of eight months. When using the expression "Brazilian telenovela" we refer actually to the teledramaturgical standard accomplished and made popular by Globo TV, incorporating the importance from the Tupi TV's pioneering experience (from 1964 to 1980) and the innovative experience from the TV Manchete (from 1984 to 1998), the other networks that were responsible for the achievement of the mentioned standard.

² The television was introduced in Brazil in 1950 and throughout history, the State influenced this industry at different ways. Until today it detains the power of granting and suspending TV concessions, its policy was always to stimulate the commercial model, not having until today, strictness, there is no mass public television experience in the country. Beyond constituting in one of the biggest advertisers at the mass media, the State, particularly after 1964, during the military regimen, made the telecommunications a strategic element from its development, integration and national security policies. Further than increasing its power of interference in the programming through regulations, strong censorship and normative policies, the military government invested massively in the infrastructure, making possible to build the national networks (microwave system, satellites etc.). Currently there are six national free television networks opened in the country: Globo TV, SBT, Record TV, Rede TV!, Bandeirantes TV and Brazil TV. They are all private companies, to the exception of the last one that it is public and it was newly created (December, 2007).

the reproduction of representations that perpetuate several shades of inequality and discrimination. However, it is also necessary to recognize that it has an intense penetration in the Brazilian society due to its peculiar capacity to create and to feed a “common repertoire”, through which people from different social classes, generations, genders, ethnic groups and geographic regions localize and recognize each other. Far from promoting consensual interpretations, producing struggles for the interpretation of the meanings, this shared repertoire is in the base of the representations of a “imagined national community” that the television, more than any another means of communication, achieves to collect, express and to bring up to date in a permanent way.³

The television offers the transmission of accessible information to everyone without distinction of social belonging, class or region. At making it, the television turns available the repertoires previously restricted to the privileged traditional social institutions as the school, the family, the church, the political party, the state apparatus (Lopes, 2003: 18). The television spreads the advertisement and guides the consumption that inspires the formation of identities (García Canclini, 1995). In this direction, the television, and the telenovela in particular, are emblematic of the sprouting of a “new public space”, where the control of the formation and the available repertoires had changed hands, it is no longer monopoly of the intellectuals, politicians and governing, that is, of the ones at the commanding positions at the social order.⁴

Doubly contradictory it is the fact of such public space had appeared under the aegis of the “private sector”, where not by coincidence, the telenovela became the greatest popularity and profitability product of Brazilian television. And more, constituted under the aegis of the “private life”, since it was already defined as a narrative mainly about the family.⁵ The telenovela provides visibility to certain subjects, behaviors, products and not to others; it defines a certain agenda that regulates the intersections between the public life and the private life.⁶ Considering the telenovela from these categories, it can be said that during the period of 1960 to 1980 the telenovela structuralized itself around representations that composed an imaginary matrix capable to synthesize the Brazilian society in its “modernization” movement.

³ Benedict Anderson (1991) stamped the notion of “imagined national community” to describe the emergence of the National States in Europe at the XIXth century and associated the consolidation of the feeling of belonging to an imaginary community to the sprouting of the press and the national languages (“print capitalism”). The newspaper reading ritual is pointed as example of practice that had contributed for the consolidation of this feeling of a national community. This notion is useful to understand the meaning of the telenovelas in the Country. The act to watch these programs at a fixed time, daily, throughout almost fifty years, constitutes a shared ritual within the people in the domestic territory. People that start to dominate the narrative conventions from the telenovela and they take the standards shown in it as referential with which they start to define “ideal types” (in the weberian sense) of the Brazilian family, the Brazilian woman, the Brazilian man and also of the Brazilian corruption, the Brazilian violence etc. Seems adequate to use the notion of “imagined national community” to indicate the representations about Brazil aired by the telenovelas and the ways they produce important referential material for re-updating the concept about the nation and national identity. In the Brazilian case, as I expect to demonstrate, it is about the paradoxical fact of the telenovela, a fictional narrative, in Brazil was converted into a “narrative of the nation” and into a new public space of debate about the Country’s reality. And from this fact, I suppose to be able also to define it as a “communicative resource”.

⁴ Joshua Meyerowitz (1984) suggests that the opening of repertoires of restricted spheres for men or women, young or adults is an important characteristic of the television as a mass vehicle.

⁵ Evoking the Mexican intellectual Carlos Monsiváis, the telenovela would be a “familiar narrative about the nation”, where a war is seen as a fact where an uncle died and a city it is a place where a relative lives.

⁶ We apply to the telenovela the “agenda setting” concept as well as the “cultural forum” one. (Newcomb, 1999), as it will be seen ahead.

This modernization movement was grabbed by a narrative where the representations translated the private anguishes of the middle class families from cities as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. With the diversification of the television structure (Cable TV, video, competition increase) and with the social and political modifications during the 1980's and the 1990's (political redemocratization, new social movements, globalization process), this synthesis strength from the telenovela is dislocated to new social representations that question the earlier ones, with a modernization nature. A kaleidoscopic, multidimensional narrative of the everyday routine lived by the Brazilian people enters in scene.⁷

THE PRODUCTION OF A NATIONAL TELEDRAMATURGY OR "I SEE BRAZIL AT THE TELENVELA"

The consolidation of the telenovela as the most popular and lucrative genre from television is strongly linked with a language change carried through Brazilian writers from the experience accumulated at radio and movies. The opposition between "realistic" telenovelas, critiques about the social, cultural and political realities and "sentimental" telenovelas, or melodramas specially arranged to make viewers cry, marked the debate between the telenovela professionals, as well as the literature about this subject and the audience judgment.⁸ Beyond this opposition, it is interesting to indicate that even so "the sentimental" version (also known as "Mexican"), tries to remain far from the social and political commentary and does not admit humor, the Brazilian version, although incorporating commentaries on contemporaries subjects, it is also strongly ruled by the feuilletonic canons from its genre.

From the end of the 1960's and following the model proposed by Tupi TV⁹, the telenovelas of Globo TV had opposed to the "sentimental" style that used to dominated the previous productions, proposing a "realistic" alternative (Ortiz, 1989; Mattelart and Mattelart, 1989). This is the rupture with the model

⁷ The "telenovela time" was a creation of Globo TV in the seventies when it started to produce three telenovelas every day. This schedule time was extended through a time range delimited between 5:30 and 10 pm. With this, Globo TV synchronized the time for each telenovela and ended determining specific viewers' habits. Currently, the first time range, 5:30 pm, is busy for *Malhação*, the sole telenovela from the Brazilian television directed for a child and youth audience. It is followed by the six pm telenovela, generally with a thematic historical or romantic; the seven pm telenovela, with a contemporary subject, with a young and comic side and the eight pm telenovela (currently, nine pm), at the prime time, with a social and adult themes. Between the six and seven pm telenovela it is aired a regional 20 minutes news program and, between the seven pm telenovela and the main one, it is aired news program with the country's highest rating, with 40 minutes length. The logic that presides over to this palimpsest became classic for combining news and melodrama, fiction and reality, this continuity has been object of analyses and recurrent studies. Talking about Brazilian telenovela is to talk about the Globo TV's telenovelas. They are, with no doubts, the main responsible for the specificity reached by the Brazilian telefiction. This peculiarity is a result from a set of factors starting from the technical and industrial production mode, passing by its aesthetic and artistic level and by the authorial construction of the text, converging to the so called "Globo TV quality standard". Therefore, it is possible to attribute to Globo TV telenovelas a protagonist role in the construction of a "national teledramaturgy". The average cost of a telenovela with 200 chapters is US\$16 million, about US\$ 80.000 for chapter. A daily chapter contains, on average, 36 recorded scenes, what corresponds to a half of a feature film per day and three features films per week. There are 20 recording hours, and 27 edition hours for each chapter of 45 minutes aired (without the commercial breaks). In general a telenovela has its 60 to 70% recordings inside the studio and 30 to 40% from the recordings are made at external locations. The production involves an average of 200 people and a successful telenovela reaches around 45 rating points, a 58% share and an average of 45 million viewers.

