cadernos pagu (47), 2016:e164713
ISSN 1809-4449

War of Images, Images of War*

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Abstract

In this paper I return to incursions that I made in media analysis in two previous articles: "Japanese is to TV Like a Mulatto is to Beer: Racial stereotypes in Brazilian advertising" (Rial, 1995) and "War of Images, Images of war" (Rial 2007), the latter about rapes in Iraq and the near silence about them in the media. Although the articles involve quite diverse issues, both point to stereotyped representations of social differences in the media, the first article involves race, the second gender, ethnicity and religion.

Keywords: Media, Advertising, Gender.

* Received February 26 2016, accepted March 08 2016. Translated by Jeffrey Hoff. This article is based on a lecture presented at the event to commemorate 20 years of the Nucleus of Gender Studies – Pagu/Unicamp, held in Campinas, São Paulo, on Sept. 10, 2014. The panel was coordinated by Iara Beleli, who I would like to thank for the invitation.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/18094449201600470013

In this paper I return to incursions that I made in media analysis in two previous articles: "Japanese is to TV Like a Mulatto is to Beer: Racial stereotypes in Brazilian advertising" (Rial, 1995) and "War of Images, Images of war" (Rial, 2007), the latter about rapes in Iraq and the near silence about them in the media. Although the articles involve quite diverse issues, both point to stereotyped representations of social differences in the media, the first article involves race, the second gender, ethnicity and religion.

The analysis of advertising – and how it employs stereotypes of gender, race, and generation – has been intensely explored in anthropology since the precursor study *Gender and Advertisements* by Goffman (1979). To look at only a few important works conducted at Unicamp, I remember one by Guita Debert, who analyzed stereotypes of old age in 2003, and a 2005 study by Iara Beleli about constructions of gender, sexuality and race in advertising. In Brazil, as Debert mentioned, youth have a stronger presence in advertising, with the elderly practically limited to presence ads for insurance or health plans, or used to symbolize loneliness (as in telephone company advertising) and incompetence (not knowing a new product). This is different than their role in other countries, in Europe for instance, where they are more fully inserted in daily life. With the passing of years, Debert noted changes in this pattern: she made a video about the presence of the elderly in Brazilian advertising, including a few exceptions, like the commercial of a margarine brand in which "grandma" is caught by her family in bed with a stranger and explains by saying: "we're going to get married". Meanwhile, Beleli (2007) sought to understand "how advertising reifies or destabilizes notions of gender and sexuality perceived as traditional" by analyzing ads published in entertainment magazines and winners of advertising competitions. She concludes that "advertising distinguishes categories of people and guides ways of being and living, focusing its effectiveness on the attention that it awakes in the consumer".

I began the text "Japanese is to TV Like a Mulatto is to Beer: Images of publicity in Brazil" (Rial, 1995) recognizing, like Goffman,

the limits of the analyses of advertising pieces and agreeing with his affirmation that "the success [of the study] requires only a little perversity and astuteness, and an important batch of photographs". Goffman goes farther by affirming that the analyses are nothing more than a "purely subjective reaction", "rambling subjectivity", when considering a "non-representative sample", "everything that you can read from a collection of images", "a collection of this type does not prove anything about the social" and so on (Goffman, 1979:36-37). These observations anticipate possible criticisms and appear to be a self-defense against questioning from fellow sociologists concerned with the representativeness of the sample used and extreme objectivity. Today, these caveats sound dated, at least among those who recognize subjectivity as part of the anthropological method. Although the factors mentioned should be considered, they do not prevent Goffman's study (1979) – and that of the authors mentioned above – from reaching instigating conclusions. There is no doubt that subjectivity is present in the reading of images that I chose to analyze – could it be any other way?

Beyond the limits indicated by Goffman (1979), there are others to be considered in the analysis of advertising images and of media texts in general. For example, very little can be deduced about the effect (or "influence", as some prefer) that these advertising images have or could come to have on other readers: and even less about what happens in the real world, among people, in their behavior, practices, lifestyles and constructions of subjectivities. This would require a *reception* study, because we know that images, and texts in general – images being a possible form of text – can be read differently by different receptors (Eco, 1968). I add, however, another warning: the two essays that I evoke here do not address reception because I was not interested in analyzing this. Reception studies is a field that is quite developed in Latin America – especially in communication, but much less so in anthropology – and should be continued, even to challenge the conclusions of analyses such as those that I propose here.

Japanese…

The proposal of the article "Japanese is to TV Like a Mulatto is to Beer: Racial stereotypes in Brazilian advertising" recognized the heuristic importance of advertising as a way of understanding social images. Based on these advertising texts[1], there is little that can be gauged about the behavior, practices, lifestyles and the real composition and distribution of individuals and ethnic groups and much less about the effect that the images found in advertising may have on Brazilian society. They are pretexts for exploring the advantages that advertising images offer research because of the intentionality of their construction (Barthes, 1964): by revealing images (in this case, ethnic and racial stereotypes), which correspond to social imaginaries and the dominant models subjacent to the distribution of racial roles in society; to verify how the advertisers create, based on a set of material available in social situations, in order to reach their goals, or that is, to present a verisimilar and readable scene.

