CONSTRUCTING THE INDIGENOUS SUBALTERN IDENTITY IN THE BRAZILIAN MEDIA: RUPTURES IN DOMINANT REPRESENTATIONS

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ABSTRACT: In this paper we examine the way the Brazilian Indigenous subaltern identity is represented verbally and visually in one of the most widely read newspapers in Brazil, *Folha de São Paulo*. Our objective is to show that these representations are never neutral or objective but are constructed inside the dominant ideology that tends to attribute to the Indigenous identity pejorative characteristics. The analysis of a report on the invasion of a luxurious hotel by the Indigenous Tupinamba tribe and the interpretation of its accompanying photograph offer an insight on the mechanisms the media uses in order to disqualify Indigenous political movements. The insight of Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Visual Literacy can cause ruptures in the representations the media make of realities and can lead to a better understanding of the contextualizing nature of the construction of any identity.
KEYWORDS: Representation, subaltern, identity

CONSTRUINDO A IDENTIDADE INDÍGENA SUBALTERNA NA MÍDIA BRASILEIRA: RUPTURAS NAS REPRESENTAÇÕES DOMINANTES

RESUMO: Neste artigo examinamos a forma como a identidade Indígena subalterna Brasileira é representada verbalmente e visualmente em um dos jornais mais lidos do Brasil, *Folha de São Paulo*. Nosso objetivo é mostrar que essas representações nunca são neutras ou objetivas, mas são construídas no interior da ideologia dominante que tende a atribuir características pejorativas à identidade Indígena. A análise de uma reportagem sobre a invasão de um hotel de luxo pela tribo indígena Tupinambá e a interpretação da fotografia que a acompanha oferecem um melhor discernimento dos mecanismos que a mídia utiliza para desqualificar os movimentos políticos indígenas. A perspectiva da Analise Crítica do Discurso e o Letramento Crítico Visual podem causar rupturas nas representações que a mídia faz da realidade e podem levar a uma melhor compreensão da natureza contextualizada da construção de qualquer identidade.
**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Representação, subalterno, identidade
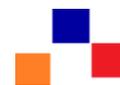
Introduction

Over the last decades, there has been a growing interest from the part of the media, anthropologists and academics in what has been established to be called "the subaltern". When terms such as "the subaltern", "the inferior" or "the subordinate" are used, the first question that comes to mind is which groups of people make up such subordinate communities. The starting assumption is that "the subaltern" is made up of groups of people whose members have limited capacity to consume, whose status in the bigger society where they belong is inferior, communities whose tendency is to become extinct like Indigenous groups or grow in numbers like slum dwellers, and whose suffering is humiliating.

The increasing commitment to the representation of these "inferior" groups marks an epistemological turn. Representations of these communities are situated in the postmodern paradigm since they legitimate and prioritize elements such as diversity, discontinuity, conflict and contradiction which are inherent aspects of any social phenomenon (TORRES, 2003).

Subaltern groups consist of people who are characterized by a deep suffering that they inherit together with their social position, scarcity of economic means, gender choices or professional humiliation. The most straightforward way to define which groups contrive "the subaltern" is by their opposite. "Subordinate" are those communities that are ruled by the "dominant" or the "elite" or, in other words, groups on which power is exercised. Although capitalism sees this domination as mainly economical, according to Gramsci this "much greater mass of people [are] ruled by coercive or sometimes mainly ideological domination from above" (apud. GUHA, 1988, p. vi).

For Spivak (1994) "the subaltern" is made up of "men and women among the illiterate peasantry, the tribal, the lowest strata of the urban subproletariat" (p. 78) and "the communities of zero workers on the street or in the countryside" (p. 84). Yet, "the subaltern" subject, is undeniably
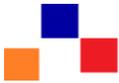
heterogeneous and efforts to essentialize it and define it as homogeneous would be fallacious. The construction of the subaltern identity should be based on their difference and not on the creation of a common essence. Strategic essentialism (SPIVAK, 1987) might come in handy when subordinate communities create a collective identity to fight for common goals but it is important to focus on characteristics that differentiate groups among them and make them unique.

Verbal and visual representation of "the subaltern"

Spivak (1994) claims that "the protection of "the subaltern" [has] become a signifier for the establishment of a *good* society" (p. 94) since "to ignore "the subaltern" is to continue the imperialist project" (p. 94). Still, she talks about the commercialization of interest in the "Other" nowadays which has also become a product for consumption by the media. In the modern world being marginalized has become 'attractive' to First World public since divergence from the upper and middle class mode of living is alluring.