⁸ According to a recent research, 68% from the viewers never watch the telenovelas produced in Latin American countries, as Mexico and Colombia (TGI research - Target Group Index, October 2008).

⁹ Tupi TV was the first Brazilian television network; it marked a period as pioneer at television's particular dramaturgy based at Brazilian subjects and characters. With its bankruptcy in the 1970's, Globo TV started its hegemony.

represented by the telenovela *Sheik de Agadir*¹⁰ (Globo TV, 1966), with characters with foreign names living heavy dramas, formal dialogues and pompous costume designs, located at exotic periods and places.¹¹

What I call a “communicative resource from the Brazilian telenovela” had being constructed from the telenovela *Beto Rockfeller* (Tupi TV, 1968). This paradigm brought the plot to the contemporary universe of the big Brazilian cities. The use of external locations introduced the colloquial language, a clever humor, a certain characters ambiguity and above all, a repertoire of references shared by the Brazilians. It syntonzed the liberating longings from a young audience, male and female, recently arrived at the metropolis, in search of instruction and integration at the modernization poles. The conventions that started to be adopted after this are based in the concept that each telenovela should bring a “novelty”, a subject that would differentiated it from its predecessors and that it was capable to “provoke” interest, commentaries, a debate within viewers and other media, the consumption of related products, as books, records, clothes etc. This emphasis in the representation of a contemporary life that is successively updated is quite visible at fashion, technologies, and at the references relating current events. But it is also quite visible, specifically, at the evolution in the manner as love, romance, sexuality and the relation man-woman started to be represented at the telenovelas after the 1970’s.

This option for a clear definition of time and space - the contemporary scenario is almost always located in the scope of the nation – leverages the vocation of the telenovela to a constant mimicking and renewing of the everyday life images from a Brazil that “modernizes” its own. This can be identified through two structural plans from every telenovela: the renewed sense of exploration of contemporaries subjects and a clear “demonstration effect” from the consumption standards lived by the characters and presented to the population of viewers, with the social integration possibility (concrete or not) through the consumption. This almost obsession with the present conjuncture and the fashion is accommodated to the serial and interactive structure from the feuilleton and mobilizes repeatedly the melodramatic genre as a cultural matrix, a communicability device (Martín-Barbero, 1987) and as a communicative resource.

The telenovelas plots are in general moved by opposition between men and women; among generations; among social classes; between agricultural and urban locations, “archaic” and “modern”, represented as intrinsic, simultaneous and ambivalent trends from the Brazilian contemporary life. Other dramaturgical resources as false identities, exchanged children, unknown parents, unexpected inheritances and social ascension through love are present in a recurrent way and coexist in harmony with the references to the thematic and repertoires contemporaries to the same period the telenovela is being aired.

Raised to the position of main product from a television industry of big proportions, the telenovela started to be one of the most important and wide places to problematize Brazil, from the private privacy up to the social problems. This sui generis capacity to synthesize both, the public and the private worlds, the political and the domestic issues, the real news and fiction pieces, the male and the female gender, it is registered at the telenovelas narrative that combines the formal conventions from documentaries and television melodrama. This is what, in my opinion, typifies the Brazilian telenovela and almost creates the

¹⁰ *Sheik of Agadir*. (T.N)

¹¹ The data collection related to the telenovelas for the present article was carried through by the CETVN (*Centro de Estudos de Telenovela*) – Telenovela Study Center from the School of Communications and Arts at University of São Paulo (established in 1992) and particularly inside of its project OBITEL (*Observatório Ibero-Americano da Ficção Televisiva*)- Ibero-American Observatory of Television Fiction. See: <http://www.eca.usp.br/cetvn/>

paradox of “seeing” Brazil more at this fictional narrative than at the TV news program. In the telenovelas is recurrent an identification among fiction characters and public people from reality, between the plots and real and true problems, and there is a trend for a higher verisimilitude at the told stories, this one, by the way, it is a strong request from the same audience itself.¹²

Such combination of genre and information can be found, for example, in the use of documentaries from the same period inserted at the telenovelas storyline, since *Irmãos Coragem*¹³ (1970, contemporary time telenovela) to *Terra Nostra* (1998, period piece telenovela).¹⁴ It can also be mention the reality “invasion” at the telenovela *Porto dos Milagres*¹⁵ (2001) for the use of clips of political campaign advertising with its characters during the regular TV commercial breaks, provoking a reality effect as an advertising carried through by real life political parties. Finally, I mention the incorporation of the TV news program, taken to the last consequences, and that started to be called as social merchandising (Schiavo, 1995). Still without this designation, the telenovela *O Espigão*¹⁶ (1974) showed already an environmental campaign. In recent telenovelas there was a broadcasting of NGOs works and the presence of mothers of missing children at *Explode Coração*¹⁷ (1995); the Brazil’s Landless Workers Movement (MST) and the presence of two real life senators of the Republic at the fictional mourning at *O Rei do Gado*¹⁸ (1996); the denunciation of the exploitation of child labor at *A Indomada*¹⁹ (1997); the AIDS subject at *Zaza* (1997); the marrow bone donation and the presence of doctors explaining the cancer of a young woman at *Laços de Família*²⁰ (2000); drugs and testimonies from real drug addicts in treatment at *O Clone*²¹ (2001); the urban and domestic violence, breast cancer and alcoholism at *Mulheres Apaixonadas*²² (2003); illegal immigration for the United States, drug traffic, pedophilia at the Internet and visual handicap people appearances at *America* (2005); the Down syndrome, youthful bulimia, AIDS in Africa, alcoholism and ordinary people testimonials at the end of each daily chapter at *Páginas da Vida*²³ (2006); the racial prejudice and a slum as main location at *Duas Caras*²⁴ (2008); the schizophrenia and the treatment of real mental sick people through music and painting at *Caminho das Índias*²⁵ (2009).

THEMES FROM THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE LIFE

The staging of events, together with social and political thematic issues, refers to the assertion made about the “naturalist” character of the telenovelas and to the explicit references to the life of the nation. I

¹² There are frequent critiques from the media as from the audience to certain situations discussed in a telenovela for being considered unreal and imagined, demanding more reality and less fiction, limiting the “poetic licenses” from the writers. Perhaps this trend to “realism”, or more precisely, to the “naturalism” from the told stories, it is in the base of the legitimation and credibility mechanisms from the Brazilian telenovelas. About the relations between fiction and reality at the telenovelas from Brazil, see Lopes (2001, 2004) and Motter (2001). I will deepen these realistic and naturalistic aspects at the second part of this article.