The random sample of a large number of ads did not seek statistical legitimacy. The fact that certain associations were identified (black men /work, black women/maternity) does not make them more realistic or their interpretation more persuasive. It is well know that the analysis of a single image can be highly significant. I used various examples of the same theme because I was interested in perceiving the variations in the series (Eco), and, through these subtle variations how the theme is treated, I sought to detect its slow but perceptible transformation during the period studied.

In addition, I used different examples of the same theme not to show *that they are the same*, as the Frankfurtians affirmed (Adorno; Horkheimer, 1969), who always saw similarity in the products of the cultural industry, and emphasized *repetition*, but to look at the subtle differences that the theme presented and their

[1] *Text* here and throughout this paper is used in the semiotic sense of cultural production, thus, broader than written words.

meanings. I was interested in perceiving *variations in series* as proposed by Umberto Eco (1988), which proved to be revealing of slow but perceptible, transformations during the period studied.

That is, the idea that advertising texts – composed of iconic signs and linguistic messages (Barthes, 1964) – do not result from absolute arbitrary constructions of their authors imagination. To the contrary, they are expressions of social values more than absolutely idiosyncratic individual "creations". Moreover, I recognize that the construction of an advertising text, as Barthes affirmed in *Réthorique de l'image* de 1964, is always intentional.

The first finding of the more systematic reading of advertising in the first period of this study (1994-1995 and 1998-2000), therefore, was predictable. Native Americans, blacks and mulattos, are excluded from the overwhelming majority of Brazilian advertising. The texts promoted by the national media privilege whites. Young whites appear associated with cars, clothes, appliances, banks, food and any other product – the age group is significant. In Brazil, as mentioned above, the majority of the characters in advertising are young men and women, with few elderly people. The white presence is nearly omnipresent.

In fact, I knew this since the beginning of my research, because in an interview about globalization I conducted with an advertiser from McCann-Erickson in São Paulo, he told me that the main impediment to the importation of U.S. advertising texts was not legal, but the fact that U.S. ads nearly always include blacks in a manner understood to be unacceptable in Brazil. This required the Brazilian divisions of multinational advertising agencies to adapt the U.S. advertisements, and whiten them, so that they correspond to a supposed racist imaginary of the Brazilian consumer.

I was obviously facing different ethnic and racial values and it was impossible not to relate them with the rich discussions in the United States about the need to redesign the social space to give voice to ethnic, sexual and other minorities who had previously been muffled by the hegemonic representatives of the nation. We

will soon see how these racial differences were expressed in the Brazilian advertising studied.

Native Americans, were nearly totally ignored by Brazilian advertising: only twice did I observe their presence, each time as caricatures. One commercial had an "indigenous" man adorned with feathers among scores of people portrayed as coming from various parts of the world. They all run down a sand dune attracted by the noise of **Adams** chewing gum. In the second advertisement the caricature is even cruder. The Native American is presented by an image that conforms to the conventional pictorials of Native Americans from the sixteenth century: a man with lightly darkened skin, nearly naked and with his entire face painted white, is seen jumping around with his legs open in an arch, chasing a group of desperate white men and women. There is a cauldron in the background indicating he was a cannibal. The whites asked why they hadn't thought earlier of purchasing Bamerindus insurance. Risk is the object of the commercial and is portrayed with colonial stereotypes.

Blacks, meanwhile, were represented in situations similar to mulattos in commercials where the *body* is the central value, they are depicted mainly as a *laborers* – porters, drivers and maids. The use of blacks or mulattos thus appears to be determined by the association of the product promoted with *physical labor*: there are no blacks in commercials for automobiles but there is a black in a commercial about tire dealers. We found no black women used as models to promote clothing, but they are found cleaning them. There are no black women shopping in supermarkets, but they do appear cooking; and so on. In general, we can say that for Brazilian blacks and mulattos the images constructed through popular discourse and literature continue to prevail, where we have the association of the black man (and more frequently, the black woman) with more difficult labor (Moreira; Sobrinho 1994).

Meanwhile, when black women appear, they are usually performing domestic work, and are invariably portrayed next to a child, to attest to the black woman's condition as mother. *Maternity* is one of the traits traditionally linked to black women in

Brazil, reproducing an imaginary that dates back to the colonial period, to slavery and the use of black women as nurse-maids for whites, as mistresses and or as reproducers of the slave labor force. One campaign had white women who appeared alone, they did not need a child at their side to determine their dignity.

This imaginary that emphasizes the strength and productivity of male and female, black and mulatto bodies is confirmed in the representation of football. In this realm, the black is portrayed as an artist. Football in Brazil is black, that is mulatto, as anthropologist Gilberto Freyre maintained:

> An unmistakably Brazilian style of football has been defined, and this style is one more expression of our mulatismo, which as to our liking, agilely assimilates, dominates and softens into dance, curves or song the more angular European or U.S. techniques: whether in sport or architecture. Because our *mulatismo* – psychologically, to be Brazilian is to be mulatto – is an enemy of Apollonian formalism because his Dionysian manner – is the great mulatto trait (Freyre, 1945:432).

Football, however, requires physical ability, a quality that has been attributed to blacks since the time of the influential racist theory of Gobineau. Brazilian's football skills are considered in the popular imaginary to be innate – "football is not learned in school", "a star is born that way", "it's in the blood".