Nonetheless, even when politicians, academics, activists, reporters or photographers have the intention of speaking for these groups, they enhance the fact that these groups can not represent themselves and need to be represented. The fact that their experience is not documented by the subordinate community itself but needs to be reported through the vocabulary, conceptual images or photographs of some dominant group silences them even more (ALCOFF, 1991-1992, p. 7).

It is usually the case that the discourse of the society's Other is not known through their mouth but requires mediation. The task of "counterhegemonic ideological production" (SPIVAK, 1994, p. 69) is a rare and difficult enterprise. "Inferior" groups struggle and long to be given a voice. Nevertheless, as John Beverly writes, "if the subaltern could speak in a way that really *mattered* to us, that we would feel compelled to listen to, it would not be the subaltern" (apud. KAPOOR, 2004, p. 639). Lack of the power of

speech is the main reason why these groups continue to live in obscurity (although their physical presence is everywhere).

The representation of the "Other" by dominant groups (SPIVAK, 1994, p. 66) creates a scene of power which still leaves "the subaltern" as the unprivileged and reproduces the relations of power. Power is not transferred to the unprivileged when they are represented but it stays with the ruling class who usually speaks for them and continues (willingly or unwillingly) to define the interests of the dominant group. Power, which is mainly in the hands of the group making the representation, is exercised in a way that tends towards the maintenance of the *status quo* which is capitalist exploitation. The relation of speech and power is evidently one of the mechanisms capitalism uses to perpetuate the asymmetries in power.

Making representations of subaltern cultures means gaining entrance to the civilization of the "Other", the unprivileged, through your own conceptual world which is always an arduous undertaking. Cultural difference, a characteristic inherent to human societies, makes the understanding of the culture of the "Other" difficult, even to anthropologists. An important step towards more ethical representations would be to turn "the subaltern" in the Subject of the representation and not the Object.

When analyzing representations made by dominant groups, uncovering the central themes in the verbal and visual discourse must serve as a means of catching a glimpse not only of the ways "subordinate" groups are conceived but also of the ways they imagine themselves. The predicament of the one making the representation is how to turn the subjugated that has been invisible into a Subject. Understanding the mechanisms that can empower the disenfranchised should be one of the tasks of anyone involved in representing "the subaltern".

Dominant subjects selectively represent the "Other" in order to define themselves. The dominant subject, moreover, imposes certain mechanisms to constitute the "Other" and therefore, in some cases, this leads to an essentialization of categories used in the representation. The verbal or visual
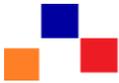
construction of the subordinate seeks to capture the real essence of the "Other", to make an authentic representation. This representation has been historically made in a way that is compatible with the ideology and the interests of the dominant institutions. Moreover, this construction of identity of the "Other" instead of empowering "the subaltern" might lead to the fabrication of continuous oppression.

Whoever is the one making the representation, might they be anthropologists, journalists, photographers or 'native' informers, representations are equally problematic. Any kind of construction, discursive or imagetic, depends on the person making the representation: their gender, culture, micro-macro history, geographical space in which they are inserted, socioeconomic status and institutional association.

The investigating subjects of subaltern cultures and ways of life should be critical of their privileged positioning (social, historical, geographical and cultural) and not contemplate their perspective and representations as objective, transparent and natural. For this kind of attitude perpetuates the preexisting relations of power and results in sustaining the *status quo*.

Postmodern epistemology valorizes the production of knowledge on "the subaltern". However, any production of knowledge on people and cultures that are considered peripheral is not altruistic. Academics need the Third World and its subaltern as a source of information on cultural difference in order to help them ascend in their career, publish more, get funds and tenure. The point is if such knowledge production brings some advantages back to "the subaltern", if it improves its living conditions, its economic situation or its social status. Appropriating "the subaltern" for self-promotion is, evidently, unethical. Nonetheless, should the search for mechanisms to relieve the suffering of the "Others" be abandoned?