¹³ *Brothers Courage*. (T.N)

¹⁴ To simplify the notes, every telenovela cited without its network should be considered as from Globo TV.

¹⁵ *Port of Miracles*. (T.N)

¹⁶ *The Skyscraper*. (T.N)

¹⁷ *Exploded Heart*. (T.N)

¹⁸ *The King of the Cattle*.(T.N)

¹⁹ *The untamed woman*. (T.N)

²⁰ *Family Ties*. (T.N)

²¹ *The Clone*. (T.N)

²² *Women in Love*. (T.N)

²³ *Pages of Life*. (T.N)

²⁴ *Two Faces*. (T.N)

²⁵ *India - A Love Story*. (T.N)

advanced the hypothesis about the telenovela functioning as an agenda setting, such is its power of ruling a thematic agenda that is followed and discussed by the whole country during its eight months length. Subject matters as the agrarian reform, the “coronelismo²⁶”, the real estate speculation, the multinational companies, the political corruption, racism, minorities, among others, are some examples from the telenovelas vocation to incorporate issues from the public scope to the private universe inside their narratives. These themes are inseparable from the romantic plots, the family ones, like love, marriage and separation. It is the logic from the personal and familiar relations in charge of the narrative of the social problems. It is where seems to inhabit the power of this narrative, its capacity to translate the audience through the affective relations, up to the level of the lived life, self mixing with the daily experience lived in multiple aspects; subjective, emotional, political, cultural, and aesthetic.

The fusion from the public and the private domains carried through the telenovelas allows them to synthesize big problematic subjects within punctual people and plots and, at the same time, to suggest that personal and punctual dramas can have a widespread meaning. In this sense, the good examples are the cases from the telenovela *Barriga de Aluguel*²⁷ (1990) that tells the story about an artificial insemination; of heart transplant at *De Corpo e Alma*²⁸ (1992); the environment destruction at *Mulheres de Areia*²⁹ (1993); the arrival of the Internet at *Explode Coração* (1995); the urban violence at *A Próxima Vítima*³⁰ (1995) and *Torre de Babel*³¹ (1998); the violence against the woman and elders at *Mulheres Apaixonadas* (2003); the human cloning and the drug addiction at *O Clone* (2001); the visual handicapped at *América* (2005); the Down syndrome at *Páginas da Vida* (2006); the racial and sexual diversity at *Duas Caras* (2008); the mental health and the cultural diversity at *Caminho das Índias* (2009).

However, maybe this capacity to agglutinate public and private experiences that characterize the telenovelas is better expressed within the trajectory of the feminine characters, as well as at representations of love and sexuality.

Still, the plots started to deal with the professional life and the financial independence of the woman, the reproductive technologies (*Barriga de Aluguel*, 1990; *O Clone*, 2001), with the constitution of new familiar arrangements where a woman, even single, decides to take care of her children conceived at different relations (*Laços de Família*, 2000). The interracial marriages enter in scene and are more constant each time: *A Próxima Vítima*, 1995; *A Indomada*, 1996; *Por amor*³², 1997; *Suave Veneno*³³, 1999; *Laços de Família*, 2000; *Porto dos Milagres*, 2001; *Celebridade*³⁴, 2003; *Da Cor do Pecado*³⁵, 2004; *Duas Caras*, 2008; and homosexuals unions, either between adult young men as between women (*Vale Tudo*³⁶, 1985; *A Próxima Vítima*, 1995; *Por amor*, 1997; *Torre de Babel*, 1998; *Mulheres Apaixonadas*, 2003; *América*, 2005; *Duas Caras*, 2008). And, more important still, the naturalistic treatment given to these subjects usually does not to embezzle the prejudice and conflict elements, conferring to the telenovela a higher credibility next to the audience. It is through this credibility effect that the telenovelas place in circulation and debate these messages about tolerance, the right to be different and the rights of the minorities, despite of customarily “happy ending” finishing the stories.

²⁶ “Rule of coronels” - an oligarchy of agrarian landlords or landowners.

²⁷ *Surrougate Belly*. (T.N)

²⁸ *Body and Soul*. (T.N)

²⁹ *Sand Women*. (T.N)

³⁰ *The Next Victim*. (T.N)

³¹ *Babel's Tower* (T.N)

³² *In the name of Love*. (T.N)

³³ *Soft Poison*. (T.N)

³⁴ *Celebrity*. (T.N)

³⁵ *Shades of Sin*. (T.N)

³⁶ *Everything is valid*. (T.N)

Possibly the appeal and the public repercussion of telenovelas are related to this boldness in the approach to the everyday life common dramas. To what extent the final moral corresponds to the conventional or liberating models has something to do with a symbolic negotiation or with the significations at stake, it is a negotiation full of mediations that involve writers, producers, market researchers; institutions as the censorship, the church; black, feminist, and gay movements; NGOs and the different public that watch telenovelas. The truth is that these dramas at the telenovelas are already neither linear nor unilateral, but sufficiently nuanced and marked by an ambivalent movement of transgression and conformism. Regarding the subject of the racial and sexual discrimination, the dealing is becoming increasingly informative, undogmatic and in favor of tolerance and respect with the minorities. In this direction, the telenovela seems to configure itself as a force line in the construction of a multicultural society in Brazil.

“RECEPTION PACT” AND THE SPACE FOR A DEBATE ABOUT MEANINGS

There is no doubt of that the telenovela constitutes a narrative example that exceeded the leisure dimension and impregnates the daily routine of the nation. It builds interactivity mechanisms and a dialectics between the lived time and the narrated time and configures itself as communicative, cultural, aesthetic and social experience. As communicative experience, it activates mechanisms for dialogue, sharing and for imaginary participation. “The telenovela became a form of narrative of the nation and a way to participate at this imagined nation”. The viewers feel as participants from the telenovelas and mobilize the circulating information around them at their everyday life. The audience relation with the telenovelas are mediated by a variety of institutions, like TV ratings research, personal relations, direct contact with the writers, furthermore the press and the specialized media and, more recently, through the Internet.

As important as the daily ritual to watch the chapters from the telenovelas are the information and the comments that reach everyone, even that ones that watch them once in a while or hardly ever do it. The people, regardless of their social class, gender, age or locality, ends participating inside the circulation territory at the meaning of the telenovelas, shaped by countless circuits where they are re-elaborated and re-semanticized. This phenomenon allows me sustain that “the telenovela is as seen as it is told”, because its significations are the result not only from the audiovisual narrative produced by the television but also from the never-ending conversation produced by the people. As many researches already had shown, the telenovela starts to be commented during the same act of its viewing. It is discussed at every home, with the husband, the mother, the children, the domestic help, with the neighbors, friends, at the work place. Telenovelas are commented by magazines specialized in commentaries and gossips about them; at columns from daily newspapers, as much the prestige publications as the popular ones; at the public opinion polls; at the letters from the readers sent to newspapers and magazines; at the television and radio programs that in such a way follow the telenovelas with news articles and interviews with its actors, as at humoristic programs where they are satirized. The telenovela also appears at the music from the CDs with the soundtrack composed specially for it; it is present at the whole merchandising circuit, from the clothes and jewels wore by the actors to the decoration objects from the sets, drinks, cars, stores and banks that come into view at the stories; at the commercial breaks made by actors from the telenovelas being aired at the same moment. Finally, the newest space filled by all this conversation that the telenovela provokes is the Internet, where each telenovela has its own website (the web address is broadcasted after the production credits from every daily chapter). The opinions from the fans are express in numerous discussion lists, posts and blogs, from the writers and from the audience, and where several interactivity devices expand and renew the signification of the telenovelas.³⁷

³⁷ We are just starting to note the new relations with the telenovela created by digital television. We are facing the challenge to review and create new methodologies and new theoretical conceptions for the virtual research.