In fact, the great majority of the blacks found in advertising appear in testimonial advertising. They are not "blacks" in general but blacks who are super-men; having achieved success, their fame is the principal connotation of their image. This is not new: in the 1930's the football star Leônidas da Silva was probably the first black to do advertising, offering his nickname to a chocolate bar, the *Diamante Negro* (black diamond). The singer Wilson Simonal was contracted by Shell in the late 1960's and became the first black to appear in a TV ad in Brazil.

Ads with multiethnic images – like those made later by Benneton, (Finco, 1996) – were not found among those I analyzed.

The few blacks and mulattos only appeared within what were ideologically considered their domains – football, music, dance, drink and food. And with greater frequency a bit before, during and soon after the World Cups. That is, daily life in Brazil was shown with clearly defined racial borders. However, when it was time to represent the "Brazilian nation", black men and women entered the scene mixing with whites. And the World Cup was one of these moments. The background music used for an ad filmed for the 1994 World Cup in Los Angeles, and again in Paris in 1998, reflected this well: "The time has come for this tanned people to show their worth" – tanned is used as a metaphor for black and mulatto.

Therefore, their constant presence in moments when nationality is evoked, and the systematic purging of blacks and mulattos from ads at other moments, appears to show that the Brazil that confronts other nations in sporting or musical challenges is black, white or mulatto. Meanwhile, the Brazil that we encounter in daily life, when we buy toothpaste, cars and refrigerators, is a nation of whites, who are young, rich and happy, where blacks and mulattos are relegated to an inferior place, restricted to manual labor or to being football and musical stars.

In other words, in daily life in Brazil we find a vision not very different from the racist theories from the beginning of the last century. The ferocity of this ideology is exemplified in the etymology of the word used to designate the mixture of races (mulatto comes from mule, a hybrid animal incapable of reproducing). In contrast, in isolated situations, we find a Brazil that represents itself through the mystifying idea of a racial democracy, portrayed as an idyllic vision of a meeting of races.

In this way the advertising images (analogic representations) are consonant with the racist images (mental concepts) that are well expressed in a popular cartoon, cited by Freyre: "White is for marrying/ mulatta for f...ing,/ and black for cooking" (Freyre, 1984:10).

Japanese on the mind

And what about the Japanese? If *mulattos* and *blacks* always appear dancing or moving their bodies in grand gestures, the Japanese are represented in a near corporal immobility: only their heads move. A commercial for Sharp broadcast in July 1995 is a good example. Five Japanese heads appear on the screen – the rest of their bodies were invisible.

Japanese, blacks and mulattos thus appear as opposites in the advertising discourse. The black or mulatto is portrayed by his body, a body seen to possess superior physical capacity to the white body. This physical capacity is expressed either by *work*, *reproduction* (maternity), or *eroticism*. The black/dionysian is opposed to the white/apollonian, as Freyre affirmed (1945:432) and has a disadvantage in a social hierarchy where higher value is given to reason. For this reason, when the dominant social hierarchy is inverted in ritualistic moments as in the case of the World Cup (or as could be the case during the carnival period which was not included here), black men and women and their *bodies* excel.

In Brazil, *Japanese* men connote confidence and technical quality because in the popular imaginary they are seen as intelligent and hard workers, an intelligence that does not stem from individual brilliance, but from dedication, discipline and effort. Gifted by a command over advanced technologies, especially electronics, the *Japanese* are portrayed as focused, arduous employees capable of repeating the same task thousands of times until it is done well. The advertising characterizes not the *physical* but the *intellectual* labor of the Japanese. In addition, the *Japanese* are seen to be respectful of ancient traditions (which are even older and different than the more familiar European traditions), which connote fidelity and honesty. This is well expressed in a TV ad in which a "fake-Japanese" man appears in a Semp commercial from 1995. He has a mestizo face with wide

eyes, he is wearing a flowered short typical of *malandros*[2] and not the serious suit of other *Japanese* or the more respectable kimono and offers a television at lower prices.

Has this changed in recent years? I think so, a predictable consequence of growing attention to the politics of representation by the black and feminist movements. Today, it would be difficult to imagine an advertising campaign like one used by Brazil's largest oil company Petrobrás in the mid 1990's. The way it portrayed gender and racial stereotypes would certainly be considered scandalous. The ad presented a gas station attendant who, when opening the hood of a truck, finds small muscular men, mostly mulattos and blacks where the pistons would be. The attendant asks them "what kind of oil?" The response from below couldn't be more sexist: "oil X, *what do you think we are, little women?"* Another black adds a phrase with explicit sexual connotation *"Of course, look at the size of this piston"*, which continues in the final dialog in which the pistons sing: "*Em cabina pequena, sempre cabe uma morena*". (In a little cabin, there's always room for a little brown girl).

The invisibility of rapes

In this second part of the article, I would like to address my other essay, which was part of a broader study about televised images in the period after the September 11, attacks, in which I compared accounts broadcast globally and live by different international and Brazilian television channels. It will thus be a reading of images, focusing especially on gender relations, in one *genre*, journalism, which has been little addressed, because the analyses of gender relations in the media have emphasized narrative cinema, telenovelas and advertising using different

[2] *Malandro* is the term used to characterize a classic personality in Brazilian culture, one who uses trickery to obtain often illicit advantages, yet who enjoys sympathy in popular culture (DaMatta, 1997).

methodologies: audience studies, production studies, text analyses, screen ethnographies or others (Rial, 2004).