Academics can be blind to the tradition that connects them with the power and this has become historiography's blind spot. Hierarchizations of cultures into "higher" and "lower" levels or into degrees of "backwardness" (GUHA, 1997, p. xvii) have always had the support of the academic

community. One of the reasons this has happened is that the scholars are usually part of the elite (maybe not the economic but the intellectual) and are faced with their own incapacity of accessibility to the world of the "Other", the subjugated.

Local subaltern cultures interact with the world, with local elite groups and also with other contiguous local and regional groups. The dominant finds ways to disseminate among "the subaltern" certain standards of morality and values derived essentially from the culture of the elite in order to avoid a string opposition to its ruling. The "Others" of the society have constantly been expected to follow the footsteps of the dominant culture and become capitalistic, consumerist and "modern".

"The subaltern" and Subaltern critical academics are interested in creating a discourse about subaltern realities whose effects can make a difference for these subordinate groups. People that belong to "the subaltern" fight in order to get a share in the wealth, power and prestige people of higher ranks enjoy. When academics try to speak for the ruled what emerges usually is the antagonistic aspect of the academy's relation to the dominant and not their collaborationist aspect. By collaborationist aspect we mean that the language both the elite and the academics use is the language of the dominant that fails to speak for the large masses and, consequently, for the nation. So, the subaltern's resistance to elite domination is a fight they, beyond any doubt, have to fight by themselves.

Dominant groups adopt mechanisms that manifest their capacity to regulate the connection of "the subaltern" community to the world. Representing subaltern groups verbally and visually in certain ways creates virtual forms of interaction between the elite and the peripheral culture. Representations tend to depict "the subaltern" as members of some group and as objects of empirical knowledge and not as an existence whose will and reflection constitute the actions it takes. "The subaltern" seems to have a "cause" but the reasoning or the logic of subaltern consciousness does not
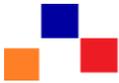
emerge. Circumstances of subaltern life seem to be external to their existence and as if not processed and acted upon by the members of the group.

These aspects of "subaltern" construction of identity are shown by referring to an April 10th, 2013 article in the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* that reported on the invasion of a hotel by the Tupinamba Indigenous people. The methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) orients the analysis of the newspaper discourse. CDA aims at making visible the relationship between language and social practice. As Gee (1991) supports, a linguistic theory should be the one that "claims that all practice (human action) is inherently caught up with usually tacit theories that empower or disempower people and groups of people" (xx) (apud. CALDAS-COULTHARD, 1997, p.31).

The title of the article was: "After invading a hotel, Indigenous take turns in bungalows and pools"[1] (Tradução nossa). The headline in newspaper discourse is crucial because it is a summary of the event and it usually contains the basic information about the topic (CALDAS-COULTHARD, 1997, p. 56). An article that has a title that calls the attention of the readers because of its unpredictability has greater chances of being read. In the case of the lead in this article, there is an evaluation of the event by the reporter. Ideological values are transmitted to the readers through the perspective of the journalist on the events reported. The descriptive verbs that report that the Indigenous "invaded" the hotel and are "taking turns" in bungalows and pools are associated with illegality. Invading other people's property is something the dominant culture condemns, especially when the invasion is done by "subaltern" groups. Invasions done by dominant groups are usually justified by necessities our modern way of living has created.

The first paragraph, the lead, informs us on the basic questions: 'who', 'where', 'when' and 'what'. But, in this report, it does not clarify the 'why'. The lead is the most important paragraph because it sets the tone of the article while giving information about the facts. This article uses irony to report the event: "About 70 Tupinabas have been having a new routine since invading a

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[1] O trecho original: "Após invadirem hotel, índios se revezam em bangalôs e piscina".
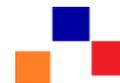
luxury hotel in Una, in southern Bahia. Previously occupied only with fishing, selling crafts and wandering through the woods, on Sunday the Indians spent their day watching cable TV programming, lying in beds, couches and mats. Some of them make a relay in bungalows, swimming pools and massage rooms"[2] (Tradução nossa). The vocabulary and tone used by the *Folha de São Paulo* reporter, Mário Bittencourt, clearly shows contempt for the Indigenous subsistence culture and for the way they request their rights. What comes to the surface by the narration is the laid-back attitude of the Indigenous after invading the hotel which is always interpreted as laziness by the dominant culture.