The writers openly declare to the press that they look for people in the street to know their opinions about the subjects they are writing and therefore have ideas about their characters' development. The slangs and mannerisms used by certain characters are incorporated quickly in the day to day language; the names of the characters get trendy and children are baptized with them; small shops and stores exhibit telenovelas' titles at their storefronts; also the names from some characters, mainly the "evil ones", are used as adjective to assign a particular personality trait from some people.

In addition, the situations lived by a character in the telenovela or the characteristics from its personality can be object of mobilization from trade unions, the black or gay movement, politicians, and ethnic communities that criticize or demand changes in situations and characters who would oppose its public image. The telenovelas still can be found reflected in the proposals of law projects for establishing quota for black actors and regulating the work of child and adolescent actors. Not rare, the plots provoke the discussion about the necessity of the television networks to adopt ethical codes, either in form of law or self-regulation.

Three law projects can be highlighted whose approvals are directly related to the situations addressed by these fictional stories: At *Mulheres apaixonadas* (2003), two characters had played out situations that had collaborated for the consensus around two social causes. The approval of the "Senior Citizen Statute", that it consigns rights to the elderly, when it was approved by the Federal Senate, recognized the importance of this telenovela, whose character, Doris, used to employ a hostile behavior with her grandparents, Flora and Leopoldo; and the approval of the "Disarmament Statute", supported with a protest march against the violence at Rio De Janeiro, where twenty thousand people attended and had a participation from the cast of *Mulheres apaixonadas* (2003), a telenovela that had a character who died at the streets, killed by a lost bullet.³⁸ Finally, the approval of the "Maria da Penha Law", fighting the domestic violence and violence against women, are recurrent subjects in several telenovelas.

The telenovelas' strength and repercussion mobilize daily a true communication net, through which circulates its meanings generating the so called "social semiose". For that reason the telenovela can be

³⁸ **I transcribe here, from diverse sources, some examples of mobilization provoked by this telenovela.**

Known for mixing reality and fiction at his plots, Manoel Carlos [writer] promoted the protest march in favor of the disarmament that exceeded the fictional universe from the small screen, at *Mulheres Apaixonadas*. Under the direction of Ricardo Waddington, the scenes had involved about 40 actors from the plot and had mobilized almost 60 thousand people at the itinerary carried through the Copacabana waterfront. It was recorded in a rainy Sunday (September 14, 2003) and it was aired at the following day (September 15, 2003). The T-shirt wore by the actors of the plot had the phrase "Brazil without weapons" stamped on it and it had an illustration made by the child Salete (Bruna Marquezine), character that lost her mother, Fernanda (Vanessa Garbelli), during the shooting which also injured Téo (Tony Ramos), who joined the protest march in a wheelchair. This fictional act in favor of the disarmament stimulated the Disarmament Law processing. During the walk, the Division of Weapons and Explosives Control from the Civil Policy set a mobile station at the Copacabana beach sidewalk and collected weapons. Beyond the actors, the then Secretary of Public Security of Rio De Janeiro, Anthony Garotinho, among others politicians, as Luiz Eduardo Greenhalgh (the rapporteur from the Disarmament Statute), Márcio Thomaz Bastos, at the time Minister of Justice also participated at the protest march. This telenovela even showed scenes with the parents from a 14 years old victim, Mayan Gabriela the Prado Ribeiro, deceased after been injured by a lost bullet, when she was inside a subway station, named São Francisco Xavier. The appearance of her family was made during a class given by the character Santana (Vera Holtz).

Sources: Globo Memories. Available at: <<http://memoriaglobo.globo.com/Memoriaglobo/0,27723,GYN0-5273-230093,00.html>> Access in: May 26, 2009; Blog *Mulheres Apaixonadas* - Brasil sem Armas. Available at: <<http://tvglobomulheres.blogger.com.br/>> Access in: May 26, 2009; Correio Braziliense. Available at: <http://www2.correioweb.com.br/cw/EDICAO_20030915/pri_bra_150903_194.htm> Access in: May 26, 2009.

considered as a new public space, for having this capacity to incite discussion and national controversy.³⁹ Through this “discussion forum” about the produced significations, with a capillary diffusion, complex and diversified, the people synthesize public and private experiences; they express their divergent and convergent opinions regarding the characters actions and about the plot development. The shared repertoire nature allows a manifestation of the differences, the expression of the competences about the genre, a mastery of the dramaturgic conventions from the telenovela, the sensitivity from that look which surrounds the details, either at the sets and the costumes, either at the multiples plots that link themselves at the 200 chapters entanglement to, at the end, release its judgment about the several endings for these plots. The producers are criticized or applauded in private and in public by the conduction of the fiction piece.

When a telenovela galvanizes the country, at this moment it brings up to date its potential to synthesize the imaginary of a nation, that is, its identity, or what it is the same, of expressing itself as “imagined nation”. This representation, despite being structurally melodramatic and subdue to a variety of interpretations, it is accepted as verisimilar, watched and appropriated as legitimate and as a credibility object. There is a consensus at literature in calling this imaginary as “modern”, once the telenovelas move the “modern imaginaries” of the nation about some recurrent thematic axis. Synthesizing, those are: the social mobility, the new family, the sexual, racial, and ethnic diversity, the feminine affirmation, along with the ethical renewal.

It is at least paradoxical that one program initially classified by the industry as an entertainment intended for women from social class “C” has dominated the prime time at Brazilian television and had transformed itself into a discussion forum about the nation, and shared by a national audience composed by women, men and children from every social and local group at the domestic territory. Perhaps the Brazilian telenovela is a unique example of how a television media system can be one of the factors to contribute at the boost up from a peculiar public space that in the current years presented itself as a new form of citizenship construction. The telenovela, at last, seems to have achieved to make permeable the Brazilian public space for the update and problematization of the national identity at a period of deep and accelerated global transformations.

PART II

THE TELENVELA AS A COMMUNICATIVE RESOURCE

At the first part of this article, the theoretical discussions based at empirical material helped me to elaborate the concept of the Brazilian telenovela as a narrative of the nation. I will now try to characterize this narrative as a “communicative resource” that, as I anticipated, it was build through the historical imbrications of this television genre and format with the changes at the Brazilian society, specifically from the 1970s.

To approach the telenovela as communicative resource is to identify it as a narrative where pedagogical actions, the implicit and deliberated ones, conjugate and start to institutionalize themselves into communication and culture policies within the country. In other words, this is to recognize the telenovela as a component of the communication/culture policies pursuing citizenship development and human rights inside the society.