The journalistic coverage of the September 11 event is considered here as a breaking point in the mediascape (Appadurai, 1990), to the degree that it establishes modes of dealing with the news guided by interests outside the *journalistic field*. This is especially true in the United States, where the so-called USA Patriot Act was promulgated, the name is an acronym for ***U****niting and* ***S****trengthening* ***A****merica by* ***P****roviding* ***A****ppropriate* ***T****ools* ***R****equired to* ***I****ntercept and* ***O****bstruct* ***T****errorism.* What I want to emphasize is that this "national security" law deeply altered the relations of journalists with events, especially wars, by establishing various forms of censorship and limiting their access (such as the right of journalists to accompany any military mission). Although I cannot go deeply into the issue here, many studies point to the importance that the promotion of images had in ending the Vietnam war, which was not possible in later U.S. wars.

Ulf Hannerz (1990) began an article that analyzed cosmopolitanism by looking at the practices of war correspondents with the question "has anyone here been raped and speak English?" The sentence is a quote from the autobiography of U.S. journalist Edward Behr, and ironically points to the rush of journalists whose productions are framed in what is usually called sensationalism. The question could lead to the conclusion that rape at war is regularly in the news. But the contrary is true, rapes are a silent element of war reporting.

War[3]

The binomial women and war does not exclusively relate to abduction, as in many traditional societies, but also to marriage and to forced domesticity, the exchange of sexual favors for protection or goods needed for survival, and to forced prostitution and rape,[4] as observed in various situations, times and regions of the world as diverse as Uganda, Liberia, Angola, China, Korea and Latin America. The book by Karima Guenivet (2001) provides countless examples of the abuse of women during armed conflicts in different historic and cultural contexts. In Angola, abducted young women were given to rebels in marriage, in retribution for their contribution to combat; if the fighter dies, the young girl is married to another. Rebel groups, such as Sendero Luminoso in Latin America used women to cook, care for wounds and wash

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[3] I will basically treat wars in modern-contemporary societies. The anthropological bibliography about war in traditional societies is extensive. There are fewer studies by anthropologists in modern-contemporary situations. The fabulous classic study *On War*, by Carl Von Clausewitz (1982), is an analysis in the field of political sociology. But it is necessary to indicate that ethnographies have been appropriated by states at war, whether without the consent of their authors (Condominas, 1957) or with their agreement (Benedict, 1972). Recognizing the threat of this appropriation and its dangerous consequences for the populations ethnographed, the respected American Anthropological Association (AAA), in one of its meetings during the Vietnam war, suggested measures to avoid that ethnographic knowledge about Vietnam and Cambodia be used against the populations of these countries.

[4] We understand rape here as it is defined in a United Nations report: "the introduction by force, imposition or violence or any object, including, but not exclusively, a penis in the victim's vagina or anus, or a penis in the mouth of the victim, who may be a man or woman" (Coomaraswamy, Radhika 1998, my translation). Thus, rape here is closer to the English and French definitions, but is different than the Brazilian legal concept of rape (article 213 of the Penal Code), according to which rape is "to "force a woman into carnal conjunction, through violence or serious threat", but which limits the characterization of rape to the introduction of a penis in a vagina, and does not recognize other forms of violation, such as the introduction of other objects into the vagina or of a penis into a anus or mouth. These other forms of sexual aggression are considered by the Brazilian Penal Code as "violent and indecent assault" (artigo 214).

clothes. They could also be forced to contribute sexually to "the war effort", through prostitution – a forced prostitution in which, unlike sexual slavery, the fighter became a pimp and earned money that would be reinvested in the war.

If on one hand there is nothing new in the fact that women are the object of aggressions by the enemy (and even allies), on the other, their recent participation in battle is an extraordinary novelty. Studies conducted about wars between nations and armed conflicts show the rise of women to the battlegrounds, no longer as booty but as part of and leading armies. First as nurses, later to take up arms, as in the armed struggle of the left in some Latin American countries (Wolff, 2006), as part of national armies (that of Israel, since the first years of that country, and now in the U.S.) or directing prisons (Eisenstein, 2004), as martyrs in bombing missions (in Palestine and Chechenya) or in leadership post (as Ministers of Defense in France and Chile, and as National Security Advisers in the United States).

Rape

Rape at war is also not a new fact, or is its high frequency. Nevertheless, what is startling is the great silence about the issue, even when it involves rapes perpetrated by known men in Western military forces, like those committed by members of the U.S. military in Iraq (or by U.N. peacekeeping forces). Rapes in these circumstances are only gradually being denounced, and even so in little read United Nations reports, academic books and articles much more than in the *mediascape* (Appadurai, 1990).

During World War I, German soldiers used rape, among other atrocities, to impose terror on local populations.[5] Despite the identification of mass rapes of French and Belgium women, "in the interest of diplomacy in Europe" (Tescari, 2005:40), these acts were

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[5] "During the invasion of Belgium, the sexual aggressions committed by German soldiers were so frequent that they led to the conclusion that they were not only tolerated by officials but encouraged" (Tescari, 2005:39).

never taken to court. During World War II the use of rape was common in France, Russia and other occupied territories. Nevertheless, these acts were promoted in a manicheist manner, with both the Allied and Axis countries denying the practice. It is estimated that between twenty thousand and one hundred thousand women were raped when the Soviets took Berlin in 1945.[6]

Many rapes committed by Nazi soldiers against Jewish women remain in obscurity because the 1935 law for Protection of German Blood and Honor prohibited contact between Germans and Jews. Meanwhile, among the allies, the act was made official, because the contracts of Moroccan mercenaries who fought in the French army in Italy gave explicit permission to pillage and rape in enemy territory (Tescari, 2005:46).