The identity of one of the Indigenous is constructed as: "Lying in bed in one of the 14 bungalows of Hotel Fazenda da Lagoa, where the daily rate is more than R$ 1,000, the tupinambá Marcelo dos Santos, 21, says while changing the TV channel: "I wonder why this hotel is considered luxurious, because nothing here interests me a lot." Despite the statement, he says that TV "has several good programs." And declares: "We are only using [the space], we have not damaged anything"[3] (Tradução nossa).

Speech representation or "quote" is a textual feature present in most media discourse in order to avoid impersonality as well as formality (CALDAS-COULTHARD, 1997, p. 57). In spite of giving voice to the Indigenous by quoting their speech, the newsmaker still controls the contextualization of this speech. The Indigenous is given voice but the content of what he says reinforces preconceived ideas on this subaltern group. The fact that he has been given the right to represent himself does not lead to

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[2] O trecho original: "Cerca de 70 índios tupinambás têm encarado uma nova rotina desde que invadiram um hotel de luxo em Una, no sul da Bahia. Antes ocupados só com pesca, venda de artesanato e andanças pela mata, desde domingo os índios passam o dia acompanhando a programação da TV a cabo, deitados em camas, esteiras e sofás. Parte deles faz um revezamento em bangalôs, piscinas e salas de massagem".

[3] O trecho original: "Deitado na cama de um dos 14 bangalôs do hotel Fazenda da Lagoa, onde uma diária ultrapassa a casa dos R$ 1.000, o tupinambá Marcelo dos Santos, 21, diz, enquanto muda o canal da TV: "Queria saber o motivo desse hotel ser de luxo, pois nada disso me interessa muito". Apesar da afirmação, ele afirma que a TV "tem vários programas legais". "Só estamos usando, não danificamos nada", declara Santos".

any kind of emancipation or ideological shift for the readers. He is not quoted explaining the reasons why they invaded the hotel or what they are demanding. This is only revealed later. The Indigenous wish to experiment the white man's life is also stated by the representative of the group in this article: "Indigenous people do not care for luxury. And we are staying here just to know the life of the white man," Santos said.

When the reporter starts describing these communities, the insight we get is one of poverty: "In southern Bahia, there are about 7,000 tupinambás, living in communities scattered in Una, Ilhéus and Buerarema. Conflicts with farmers and police are common. Some live at houses with cement walls and ceramic tiles. Others in mud huts with mud walls and thatched roof."[4] (Tradução nossa). As it is common in journalistic discourse, the facts are reported without their historical contextualization. Questions about the reasons that have led the Indigenous to become impoverished, the factors that cause conflicts between the Indigenous and farmers and the social conditions that maintain this situation are not answered.

Male, caste, class, racial and economic dominance perpetuate a historical relationship of power. These power relationships turn subaltern people into social rejects since human dignity is taken away from them. When "the subaltern" is represented, text and photographs show the most salient and visible aspects of subaltern circumstances and throw into secrecy and forgetfulness the deeper and most important causes of their predicament. Dominance always seeks to defend itself and there are techniques which tend to suppress the threat of the development of the consciousness of the oppressed.

The reporter, moreover, acts as the police when he states: "In a stroll through the premises of the luxury hotel, which occupies an area of six miles of a private beach, the report found only a few cushions and towels out of

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[4] O trecho original: "No sul da Bahia há cerca de 7.000 tupinambás, que vivem em comunidades espalhadas em Una, Ilhéus e Buerarema. Conflitos com fazendeiros e policiais são comuns. Alguns moram em casa com parede de cimento e telha de cerâmica. Outros em casebres de taipa, com parede de barro e teto de palha."

place. At the time of invasion, on Sunday, there were no guests in the hotel. The property has been closed since July 2012 because of environmental liabilities. Yesterday morning, in the area of the bungalows, there were about ten Indians, including some children"[5].

The subordinate people start creating a will for justice when they are capable of raising their consciousness in relation to the hierarchies that are imposed on them because of their origins, lack of basic means, gender, color or age. Their difference from the elite in the social, economical and political context leads them to rationalize differently from the way they have been taught. One of the ways "the subaltern" uses in order to fight submission is by collaborating while also resisting. Bhadra (1997) defends that "collaboration and resistance, the two elements in the mentality of subalternity, merge and coalesce to make up a complex and contradictory consciousness. How this consciousness overcomes and transcends its contradictions is another question" (p. 94-95).