³⁹ Usually it is the prime time telenovela, because it has the largest TV ratings throughout the country, the one that traditionally performs this function.

We saw how the cultural matrix of “melodrama” works as a constitutive and most important “genre” of the telenovela, as a narration and as a promoter of the imaginary of the nation. I advanced the hypothesis about the Brazilian telenovela being a communicative resource by the junction capacity of the melodramatic matrix, together with the naturalistic treatment as a foundation of verisimilitude at its narratives, and regarding the credibility effect accomplished. And more, that this “strategy of hybridization of fiction and reality” is perceived with increasing intensity all the way through its history.

THE PEDAGOGICAL FUNCTION OF THE MELODRAMA

Any genealogical study made from the Brazilian telenovela it must necessarily initiate by the attention to the “originary pedagogical function” present at the cultural matrix of the melodrama that it is being reformulated all over the years, acquiring a realistic feature that each time it was naturalizing and expressing itself in a deliberate form. This means that by the same nature of the language of the telenovela and the functioning of the imaginary (Morin, 1969), the telenovela presents itself as an “implicit pedagogical action” and spontaneous, activated by the correspondence between the habitus from the narrated world and the lived one (Bourdieu, 1975). However, in the course of its development, the telenovela started to incorporate an “explicit pedagogical action”⁴⁰ that presents itself at a deliberate way, and whose speech brings explanations, conceptualizations and definitions, and finally, it shapes the public opinion about the addressed social themes. This explicit and deliberated enunciation of the narrative finds support at the devices from the “melodramatic imagination” and the “aesthetic of excess” (Brooks, 1995) and at the dimension of the moral and pedagogical function of the melodrama.

The melodrama was born with an educational mission: Pixérécourt recognizes that he used to write for those “that do not know how to read”, “for this new public, mostly uneducated, in which it was desired to inculcate certain principles of healthy moral and good politics”, states Thomasseau (2005:29). But, for such, this new rising sensitivity should have to be considered and codified at the genre, as Martín-Barbero points out:

The political passions awakened and the terrible scenes lived during the [French] Revolution exalted the imagination and exacerbate the sensitivity of some popular masses that after all can be allowed to stage their “emotions”. And for these to develop, the scenario will be filled up with arrests, conspiracies and acts of justice, with huge tragedies suffered by victims and traitors that in the end will pay a very high price by their treasons. (...) Before being a propaganda instrument, the melodrama will be the mirror of a collective conscience (2001: 152).

Along with the improvement of the bardic function of the telenovela (Fiske, 1987) as central narrator of histories at the contemporary society, the audience started to acquire a cultural capacity to understand this narration throughout the time. At the history that the telenovela has constructed during the years, the melodramatic matrix – a manner to narrate – repeated itself, however, incorporating the novelty, the occasion, and changing according to the social demands of each historical context. In this historical evolution of the melodrama matrix, the verisimilitude effect is pursued from the deepening of the “naturalistic” treatment of social thematic at the plots, notably in the 1990s, surpassing the “realistic” proposal from the 1970s.

From the beginning of the 1990s, the social rhythms, from the more dense ones to the most conjunctural and explosives, were introduced in the dramaturgical success. Because, if the social issue at the telenovela from the previous decades was regarding the moat between the rich and the poor people or between the city and the countryside, the one from the 1990s assumes topics that belong to the more persistent public agenda, as the corruption, the drug trafficking, the political crisis or the poverty (Martín-Barbero and Rey, 2004:171).

⁴⁰ As we will see ahead, from a certain moment, this explicit pedagogical action inside the telenovela started to be called as *social merchandising*.

THE CULTURAL FORUM AS A DEBATE SPACE ABOUT THE MEANINGS OF THE TELENVELA

To go inside the nuances from the audiovisual telenovela's hegemony, is to analyze how and by which vehicles the cultural industry answers, using its formats, to certain "social demands" (Williams, 1975) in times of deep changes. Considering that the cultural products refract the social conditions where they are inserted, the telenovela absorbs the social changes and revitalizes its expressions: the genre "hybridization" affirms itself in the current historical time. As a result, a specific contamination happens between fiction and reality, between the telenovela and the society.

When analyzing the global society, Vattimo identifies the central paper of the vehicles as agents of the decentering of modernity, conceptualizing the contemporary society as a society with a "generalized communication" (Vattimo, 1992:7). The communication vehicles had been part of the dissolution of the unitary point of view and an explosion of world visions, disseminated through the radio, newspapers, television, Internet, etc. As a result, they started to circulate a variety of information, knowledge and interpretations from the social reality that do not keep, necessarily, a direct relation with the citizens' everyday experience. If the plurality of cultural voices, (ethnic, sexual, religious, cultural aesthetic and etcetera minorities) now visualized, and the information about the world could be an accomplishment of the enlightening emancipation based at the self conscience of the humanity; this ideal is contradicted: being the economic power in the hands of all the capital, the possible emancipation resides in the conscience of the lack of a sole reality principle, or objective. This author affirms that, Reality, for us, is more the result of the mix, the "contamination" (in the Latin sense) of the multiple images, interpretations, reconstructions that, in competition between themselves or, however it may be, without any central coordination, the media vehicles distribute (Vattimo, 1992:13).

What we have then is that the interpretative variations of the reality can be identified as "from the production point of view" of the telenovelas, with its professionals being considered as cultural interpreters as "from the audience side". Between the two sides, the attention prevailed at the analysis on this last one, where the multiplicity of directions started to be associated with the suggestive hypotheses from Hall in its influential essay about the decoding (Hall, 2003). Anyhow, at both sides, the biggest interest falls into the negotiated interpretation, what makes possible to the telenovela be seen "as a cultural forum" (Newcomb, 1999), being recognized the plurality of interpretations of its contents and how they can be contributing for the change, linking at the interpretation strategies "all the agents from the telenovela field", audience ratings, writers, producers, network directors, etc. Based at my studies, I agree with Newcomb that only a dense text could attract such massive audience at the globalized cultural environment that we live, so complex how contentious, marked by diversity, difference and distinction.

BETWEEN THE SENSE OF BELONGING AND UPROOTING

The "mediation" made by the communication vehicles can be considered as main condition from the social experience and the relativism from the same culture in view of the existence of so many other cultures; because the decentering consists at the assumption of the existence of other realities beyond the one surrounding us. To live in this multiple world signifies, in the words of Vattimo, "to make experience of the freedom as a continuous oscillation between sense of belonging and uprooting" (Vattimo, 1992:16).⁴¹

⁴¹In this same meaning it is the analysis developed by Victor Turner (apud Newcomb, 1999) about the specific qualities from the liminal phase of the ritual processes, generally involved with the concepts of playful, consumption, carnivalesque. In this liminal phase happens an inversion or suspension of the social and moral

In this thinking line, at the current scenario of tension between sense of belonging and uprooting, added to the mediation of the vehicles producing signification for the daily experiences; García Canclini (1995) opens a new key to understand the Citizenship's exercise at the globalized societies, especially at the Latin American ones, where the modernity ideal failed, and the policies of the "economic progress" were translated in misery, unemployment, illiteracy and social inequalities of every kind. Supported in the concept of "cultural citizenship", the author understands that being a citizen it is not only related with the rights that depend on the bureaucratic mechanisms offered to the people who had been born in a particular territory – a political-legal and abstract notion of citizenship - but, also, with the social and cultural practices that give sense of belonging and participation at the social nets. This practice is, for the author, the consumption, especially of the audiovisual communication vehicles. The accelerated growth of these Medias testified the change that was happening at the configuration of the audience and the Citizenship's exercise since the last century:

However, these electronic vehicles that had burst the popular masses in the public sphere had been dislocating the citizenship's performance in direction to the consumption practices. It had been established other ways of being informed, how to understand the communities we belong, to conceive and exert our rights. People disenchanted with bureaucracies from the state, the parties and trade unions, the audience turns to the radio and television to obtain what the citizen's institutions do not provide: services, justice, amends or simple attention (García Canclini, 1995:26).