Rape and sexual slavery was also found in Asia, and until today more than two hundred thousand Chinese, Korean, Philippine, Malayan, Indonesian, Thai, and Burmese women, those from what was then New Guinea, Hong Kong and Macao, who served as "*comfort women"* for the members of the Japanese army await reparations. The International Military Tribune for the Far East, established by the allies in Tokyo to judge the war criminals, judged 28 cases of rape and for the first time established "rape as a war crime. Commanders were considered responsible for sexual aggression committed by soldiers under their command", but did not consider any case among the comfort women" (Tescari, 2005:46).

In the most tragic case, which was known as "the rape of Nanking", nearly twenty thousand women were raped and mutilated in Nanking during the first month of the Japanese occupation in China, in December 1937 (Tescari, 2005:41). The way the Japanese government found at the time to avoid more mass rapes was to establish houses of prostitution in the occupied

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[6] Little is known about these rapes, because "most of the statements available come from the Nuremberg trials, at which only the Axis powers were tried" (Tescari, 2005:29).

territories, and recruit prostitutes, but also women who were tricked by promises of work, abducted or coerced, who were then raped daily (Coomaraswany, 1998).

The Japanese were not the only ones to adopt this practice. The U.S. military, during the Vietnam war, and previously in Japan, established bordellos for the servicemen, encouraged by the Pentagon. This was added to sexual violence committed by U.S. soldiers in a generalized way in Vietnam, where according to the testimony of veterans, "rape of Vietnamese women was 'standard operating procedure'" (Tescari, 2005:48).

During Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971, between 250 and 400 thousand Bengalese women were violated by Pakistani soldiers, of whom nearly 30,000 got pregnant (Nações Unidas, 1995). In Indonesia, the favorite sport of the soldiers sent to Timor was to violate women in front of their husbands and children (Guenivet, 2001:46).

During the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990, it was calculated that more than five thousand Kuwaitis were violated (Nações Unidas, 1992). In Nigeria, women suffered the same form of massacre in the name of jihad (Guenivet, 2001:12). In Mozambique's independence struggle, in the mid 1970s, mutilations and sexual violence committed by guerrillas terrorized the civil population; women were abducted, enslaved and had children by their enemies. In Liberia, the sexual aggressions of the civil war began in 1989 are still practiced; in Sierra Leone, government soldiers and rebels captured and sexually enslaved women and girls and doctors estimate that nearly 80% of them contracted sexually transmitted diseases (Nações Unidas, 2002, Tescari, 2005:4). In the Republic of Rwanda (where the estimates of raped women vary between 15 and 500 thousand), in the Congo, Guinea, East Timor and West Timor there have been an endless series of atrocities rarely denounced in the media.

The rape of women has become a weapon of war. This was the case in the Balkans, where there were reports of a state project of an unprecedented nature to encourage rape as a form of "ethnic cleansing", as first denounced by Gutman (1992). In fact,

the war in the former Yugoslavia taught the world that rape serve not only as "leisure" and spoils for soldiers – which is in itself unacceptable – but become an object of a systematic program, constituting a weapon of war and an element of a desired, conscious and specific military strategy. Like Gutman, French anthropologist Véronique Nahoum-Grappe (2003) has reflected on these rapes and showed that systematic violation now constitutes a new and unacceptable fact:

> Beyond the "common" atrocities committed by all the world's armies (violations, torture, pillaging...), the Milosevic regime added organized violation in fields planned for this effect and according to precise modalities (Nahoum-Grappe, 2003:32).

In the case of the rapes perpetrated in the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, the objective was quite precise: to erase the natural lineage of the persecuted population, introducing the foreign blood of the conqueror in the form of a child that the woman did not want and could not suppress. It involved a literal destruction of a lineage by placing the enemy's child inside the women. In the "fields of violation", as the locations where this crime were systematically perpetrated were known, the violated women were kept alive and prevented from having abortions. They were maintained prisoners until they reached six months of pregnancy (Guenivet, 2001). This new type of genocide paradoxically sought to kill an identity not only through direct extermination, but also and above all by preserving the life of the victimized women.

Voluntarily or under force, Milosevic's torturers scrupulously applied this principle. It involved, by means of political violation, not only "Serbifying" the non-Serbian blood, but also destroying the identity and honor of the targeted populations, fouling what was most cherished to them.[7] "The violator told the Bosnian

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[7] On 27 June 1996, for the first time in history, the international court at the Hague qualified the violation against woman committed in war as a "crime

woman he raped: you will have a Serbian child" (Tescari, 2005:16). Like the Spanish fascists who wrote on the walls: "Perhaps we will die, but you women will give birth to fascist children!" (Nahoum-Grappe, 2003).

In each case, rape is a message from the victors to the defeated. In this way, if there is a novelty in the rapes of war, it is the fact that this aggression is used politically, its "statization", the fact that it was ordered by military authorities. This type of violation has a perfectly genocidal intention – and is so precisely because it does not kill. It directly affects the raped women, and generates indirect victims, because it affects the honor of their entire families, or even the nation.