Finally, the article gives some historical and political contextualization of the event: "This luxury hotel is the 47th property seized by the Tupinambás since February last year, when a wave of actions started to press the federal government for the demarcation of a total area of 47.3 hectares. In this claimed stretch of land, there are about 600 small and medium-sized properties, including the hotel, according to the Tupinambás. According to Funai, the federal agency responsible for indigenous issues, the file of the demarcation of the area claimed by the tribe is already being analyzed by the Ministry of Justice"[6] (Tradução nossa).

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[5] O trecho original: "Numa volta pelas dependências do hotel de luxo, que ocupa uma área de seis quilômetros de praia privativa, a reportagem encontrou somente algumas almofadas e toalhas fora de lugar. No momento da invasão, no domingo, não havia hóspedes no hotel. O estabelecimento está fechado desde julho de 2012 por causa de passivos ambientais. Ontem pela manhã, na área dos bangalôs, havia cerca de dez indígenas, entre os quais algumas crianças".

[6] O trecho original: "O hotel de luxo é a 47ª propriedade invadida pelos tupinambás desde fevereiro do ano passado, quando começou a onda de ações para pressionar o governo federal pela demarcação de uma área total de 47,3 mil hectares. Nessa extensão de terra reivindicada, há cerca de 600 pequenas e médias propriedades, inclusive o hotel, segundo os tupinambás.
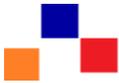
The subaltern expects from the state and government to assume responsibility for their well being. However, in this relationship, the positions occupied by the state and "the subaltern" are the ones of authority and submission respectively. The state always tries with different mechanisms to convince "the subaltern" that the authority of the state is a worthy and advantageous structure for them. It is assumed that the state has obligations towards its citizens but the citizens understand that they have duties towards the state, too.

Guha (1997) believes that historiography has ignored subaltern social existence and its drama over the centuries. And this approach to history is part of the tradition of this science. He suggests that "a critical historiography can make up for this lacuna by bending closer to the ground in order to pick up the traces of a subaltern life in its passage through time" (p. 36).

Another accessed voice is that of one of the partners of the hotel: "Artur Bahia, partner of the hotel, said he was upset with the situation: "They entered there and expelled five people from the hotel by force," he said. "We are filing [in court] a request for repossession suit. We want the hotel back. There is nothing characteristically Indigenous about the invaders."[7] From Artur Bahia's speech, it becomes apparent, that the white man imagines Indigenous identity in way that falls far from the reality. These communities exist side to side but the one does not know the culture of the other. Since identities are characterized by complexity and ambiguity, stereotypical ways of seeing the Indigenous will probably never fit contemporary Indigenous identity. What does the partner of the hotel consider as "characteristically Indigenous"?

The informative map in the article conveys information about the hotel while it would be expected to enlighten the reader about the historical contextualization that has forced the Indigenous to resort to these

De acordo com a Funai, órgão federal responsável pela questão indígena, o processo de demarcação da área reivindicada pela tribo já está sendo analisado no Ministério da Justiça".
7 O trecho original: "Artur Bahia, sócio do hotel, disse estar revoltado com a situação. "Entraram lá e colocaram cinco pessoas pra fora do hotel à força", afirmou. "Estamos dando entrada [na Justiça] com um pedido de reintegração de posse. Queremos o hotel de volta. De índio, os invasores não têm nada."".
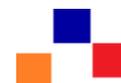
confrontations. Although *Folha de São Paulo* briefly refers to the reasons for these confrontations in the article, the newspaper is more interested in demonstrating how posh the hotel that was invaded is.

RAIO-X DO HOTEL

Salvador

BR-101

BAHIA

Hotel Fazenda da Lagoa

Ilhéus

Una

BA-001

NOME Hotel Fazenda da Lagoa

DIÁRIAS A partir de R$ 1.000

ESTRUTURA 14 bangalôs/ suítes, cada um com 140 m²

LOCALIZAÇÃO Em Una (BA), com 7 km de praia privativa para hóspedes

PASSIVO Fechado em jul.2012 por passivos ambientais

If we consider that there are readers who will just look at the photographs of the article and won't read the report, we see that the newspaper is less interested in showing that these confrontations are not something of the present but they have a long history that goes back to the appropriation of Indigenous lands by the white man.