In the same way that García Canclini problematizes the relation consumption-citizenship, Certeau (1994) approaches the everyday life as a fight place between the reproduction and the cultural creation. The clash happens among the "strategies" from the dominators and the "resistance tactics" from the subjugated ones. Through these invisible and ephemeral tactics, the "ordinary man", the street man, common man, discover gaps for the creation and subversion of the established order. "The everyday life invents itself through thousand ways of unauthorized hunting" (1994: 38). The man gets to escape from it, but without leaving it:

The everyday life is what is given to us each day (or what should be ours by partition), pressures us day after day, and oppresses us, because there is oppression from the present. Every day, in the morning, what we assume when waking up, is the weight of the life, the difficulty of living, or living in this or another condition, with this fatigue, this desire. The everyday life is what stops us intimately, from our interior. It is a half-way history of us, almost in withdrawal, sometimes veiled. We can not forget this "memory world", according to the Péguy's expression. It is a world that we love deeply, olfactory memory, memory of the places of infancy, memory of the body, from the childhood gestures, from the pleasures. Perhaps it is not useless to underline the importance of the sphere of influence of this "irrational" history or this "non-history", as it says A. Dupront: What interests to the historian experts about the everyday life is the invisible (Certeau, 1996: 31).

It can be verified that these influential problematizations articulate themselves with the conception of Vattimo concerning the liberation character that opens the communication society, the television - and the telenovela, in particular – it can be considered as a public space that turns available information and repertoires previously from the privileged competence of certain sectors of the society.

normative structures present at the everyday life, and that are the conditions of deterritorialization and "to become". It is an intermediate phase, when one is not completely inside and nor outside the society. It is a grace period, where the rules can be broken or folded, the roles can be inverted, the categories subverted. The author's suggestion is that the essence of the liminality is in the release of the normal constraints, which allows the deconstruction of the "not interesting" constructions from the common sense, of the daily life nonsense and the reconstruction of these constructions into new forms, some even bizarre and monstrous.

ABOUT THE REALISM AND IMPLICIT PEDAGOGICAL ACTION TO THE NATURALISM AND THE DELIBERATED PEDAGOGICAL ACTION

Based at an attempt of periodization of the Brazilian telenovela in three phases: sentimental (1950-1967), realist (1968-1990) and naturalist (since 1990)⁴², my hypothesis is that when giving emphasis to this last style of language, the telenovela starts to treat the subjects with a strong “naturalistic” representation, where the discourse is identified by the same reality/truth (Xavier, 2005), what makes it acquires verisimilitude probability, credibility and legitimacy as pedagogical action.⁴³ In a complementary sense and in a certain way, the evolution of the narrowing of the bond between fiction and reality, combined with the evolution of a pedagogical dimension that increasingly starts to express itself at an explicit and deliberated form, it can provoke a “documentary reading”, meaning, a “reading capable to treat all [fiction] as document”, as it states Roger Odin (1984).⁴⁴ The “documentary reading” is a reader’s positioning effect and it is centered on the image that this reader makes from the enunciator: “in the documentary reading, the reader constructs to the enunciator’s image, and assuming this enunciator’s reality, the reader constructs a self - real origin” (Odin, 1984). Thus, this reading is capable to “treat every film as a document”, as much the fictional as the documentary. One of the forms to activate this type of reading is from the stylistic resources used at the audiovisual text (internal production method): the technical credits functioning, the blurred focus, the image flickering, the direct sound, the stare at the camera, among other things. Odin points out that a film belongs to the group of “documentary when it integrates at its structure, in an explicit way, the instruction to start a documentary reading, when it programs the documentary reading” from the mentioned stylistic forms.

In general, the described forms of enunciation respect the classic assembly of continuity that, as Xavier points out (1983: 13):

the biggest effect is to provoke us a very particular relation with the fiction, as if it developed for itself and the mediation did not existed, as if we were facing something as independent as certain events from our everyday life.

SOCIAL MERCHANDISING AND COMMUNICATIVE RESOURCE

The naturalistic or documentary discursive devices that had been deliberately made explicit at the telenovela, combined with the diversification of the melodramatic matrix in the telenovela started to be known as social merchandising.

⁴² **The period division from the Brazilian telenovela is found in several studies, like: Ortiz, Borelli and Ramos Ortiz (1989), Mattelart and Mattelart (1987), Campedelli (1985) and Fernandes (1994).**

⁴³ Not everyone support this deliberate explicitness: “In the anxiety to show a TV constructive dimension, several programs are privileging contents with a “didactic” register in detriment of the good dramaturgy. Telenovelas, in the French tradition of the serial novel from the 19th century, which Marlyse Meyer considers in her book “Feuilleton”, are mentioning the current events for a long time. In the 80s and 90s, the references to social and political issues were part of the genre conventions, with mentions to the campaign for direct [elections] or to the characters that warned, for example, about the condom use necessity. Nowadays these references became obligatory and “official”. The “politically correct” tone of the current productions annihilate the possibility of the artistic creation” Hamburger (2004).

⁴⁴ **It is important to point out that Odin’s argument finds an empirical foundation at the observations I made regarding the telenovelas that had been cited in the first part of this article.**

The social merchandising⁴⁵ can be defined as a communicative resource that consists of airing explicit social educational messages, with fictional or real contents inside the storylines and plots at the teledramaturgical productions. Understanding for “social educational messages” the intentional elaborated ones, systemized and with defined intentions, as those perceived by the audience - that, from the dramaturgical situations, extract teachings and reflections capable to change positively the audience’s knowledge, values, and practices. The mere occurrence of a fact in the plot (pregnancy, alcohol consumption, domestic aggression, racial discrimination, accident etc.) does not characterize a social merchandising. For that to happen it is necessary that it has, for example, a reference to prevention, protective, punitive or mending measures; an alert for causes and consequences associated to them or about the inadequate habits and behaviors; a valorization of the diversity of opinions and points of view, etc.

Although the social merchandising these days is spread in the main Brazilian teledramaturgy, it was Globo TV that systemized and institutionalized its use from the decade of 1990, at the point to become a registered mark of the national fiction. There is a lot to research concerning the relation between the Brazilian telenovela creation as a “naturalistic telenovela” with a strong social content and the institutionalization of the social merchandising inside it.⁴⁶

In the social merchandising discourse we find the memory of a “melodramatic imagination” (Brooks, 1995), where the overlapping between the realism and the melodrama marks its presence at the XXI century as mediation for an education access at inequality times and social exclusion, at the same way that Pixérécourt conceived the melodrama before the social transformations from the XIX century. The social merchandising discourse confirms the telenovela as a “hybrid” discourse, as a “cultural form” that dialogues with its historical time, answering the requirements that originate from the social tissue. In this case, a type of social inclusion, informal education through melodrama, the telenovela, through a cultural object with a popular access.