Rapes by the military also occur and take place in places closer to us. During the military dictatorships in Latin America, in the 1970s and 1980s, rape was one of the forms of systematic torture and the sexual assaults were not restricted to women – militant leftist men were methodically raped and even castrated. The silence in relation to the sexual aggressions involving men was and is still greater than the rapes involving women, as if in these cases the victim's shame was even greater. It is significant that among the numerous rapes of men that are believed to have taken place, only the case of one priest was made public – that is, of one man, however, one without a virile honor to maintain.[8] Later on, with the militarization of Chiapas, after 1995, there have been frequent charges of rapes by government troops against indigenous populations.

In all these cases we are inserted in logics of honor in which the victims often impose on themselves an embarrassed silence, because to reveal they are victims could be unsupportable to their comrades on the left, who shared the same codes of honor and

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against humanity" following the Foca process. Véronique Nahoum-Grappe, an anthropologist of the Center for Transdisciplinary Studies (CETSAH), worked on the places of genocide and testified about these war crimes.

[8] About the participation of women in the armed struggle in Brazil, see Wolff (2006); Goldenberg (1997); Costa et al.(1980).

virility as the torturers.[9] These are situations of which there are absolutely no images, just silence in the mediascape; but as we have seen, it is nothing new.

It is difficult to understand this silence in the mediascape, given the intense flows of information today; a silence that contrasts with the broad promotion of images and narratives of torture in the prison of Abu Ghraib or with the promotion (but not widely) of torture in the concentration camp at Guantanamo. In the two cases, when they were of a sexual character, they have been treated under the milder term of "humiliations". It would be difficult to understand the silence, if it were not for the perverse echo of the silence of the victims themselves. The silence appears to be a shield from the rapes and their dual violence, because the physical abuse is combined with the self-guilt of the victims, causing them to prefer a silence that protects the rapists.[10]

Thus, everything occurs in silence and anonymously, quite contrary to what took place with the celebrated African Muslim woman Mina. Westerners launched humanitarian campaigns in her defense that had broad repercussions in the mediascape, to save her from the brutality of the African-Muslim men ready to stone her, thus having her name and story broadly promoted.

It is thus not rape that is silenced, but some rapes. Quite the contrary, the *tropos* of rape (and of rescue) has been engrained in the Western imaginary by the cinema, since its beginnings: *The Birth of a Nation, The Last of the Mohicans, Drums Along the*

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[9] Gabeira (1980a and b). I would like to thank Miriam Grossi for this (and other) comments to this article. As Wolff has shown, concerning gender relations among the male and female guerrillas, "the fact that men began to help in the kitchen, giving up one of the major symbols of their "macho" role, and that women came to have more sexual freedom, did not significantly change power relations between men and women" (Wolff, 2008:128).

[10] This takes place when there is no total reversal of the meaning of the act, with the rapists coming to be seen as heroes, as took place with the football players of the Grêmio football club of Porto Alegre, who were arrested for rape in Switzerland, in the 1980s, and welcomed as heroes in Porto Alegre after being freed (Rial and Grossi, 1987).

Mohawk and *The Searchers* all present scenes in which women are threatened with rape by dark-skinned men and then rescued. As Ella Shohat and Robert Stam show well:

> In the realm of the colonial discourse, the *tropos* of rescue occupies a strategic place in relation to the battle of representation. The Western imaginary not only sees the colonized land metaphorically as a woman who must be rescued from her mental and environmental disorder, but gives priority to more literal rescue narratives, above all of Western women, and of non-Westerners who are under the domination of polygamous Arabs, libidinous blacks and "macho" Latinos (Shohat; Stam, 2006:63).

That is, not all women who risk being raped deserve to be rescued. Oriental women do not need to be rescued, because they are seen and portrayed as presenting an enormous sexual appetite,[11] Which makes the rape impossible:

> The hot-cold dichotomy suggests three interdependent axioms in relation to the sexual politics of colonial discourse. First, it believes that sexual interaction between black and Arab men and white women can *only* take place through rape (given that white women naturally do not desire black and Arab women). The second axiom affirms that the sexual interaction between white men and black or Arab women *cannot* result in rape (because black or Arab women are naturally "hot" and desire the white master). Finally, the third premise sustains that the interaction between men and women of black or Arab descent cannot result in rape given that both are "hot" by nature (Shohat; Stam, 2006:63-4).

[11] "In a scene from the film *O Sheik*, Arab women – some of them black – literally fight to conquer the Oriental man" (Shohat; Stam, 2006:63).

Rapes in the Iraq war

Who has heard of the rape of an English woman when she visited her relatives in Bagdad? Or of the rape of a nine-year old girl perpetrated by U.S. soldiers (or by U.S. mercenaries)? There are dozens of narratives of women who were raped in Iraq, most from the women themselves, with detailed descriptions of the aggressions and precise accounts of sexual abuses in reports of United Nations observers and NGOs (like the Red Cross and Human Rights Watch), which strangely remain absent from the quite loquacious mediascape. Many of the Iraqi women (Arabs and Muslims) raped by Western men, however, have no name, do not speak of the atrocities committed against them, and their attackers remain incognito although they wore uniforms with recognizable insignia. The violence against women in armed conflicts appears as a concern restricted to a quite localized part of the international community, close to the ideals of the feminist movement.