The photograph that illustrates this article comes as a proof of the Indigenous occupation of the hotel. The caption reads: "The Tupinambá Indigenous, one of the 70 that invaded the luxurious hotel in Bahia, watches cable TV in a bungalow". Qualitative adjectives such as "luxurious" for the hotel and "cable" for the TV reinforce the idea that the Indigenous are in a different social space from the one they are accustomed to.

The way elements are displayed in the photograph has a crucial role in the meaning making process (ROSE, 2007, p. 20). The study of the internal layout and the spatial organization of the photograph guide the readings of the viewers. Moreover, the place each object occupies and the relations it establishes with the other objects exhibited conduct our interpretations and

can lead to the deciphering of the strategies that institutions use in order to produce their "realities". Critical Visual Literacy (ROSE, 2007) allows us to analyze the way images refer to our world and the ideology(ies) behind the image. The interpretation of the ideology that constructs the photograph will depend on the observer. However, the way the elements are exhibited in the image will guide the readings made of the ideology(ies) behind the image. The subject of the photograph is almost always represented in ways that are compatible with the dominant ideology which the photographer is part of.

Índio tupinambá, um dos 70 que invadiram hotel de luxo na Bahia, assiste à TV a cabo em bangalô

The photograph above has as its central figure an Indigenous who uses some typical Indigenous pieces of clothing. He is wearing a headdress of feathers and a vest. He is photographed in a long shot and his whole figure appears. He does not make eye contact with the viewer (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2000, p. 122) and does not invite us to share the visual composition. The gaze of the Indigenous is directed towards the TV. The oblique angle of the photograph also creates a feeling of detachment in the reader. The high angle makes the bed look huge. The oblique, high and long shot create a feeling that the Indigenous is not part of our world, he is the stranger, the "Other" (ibid; 144). The color of the bedspread is a bright blue

that animates the picture and contrasts strongly with the color of the skin of the represented participant, the Indigenous. The color of his skin blends, though, with the color of the wood of the bed and his facial characteristics cannot be defined. His face disappears and the effect of this dissipation is the non identification of the reader with him.

Representation and the location of truth

Representations that use western codes to analyze the non-Western world should be considered ambiguous. The uncritical use of categories to classify the "Other" whose culture the one making the representation is not acquainted with, is characteristic of a rational, modern and scientific approach toward the studying of societies whose point of view remains stubbornly inaccessible to the ones making the representation and who act unaware of their own blind spot which is their ideology and beliefs, their cosmovision.

Therefore, the analysis of representations has to make what-goes-without-saying explicit and this consists in reflecting on the genealogy of our own truths and how these truths have been constituted over the years. For Veyne (1984), what one knows, our way of seeing the world is like a mirror in which knowledge and reflection is blended. Ideology is blended in our views of the world and thus in the parameters used to justify what one sees. De Souza (2006) explains what Greenblatt called the "kidnapping" of language which is the process of fitting what is inexplicable to us into our own categories:

> This colonial attempt to "fit" the strangeness of the new reality encountered into the codes known to the European, is described by Greenblatt (1991:p. 88) as an attempt to render transparent what was seen as opaque, or to reduce the profusion of unknown signs into known codes, thereby imposing sense and control over what was seen as lacking both; Greenblatt calls this process the "kidnapping" of language" (p. 236-237).
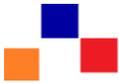
Pratt (1992) uses the term "anti-conquest" to refer "to the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony" (p. 7). So, journalists or photographers describe or take pictures of other cultures while reconfirming their own beliefs and systems of knowledge that can be completely foreign to the culture being represented.

The question is if the media or science, in spite of being open to representing any culture, they covertly promote what Mignolo (1995) called *cultural relativism* which "consists of a strategy of ostensively accepting difference, but using one's own values, disguised as objective and universal, as a yardstick for assessing other cultures" (apud. DE SOUZA, p. 2008, p. 204). Using Bhabha's (1996) terms, we should analyze if representations of "the subaltern" purport to attribute *equal respect* to "the subordinate" cultures by also granting *equal worth* (apud. DE SOUZA, 2006, p. 259). Habermas (apud. HOY; McCARTHY, 1994, p. 159) commented in an interview that there are societies that are considered superior to others because of their economic or administrative systems or with reference to their technologies and legal institutions. However, he does not accept considering these societies superior as a whole, as a superior form of life. Habermas[8] tries to free himself from the influence of western values that regard economic and technological advances as the measure of judging societies.