⁴⁵ The *social merchandising* social has as objectives: to spread out knowledge; to promote ethical and universal values and principles. Examples: the human rights defense, conscientious vote, etc.; to stimulate the attitude change and the adoption of new behaviors (social innovations) in relation to the of public interest issues, for example, breastfeeding, condom use, prejudices dissolution, etc.; to promote social criticism and to rule of social relevance questions, stimulating the debate made by the society, for example, disarmament, inclusive education etc.

⁴⁶ In 2008, the results of a research of the BID about the influence of Globo TV telenovelas at women’s reproductive and social behavior had a great repercussion at the media. “The plots of the telenovelas frequently include critiques against traditional values. For example, the 1988 audience hit, the telenovela *Vale Tudo*, presented a leading role that was capable to steal, lie and to be deceptive in order to reach her objective to be rich at any cost. Globo TV also brought to the small screen a modern style of life and feminine emancipation at the telenovelas as *Dancing Days* (1978), where the feminine protagonist was a former prisoner fighting to reconstruct her reputation and to get back her teenager daughter’s love. There are also suggestive indications that the telenovelas content had also influenced the divorce taxes. When the feminine protagonist of a novel was divorced or she was not married, the divorce tax increased, on average, 0.1 percent. The reduction of the fertility taxes was higher in the following years to the exhibition of telenovelas that included social ascension cases, at women with ages next to the age of the telenovela’s feminine protagonist”.

In: *Novelas brasileiras têm impacto sobre os comportamentos sociais*. Banco Interamericano de Desenvolvimento. Available at: <<http://www.iadb.org/NEWS/detail.cfm?language=Portuguese&id=5104>>. Accessed in: 04 Feb. 2009. Os estudos *Novelas e Fertilidade: Evidência do Brasil* (Available at: <<http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=1856122>>) e *Televisão e Divórcio: Evidência das Novelas Brasileiras* (<<http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=1856109>>) are available at same site, in English.

I consider, therefore, that the social merchandising constitutes itself as a deliberated “pedagogical action” for “who does not know how to read and poorly know how to write” from elements of enunciation of popular recognition. Why not consider the social merchandising as the “practical advice” openly offered, as said Benjamin (1991) in its more modern form? The social merchandising as mediator from a “secondary literacy” (Martín-Barbero and Rey, 2004) based in the oral culture restitutes a memory of an education starting from the melodrama, as long ago was made at the XIX century, now in the bulge of tensions that were established between the social demands and the market interests? And there, an imagination, still valid to tell the reality - the “melodramatic imagination”, did not take form? (Brooks, 1995).

THE COMMUNICATION UNDERSTOOD AS AN “AVAILABLE RESOURCE” FOR COMUNICATION/CULTURE POLICIES

I use two authors whom drink at the reflections of Heidegger (2000) about the resource as an “available reserve”, transposing them for the communication and the culture; they are George Yúdice and Giovanni Bechelloni.

According to Yúdice (2004), the question of the culture at our time, characterized as an accelerated globalization culture, can be considered as a resource, as an “available reserve” (cf. Heidegger, 2000) for a social-political and economic improvement, source of increase of its participation in this age of declining political involvement. The globalization pluralized the contacts between several populations and facilitated the migrations, making the culture utilization something bigger than a national resource. The art folded entirely to an expanded concept of culture that can solve problems, including jobs creation.

These comments find support in the concept of “cultural capitalism” (Rifkin, 2000) that deals with the characteristic dematerialization of multiple and increasing sources of economic growth - the rights of copyright. According to GATT (General Agreement on Tariff and Trade) and the WTO (World trade organization), the biggest distribution of symbolic goods at the world-wide commerce (films, television programs, music, tourism) gave to the cultural sphere a protagonism bigger than at any moment from humankind history. It would happen something as a “culturalization” of the new capitalist economy, based at mental and intellectual work.

Such thesis, according to Yúdice, recognizes that the culture has been assumed by the most diverse groups, institutional or not, inside or out this formal power spheres, or to improve the social conditions, as in the creation of a multicultural tolerance and civic participation through the cultural citizenship and cultural rights defense, or to stimulate the economic growth through cultural development projects, or to create a political environment favorable and balanced for the development. Such projects can also embrace questions of cultural consumption, emergent cultural industries at environments with not very propitious conditions for the promotion of such phenomenon. The cultural development policies focus at projects with return, at the development of “creative industries”, as Castells (2009) sees it, and at the provisions of contents for the mediatic convergence.

However, today, the society complexity must be seen from the “complexification of the individual”, what suggests more than never the communication importance as an opening possibility, recognition and understanding of others. In this context, the communication can be understood and be practiced as an “available resource”.

If we think about the communication development - through the use of new languages and environments, new prosthesis or technologies, as the disruption of the barriers and the borders explosion to extend the capacity of social inclusion; to create new balances between innovation and tradition, to make a shared conception of human culture as a permanent capacity to learn; to arrive to modify the environment,

facing the uncertainty and promoting the changes - to think about the communication in these terms means to think it as a human action for the inclusion and the reception, to construct and to keep a shared social order, widening always the amount of significations to include. The communication, in this way understood and practiced, becomes a “resource” to get open minded and listen the different one, the other.

As it is perceived, I do an enlargement of Yúdice’s thesis of “convenience of culture”, to beyond its political utility and explicit economics. It is necessary to complete it with the conception of “communicative resource so that the culture can be communicated”.

Bechelloni (2002) points to the concept of the “communication ambivalence”, therefore at the same time where “it is impossible not communicate”, emerge the difficulties to communicate. These hold back the discovery of a “leverage” that can be activated to contain the destructive conflicts, to activate the virtuous circles facing the cooperation and to build the bases from that world-wide public sphere, indispensable premise to regulate the international community, based on shared significations and unified minimum values. This “leverage” can only be based at the joint recognition of the universal value of the humans, of their rights and duties that are established at the unity and at the diversity of human beings. A “communication culture” is based on the perception of the other and the recognition of the individual-person as a main actor and responsible about the communicative proceeding. The insertion of diversity, the pacific coexistence growth and the self sustainable development as much as the representations and claims of the cultural differences must be treated as “communicative resources”.

It is in this sense that I conceive the singular institutionalization of the telenovela at the Brazilian culture and society as the discovery of this “leverage” that can be activated at the pursuing of the cultural citizenship, at the recognition of the cooperative forces as well as the conflicts that emerge during this march.