The electronic and print media remain silent, with fleeting exceptions. The U.S. magazine Newsweek, in May 2004, revealed and provided precise information about the existence of photos kept secret that included "an American solider having sex with an Iraqi woman prisoner and U.S. soldiers watching Iraqi men have sex with young men". These photos were seen by U.S. congressmen at the beginning of the investigations of the Abu Ghraib abuse scandals. Considered more inappropriate than other forms of torture, they were not presented to journalists.

Meanwhile, the material that I used in the study about rape in Iraq was available to anyone who wanted to access it on the Internet. The photos, (yes there are photos of these rapes) circulate in cyberspace, spread by pornography sites located in Hungary and the United States. I accessed them through a site on a well-known provider, AOL, which had a link for one day before it was removed, but they were also published on the site of an anti-American newspaper in Mexico *La Voz de Aztlan* (Cienfuegos, 2004), on May 6, 2004. They were republished in *The Boston*

Globe, a newspaper owned at the time by The New York Times. Co., on May 12, 2004, and nearly immediately discredited in an editorial by Martin Baron, who considered their publication a mistake for not having been "authenticated by U.S. authorities".

As we read in articles in these papers, hundreds of these and other horrible photos of rape circulated in Iraq, among Western soldiers, exchanged as if they were innocent baseball cards.

What do we see in the six photos? How should they be analyzed?

One of the photos shows the rape of two women dressed in black committed by three men in U.S. soldier uniforms. They were taken on a bright day in an open space, where we can see an oriental rug and a used car tire on sandy ground. One of the soldiers has been recognized as that of a U.S. intelligence operative and two others as mercenaries at the service of the U.S. army in Iraq, according to the newspaper. Therefore, the rapes were conducted by at least four people: the three men who appear in the image and a fourth person, who took the picture, apparently from up-close, considering it was probably taken with a simple digital camera.

My first observation, what wounds me first – the *punctum,* as Barthes would say (1981) – is the absolute emotional serenity of the men, revealed by their body postures. They are calm, controlled, as if they were conducting a bureaucratic task. This does not involve, therefore, soldiers who were momentarily left insane by alcohol, omnipotence and or by guaranteed impunity; it does not involve the often disseminated stereotype that associates rape to impulses of soldiers sexually frustrated because of a long sexual abstinence. There is a bizarre tranquility in their gestures, a sobriety that strongly contrasts with the desperation registered on the faces of the women. It also contrasts with the sadistic satisfaction that we read in the faces of the soldiers who tortured in Abu Ghraib. Here, in contrast, there is no eruption of an ecstatic irrationality, the libido does not appear to have possessed their bodies; there is moderation, restraint. The focus of the camera is precise, we see the contour of their bodies, as if the movements

were moderated and economic. This indifference that approaches boredom struck me sharply, causing deep wonder. It contrasts with the dramatic suffering of the woman, whose hair is in disarray, eyes half closed, mouth aghast.

My second observation of the photos to which I had access is the proximity of the male bodies, the homoerotic relationship that is established. In the first photo, we see two men standing up, one in front of the other, the woman crouched between them, the hand of one of the men is holding the head of the woman against the other man's sexual organ. This proximity also appears in other photos. In the second photo, once again, the hand of one man holds the head of a woman against the other man's sexual organ. In the photo that I identified as number six, one of the men penetrates the woman from behind, while another forces her to have oral sex with the help of the hands of a third man. The rhythm of the first, each one that penetrates her, has a repercussion in the second and third man. The objectified body of the woman mediates a homoerotic relation between them.

A third point that should be emphasized in the photos concerns a detail that intrigued me for a long time: why in the photos that I found were the women raped always wearing black? The question would be irrelevant in a country where a conservative Muslim religion is predominant. But this is not the case. Iraq, before the U.S. invasion, was a secular state. Women were free to dress as they pleased, many were educated in universities and held important posts as university professors, as scientists in laboratories and in government, and the use of the veil and the chador were not common during the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. So why were the women raped always chosen among the most orthodox Muslims?

The statements of the victims that I read in the United Nations reports and from NGOs do not explain very much. They indicate that in the rapes, the choice of the victim appears to have been by chance: for example, a woman who was the victim of a rape would be speaking with other women at the door of her home. She would be approached by soldiers in uniform who

abducted her in front of the other women and left in an army jeep, without explanation. The woman would disappear for a few hours or a few days and would then be returned, wounded and with marks of torture.

Why then the choice of women dressed in the chador in the photos?

The hypotheses that I reached did not completely satisfy me. It could be a coincidence based on a concern to not be caught: the soldiers preferred to capture women in low-income neighborhoods in the periphery, because they were less watched by security forces, and are precisely where there are more women who use the chador.

Is it because it was easier to abduct them than in downtown Baghdad, which is theoretically under greater control? Or is the choice due to the fact that these women, because they come from orthodox families, would presumably be more submissive, and not speak for fear of reprisals from the men in the family? It is known that in a moral system based on male codes of honor, raped women can come to be sacrificed by their own families, and often prefer to commit suicide, and thus provide a greater guarantee of safety for their attackers.