The newpaper's adept readers are likely to pass from a process of assimilation of their different points of view into *Folha de São Paulo's* mainstream ideology. The question of power is also to be found here. If the community of arrival, the readers of the newspaper, is formed by the same principles and beliefs as the community of origin, journalists, photographers and editors, no deconstruction or transformation of the sign will take place. However, if the community of arrival is formed by different values and beliefs the stimulus will undergo a process of transformation because it will be

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[8] ibid.
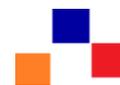
interpreted and constructed in tune with a different mind-set. De Souza (2008) puts forward this idea in the following way:

> If literacy involves the introduction of new meaning-making resources and related practices into a community, it is important to be aware of how these new resources, in their origin, are connected to essential values of the culture from which they originate; these values may be maintained or transformed in the movement of the resources from one community to another (p. 209).

The production of knowledge by dominant institutions should cease to be seen as universal, scientific and objective truths and start to be seen as truths that are products of the dominant *regime of truth*, this means truths influenced by dominant values, ideology, religion and market needs. The question of power is implicated in this production of knowledge.

According to Bhabha (1994) representations should be seen as formed by the *locus of enunciation* where they are produced. By bringing to the surface and questioning the context in which these dominant knowledges are produced, people can act as agents who show the non essentiality of any representation. Representations are not fixed and objective but are one alternative among many.

The study of the representations constructed by *Folha de São Paulo* does not aim at accusing the newspaper of falsity or proposing other more objective and truer pictures of reality. This would be impossible since any representation is bound to some context and thus always has a perspective and a point of view. However, by unveiling the processes by which such dominant representations are made possible, their situatedness might be revealed.

The contextualized grammar that *Folha de São Paulo* uses to construct its images is studied. From the various possibilities of representation, *Folha de São Paulo* chooses a standard form, which can be called its imagetic grammar that has passed from a process of normatization that turned it into a transparent, objective, logical and harmless. Researching how knowledge is
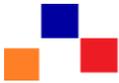
constructed through this imagetic grammar and how truth is validated through the visual tradition the newspaper has had, helps us have a more critical eye towards the realities it constructs. These visual truths are not free floating but are related to other truths with which they form a network that Veyne (1984) calls *regime of truth*.

Understanding that the truths the magazine supports are the product of socio-historical and cultural processes helps us stop seeing these truths as universal and objective but as local and subjective. This thinking does not tear from them their truth value but presents them as contextual, situated and contingent. The value of each regime of truth depends on the power attributed to it which is the result of global processes of cultural domination and submission. The transformation of the dominant regimes of truth into mainstream truths confers them value against other conflicting regimes of truth. However, there is no connection between the validity of each regime of truth and some external reality. The validity of these truths is internally conferred to them through their acceptance by the groups of people who believe in them.

Veyne (1984) sets out to deconstruct the dualism myth/truth. He claims that Greeks believed in their myths because their credibility was attributed to them by consensus over the ages. Myths were part of their tradition that was a historical truth transmitted from generation to generation. Myths, Veyne (ibid.) continues, are truths that mix the element of marvelous and should be understood not literally but as high philosophical teachings or allegories or a way of transmitting history. Still, ruptures in those myth/truths caused the adoption of another religion by the Greeks.

Nowadays, our world is characterized by the "formation of professional centers of truth" (VEYNE, 1984, p. 31). However, truth is a term that should be used only in the plural because there are different programs or regimes of truth and the different modalities of belief are related to the ways in which truth is possessed (p. 27). The ideology behind the 'truths' that *Folha de São Paulo* promotes is not a disinterested, natural and autonomous notion.
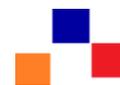
Professional centers of truth establish what each group tends to know or what it is allowed to know but the notion of truth as something objective and universal does not exist. Every truth is always tied to some system of truth, some criteria for truth which seem rational and reasonable in the specific context.

New forms of thought arise, according to Hoy (1994), when historical periods stop repeating the same patterns and present ruptures and discontinuities (p. 127). New forms of knowledge can also crop up when there is an understanding that current patterns of thought and practices have produced domination. Critical theory's purpose[9] is to produce dissent to dominant traditions by showing that assumptions of what is true have a historical origin contingent to the circumstances of their creation and do not have a transcendental or universal status. This genealogical research of the origins of modern truths will help us reach an understanding of the location and time that contributed to the formation of our truths.