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ATTACHEMENT

MONITORING THE SOCIAL MERCHANDISING
AT THE TELENVELAS FROM 2008 ⁴⁷

DUAS CARAS

Chapters from 2008

MONITORED SOCIAL MERCHANDISING SCENES

Source: Comunicarte

Theme	Number of Scenes	Description
Citizenship and Rights - 25		
Childhood and youth's rights	3	Juvenal warned about parents' commitment with the payment of their children's alimony. The discussion about Dalia's son registration stimulated the reflection on child adoption by couples outside the conventional standards.
Minority or excluded rights group	1	The signature of the relationship agreement between Heraldinho and Carlão highlighted equal rights for homosexual couples.
Rights of Citizens with handicaps	1	Célia Mara defended an adaptation of the university to allow the access of citizens with handicaps.
Senior citizens' rights	1	The character Misael protested against the difficulties faced by retired people to receive their pension.
Civil, political, economic and social rights	3	Juvenal's attempt to expel Zé da Feira from the slum quarter made possible the reflection about the illegal performance of the militia. Gioconda, in an infuriated speech, stimulated the social mobilization against the violence and the corruption.
Public security, prevention and combat of violence	1	Juvenal's campaign for municipal councilor allowed the discussion of the government role as a guarantor of the population security; and the debate about the militia performance, filling the space left by the authorities at poor communities.
Trafficking in human beings	8	Several situations involving the NGO from the character Countess Finzi-Contini had alerted the women grooming for sexual ends.
Valorization of the democracy and the Three Powers of the State	6	With the plebiscite about the construction of the industrial plant at Portelinha [slum], the telenovela drew attention for the importance of the conscientious vote.
Domestic violence	1	The Finzi-Contini Countess stimulated the combat to the violence against women.

A FAVORITA

Chapters from 2008

MONITORED SOCIAL MERCHANDISING SCENES

Source: Comunicarte

⁴⁷ The scene register from the *social merchandising* from this attachment has been made available to the author by Globo TV.

Theme	Number of Scenes	Description
Citizenship and Rights - 25		
Rights of Citizens with handicaps	1	Zé Bob drew attention for the accessibility rights of citizens with handicaps when criticizing Donatela for parking at a handicap's parking space.
Labor rights	1	Through Damião, the telenovela alerted about the labor rights, where workers should not to be submitted to an excess of overtime.
Domestic violence	17	Through Léo and Catarina, the telenovela fought the domestic violence (physical and psychological) in a categorical way, showing several messages of incentive to denunciation, and highlighting the importance of the family and friends support, and the recovery of the self-esteem.

BELEZA PURA

Chapters from 2008

MONITORED SOCIAL MERCHANDISING SCENES

Source: Comunicarte

Theme	Number of Scenes	Description
Citizenship and Rights - 11		
Childhood and youth's rights	10	Through the character Klaus, the telenovela informed about alternative penalties for minors and about the legislation that foresees restrictions to child and youth labor. Joana and Klaus showed the importance of the combat child mistreatment, denouncing the director of the orphanage.
Adoption	1	The posture of Joana and Guillermo to adopt a child constituted a stimulus to the adoption practice.

SETE PECADOS⁴⁸

Chapters from 2008

MONITORED SOCIAL MERCHANDISING SCENES

Source: Comunicarte

Theme	Number of Scenes	Description
Citizenship and Rights - 1		
Rights of Citizens with handicaps	1	The dialogue between Miriam and Vicente about Simone drew attention for the valuation of the aptitudes from citizens with handicaps.

⁴⁸ *Seven Sins*. (T.N)

DESEJO PROIBIDO

Chapters de 2008

MONITORED SOCIAL MERCHANDISING SCENES

Source: Comunicarte

Theme	Number of Scenes	Description
Citizenship and Rights - 1		
Rights of Citizens with handicaps	1	At giving the possibility to André to use the typewriter that he received as a gift, the telenovela showed the right of the citizens with handicaps to develop their abilities.

Social Merchandising at the most watched six pm telenovelas in 2008

TITLES	Health and quality of life	Values, principles and human relations	Citizenship and Rights	Education, science and Human development	Development and environment	Culture and identity	Sexuality and Affective relationships	TOTAL
Duas Caras	32	29	25	15	4	2	2	109
A Favorita	13	38	19	10	1	10	2	93
Beleza Pura	19	28	11	7	3	-	1	69
Três Irmãs ⁴⁹	34	5	-	1	9	-	3	52
Sete Pecados	24	9	1	5	-	-	-	39
Desejo Proibido ⁵⁰	10	10	1	-	-	-	1	22
TOTAL	132	119	57	38	17	12	9	384

Source: Globo TV (categorization and tabulation)

AUTHOR'S COMMENTARIES

According to the data above, we can remark that the telenovela with higher concentration of social merchandising was *Duas caras*, with 109 insertions, representing 28% from the total. Inside this universe, the most recurrent theme was "Health and life quality" with 32 insertions. In second place, follows *A Favorita* with 93 insertions, 24% from the total, being the dominant the thematic group "Values, principles and human relations" (38 insertions). At the third place, *Beleza pura*⁵¹ showed 69 social merchandising insertions, standing for 18% from the total. The theme with a higher concentration of

⁴⁹ *Three Sisters*. (T.N)

⁵⁰ *Forbidden Desire*. (T.N)

⁵¹ *Pure Beauty*. (T.N)

insertions also was “Values, principles and human relations” (38 insertions). The fourth place is for Três irmãs, with 52 insertions, 14% from the total; in the fifth position we find Sete pecados, with 39 insertions, 10%, and at the last position, Desejo proibido with 22 insertions, 5.7% from the total.

The mapping was carried through based at seven thematic groups. The group “Health and life quality” (132 insertions) includes scenes around the following indicators: the incentive for healthful habits (healthy diet, physical activity, mental health); hygiene and basic health care; prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illnesses; drug abuse and chemical dependence; health of the pregnant woman and the baby, and donation of blood, organs, bone marrow and tissues; childhood and youths health; accidents prevention and women’s health. The group “Values, principles and human relations” (119 insertions) comprises the following indicators: illegal and criminal activities, corruption; prejudice and discrimination; relationship with the family and relatives; solidarity, social action and voluntary work; personal and, familial cultural values; communitarian relations and social gathering; ethics; harassment. The group “Citizenship and Rights” (57 insertions) enclosed scenes concerning: rights of people with handicaps; labor rights; domestic violence; childhood and youth’s rights; adoption; rights of minority or excluded groups; rights of the elders; civil, political, economics and social rights; public security, prevention and combat of violence; trafficking in human beings and valorization of the democracy and the Three Powers of the State. The group “Education, science and human development” (38 insertions) includes scenes referring to: education in/for the traffic at the streets and roads; incentive to reading and writing skills; valorization of the education and study; inclusive and special education; complementary education for the formal education. In turn, the group “Development and environment” (17 insertions) had scenes referring to the following indicators: preservation of the fauna, biodiversity and ecosystems; pollution; conscientious consumption; recycling, garbage reduction and materials reusing; sustainable exploration of the natural resources; sustainable development. The thematic group “Culture and identity” (12 insertions) contained scenes that mainly focused the valorization of the culture and the arts. Finally, the group “Sexuality and affective relations” (9 insertions) encloses scenes referring to: undesired or not planned pregnancy; homosexuality; sexual myths and taboos, in addition to sexual initiation.

The detailing done from the operations of social merchandising is justified as an important work carried through by Obitel, Brazil Section, therefore it is through a particular appropriation and fusion of these social thematic in a melodramatic story that the Brazilian television fiction, particularly in its format of telenovela, conquered its specificity as national genre, becoming the most representative “narrative of the nation”.

Versão em inglês por Silvia Cobelo.