These suppositions, based on a logic of a practical order, did not seem sufficient, to justify the choice. It was only later that I realized that the rapists needed this clothing, a religious and ethnic mark, to locate their sadistic act. The chador functioned as a symbol of Iraq, a diacritical mark of cultural identity. Firstly, the black clothing served to territorialize the rapes. It thus had a function similar to the towers of a mosque or palm trees and exotic plants used by foreign journalists in Iraq as background in their broadcasts or a beige vest with lots of pockets like Indiana Jones, which they wear to indicate that they are in dusty, dangerous Third World countries, with excessive nature. The chador, combined with the soldiers' uniforms, located the rape: it involves an act of war, in an Arab country – religion and ethnicity here, as many other times, are merged.

Ok. The black clothes of the women and the uniform make the rape an act of war. Even so, it should be asked: what do the rapists gain by establishing this violence as an act of war? And photographing it?

The black Islamic clothing attributes to the rape its unique character, its *hic et nunc*. It is not any rape (if it is possible to think in these terms in relation to such aggravated violence), committed in a deserted street or even inside a domestic space, like the thousands that take place daily in the world today. The chador transforms the photo into something unique, a trophy, increasing its value. Because it is not any rape, because of its rarity, the act gains value in the field of symbolic goods (Bourdieu, 1974). A value that is not symbolic, but also of exchange, given that in the sordid market similar to that of snuff films (films of real assassinations) these photos gain value by being identified as such. The Iraq war charged the photos with more symbolic meaning, and thus, made them economically more profitable. They become an economic good.

Another consequence that is no less perverse of the promotion on pornographic sites is the perpetual renovation of physically suffered violence. Yes, because with each access to the sites these women are once again victims of rape, now in a virtual manner, a voyeuristic rape committed by the thousands of active receivers of the images. And since the images are provided on sites with paid access, the women continue to work for their attackers, like the genie in Aladdin's lamp as Leach astutely evoked (1980).

The photo-trophy is the memory of a sexual triumph, of an absolute phallic power, in a relationship of substitution. And more over, it is a trophy that, *ad infinitum*, multiplying the rapes, multiplies the victories in the form of money and prestige, because, we cannot forget, they circulate among the soldiers like rare baseball cards.

The sacrifice

And why do the raped women commit suicide as indicated by some of the reports?

I understand the suicide of the Iraqi women as a *sacrifice*, in the anthropological sense of the term attributed to it by Leach (1980:312-6), in which the act of the *sacrifice* serves to cleanse the sacrificed party from the filth in which they were momentarily found. As in all sacrifice, these suicides present elements of a purifying operation that purges the filth, removing the contamination. When the filth penetrates deeply, as in the case of these women, when it is incorporated, it is their own body that must be given in sacrifice.

Honor and sacrifice; it is about this imaginary that feminism, as a libertarian cosmopolitics, should act, knowing however, that it does not have complicity from the communication media, because, even if the mediascape is fragmented and a place of identity politics of representation, it maintains great silences. Rape in Iraq, rape in war, is only one of them.

Post-script

To write about the current themes is an especially difficult task because of the constant movement of events. While I have tried to maintain the text up to date, important changes took place since I finished writing it. The most significant was certainly the condemnation of a group of American soldiers (Steven Green, James Barker and Paul Cortez) who participated in the rape of Abeer Qassin al-Janabi, a 14-year-old girl, who was later assassinated along with her family in the city of Mahmudiya, south of Bagdad.[12] The trial of these U.S. soldiers received global

[12] "The Iraqi mayor, Mr. Fadhil, said that the body of the rape victim, Abeer Qasem Hamzeh, had multiple bullet wounds and burns. Her sister, Hadeel, was shot in the head, he said, reading a hospital report; her father Qasem Hamzeh Rasheed, who was approaching 45, suffered a brain injury; and her mother, Fakhariya Taja Muhassain, was shot several times (Cloude Semple, 2006).

coverage, including an appearance in Brazil on the country's leading evening television news program, the *Jornal Nacional*, on Rede Globo, under the glaring headline announcing an exemplary condemnation of 100 years of prison. What was not said is that, because of a previous agreement, the rapist condemned to the 100-year term will not remain in jail more than 10 years, and that the "prison" is in fact a military base where he may be living and continue to provide military service. In any case, victims (and aggressors) finally begin to have names. The denunciations of these rapes in the mediascape, however, remains eventual and fleeting.[13] This is also true in Brazil, where each year "0.26% of the population suffers sexual violence, which indicates that each year there are 527 thousand attempted rapes in the country, of which 10% are reported to the police".[14] The rape in 2016 of a 16-year-old girl by more than 30 men, finally provoked expressions of indignation on social media and in the streets, which could not be ignored by the media.

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[13] Contrary to the tradition of silence, two Sunni women revealed on Iraqi TV that they were raped by Shiite soldiers in a military zone controlled by Americans and by the Iraqi policeman Harith al-Dhari, the leader of the Sunni Association of Muslim Schools, and said they knew of hundreds of cases of rape that were not made public in the past two years: "The families of the victims are concerned with their honor and reputation, so they protect them and pray that god will avenge them one day", they told Iraqi the television channel Al-Sharqiya" [http://www.estadao.com.br/ultimas/ mundo/noticias/2007/fev/23/ 86.htm].

[14] According to the Instituto de Pesquisa de Economia Aplicada (IPEA), Consulted in June 2016 at http://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/images/stories/PDFs/nota_tecnica/140327_notatecnicadiest11.pdf

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