When interpreting visual and verbal representations, the analyst participates in a system of different levels of interpretation. The subject that is constructed and interpreted does not reflect its referent or its essence. Subjects can be represented in different ways but are usually constructed in line with the conceptual world of the journalist or photographer in the case of newspapers. Moreover, interpretations will be linked to the history of interpretations of such or similar subjects in our society. Interpretations are, thus, self-interpretations or interpretations of the societies analysts belong to because the discourse that constructs interpretations is related to patterns of thought that characterize the analysts and the societies they are members of.

Critical approaches to such representations attempt to challenge the *status quo*. Social and personal development can be reached when theorists rethink their world and consequently themselves and by doing so they aim at achieving social justice. Shor (1999) points out that critical approaches turn us more conscious of the fact that we are historically constructed beings

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[9] ibid.

whose experiences are formed within the web of specific power relations (p. 1). A critical approach uses language or words that "question the social construction of the self" and seeks to construct reflective citizens (SHOR, 1999, p. 1). Questioning the representations of subaltern groups might lead us towards a more active citizenry.

Shor (1999) defines a critical approach as follows:

> Habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional cliches, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse (p. 12).

Taking unfamiliar routes of thought, or better, rethinking our patterns of thinking and received knowledge might be some of the ways we can take in order to become critical of our own knowledge. A critical methodology is interested in counter-hegemonic resistance by critically reviewing the internalized ideas of the dominant classes or ethnic groups. Human agency is the weapon people have in their hands to fight authority and we can find human agency in almost all contexts. Discourse and language are used as tools to understand experience and this way the symbolic can influence the concrete and vice versa.

Being critical means learning to unlearn the concepts we have been constituted by, a process that is slow, dialectical and unending. It crosses borders and becomes "transnational literacy that involves thinking against the grain of what we think we know and do not know; it demands alertness to the changing function of what it means to take certain positions within local and global contexts" (BRYDON, 2004, p. 83). For Guerra (2004) critical consciousness "is that moment when we think we know something that we did not know before, something that is both personally and politically significant" (p. 9).

Studying the patterns of exhibition *Folha de São Paulo* uses in order to represent subaltern groups can help us discern the political aspects of the knowledges the newspaper creates. There is an attempt to stop seeing its narratives and images as neutral by reaching an understanding of the patterns used to map the world and how they influence the ways the newspaper's readers relate to this world.

This genealogical research of our beliefs, this looking back is part of the process of understanding better the present and hoping for a better future, it is about seeing the world a bit differently from the way we know it. Brydon (2004) believes that identifying the historical beginnings of our ideology will "affect how we see the present and the potential for the future" (p. 76). If we succeed in changing our minds, we might also succeed in changing this world and create "a respect for all humanity and for the natural world we inhabit" (ibid.: p. 77). Brydon[10] relates also the phenomenon of the production of social ignorance and the consent that this ignorance acquires socially (p. 80). She defends that nationalist pedagogy, unlike postcolonial one, silences differences by not letting them emerge in the classroom context.

Gadamer uses the term "fusion or melting of horizons" to refer to the phenomenon of attempting to understand the horizon of another culture by using the horizon of your own culture (apud. HOY, 1994, p. 192). Perceiving that differences are the result of different perspectives acquired by beings belonging to distinct locations makes us expand our horizons without ever being able to abandon our own. Nevertheless, these understandings from the other's horizon transform and enrich our perspectives and consequently us. We find ourselves going through a process of self re-interpretation without ever forsaking our own tradition but becoming critical of it.

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[10] ibid.

Conclusion

The analysis of the construction of the Indigenous identity in *Folha de São Paulo* shows us that the discourse and photographs of the newspaper are instruments of cultural reproduction, highly implicated within the power structures (CALDAS-COULTHARD, 1997, 87). By figuring out the rules or the ideology or the *regime of truth* that lead to such representations, we try to show that the identity constructed is permeated by the dominant perspective of seeing the "Other". Therefore, the representation is more of a mirror and a reflection of the culture of the one constructing the subaltern identity than of the subaltern itself.

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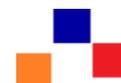
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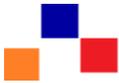
Aprovado em 20 de janeiro de 2014

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