LITERATURE AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Character Types in Brazilian Reality Shows: Cultural Manifestation of a Media Protagonist Syndrome

Ana Luiza Coiro-Moraes* and Flavi Ferreira Lisbôa Filho[†]
* Faculdade Cásper Líbero, São Paulo, BR
[†] Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, BR
Corresponding author: Ana Luiza Coiro-Moraes (anacoiro@gmail.com)

The article argues that today's media characters may be understood through a typology. As models of acting, these character types appear in programs that raise ordinary people to the heights of media visibility through reality shows. Our article presents a proposal for mapping the characters in *Big Brother Brasil*, seasons 4 and 10, and discusses what the character types say about the protagonist syndrome and Brazilian culture.

O artigo argumenta que os personagens da mídia de hoje podem ser entendidos através de uma tipologia. Como modelos de atuação, esses *personagens-tipo* aparecem em programas que alçam as pessoas comuns à visibilidade midiática através de *reality shows*. Nosso artigo apresenta uma proposta para mapear os personagens que apareceram na 4ª e na10ª temporada do Big Brother Brasil, e discutir o que estes personagens-tipo dizem sobre a síndrome do protagonista e a cultura brasileira.

The Media Protagonist Syndrome and Speech Positions in Reality Shows

This article develops an understanding of the ordinary people who increasingly inhabit the "real world" of the media, who increasingly resemble characters from literature and theater transported to the TV screen. Today's protagonist who enjoys media exposure is quite different from the "ordinary" folk of yesterday, whose opinions and experiences remained largely within a private domain where similar structures of feeling (Williams 1977) were recognized and shared within families, at the workplace, or in leisure environments with little public visibility. Today, there are ordinary people who have begun to take a place within the prime spaces of the media (in which they used to factor only as spectators), deliberately abandoning their mundane lives to become the characters of reality spectacle; they are present in media spaces through stories originating in the materiality of lived experience. People who emerge from the audience environment wear the costumes of those who traditionally occupied the space of leisure productions: the famous. The latter, in turn, become models of action for the ordinary candidates of this new protagonism. Thus, if there is an evident movement of media in the direction of including "ordinary people" in their programs, this also generates a new matrix of behavior emerging from the fame that is offered to them. This is known as the protagonist syndrome (Coiro-Moraes 2008).

The apparent strangeness of the new characters emerging on the media scene is clearly sharpened by the massive audiences that reality television shows have acquired, offering amusement, occupying people's leisure and proliferating indefinitely. According to the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*, *Big Brother Brasil* 4 (BBB4), produced by Globo Television Network, ended with an average of forty-eight points (each point represents about sixty thousand homes watching the program) and a market share (percentage of connected televisions that were tuned into the Globo channel) of 69 percent. On March 30, 2004, the show had a record audience: the Brazilian research institute IBOPE registered an average of fifty-four points and 75 percent market share "when the gas station attendant Solange was eliminated with 79% of the nearly 13 million votes (Globo data)" (*Folha de São Paulo* 2004). Similarly, on February 24, 2010, *Big Brother Brasil* 10 (BBB10)

scored an average of thirty-four points and a 55 percent market share in the greater São Paulo area (*Folha de São Paulo* 2010).

In this regard, the protagonist syndrome becomes a situation that is common to subjects who want to occupy center stage, to be raised to a new condition for which they have not yet been trained—as actors on the media scene—yet having their own experience as observers of media events as their already "tested" references. That is our hypothesis in this article, taking inspiration from Raymond Williams's concept of the structure of feeling and attempting to sketch a typology of the characters who occupy this space/time in a modernity that has been forged within the media.

Williams ([1974] 2003) thinks of television as a medium containing various dimensions: as a technology (broadcasting), as a social practice (watching television), and as a cultural form (programs). In this article, we try to articulate the social practice by means of the reception of Brazilian reality show, discussing the people's choices when people vote for who stays, who leaves, and who wins the program. We also examine the cultural form by observing the character typology. In other words, we want to answer Fernando Andacht's (2003, 87) "recurring question" when he watched and researched the reality shows *Big Brother Brasil* and the Uruguayan *Gran Hermano*: "los de la casa de *Gran Hermano* ¿son o se hacen?"

A Cultural Form: Structures of Feeling in the Reality Show Format

Big Brother, first broadcast in 1999 in the Netherlands, arrived in Brazil in 2001. McMurria (2009) points to the global business of reality TV, situating it "as a product of first-world commodity capitalism and a 'global modernity' in which wealthy countries leverage economic and cultural power" (McMurria, quoted in Ouellette and Murray 2009, 15–16). The formula of the Dutch-based media company Endemol can and has been used in different markets:

> Endemol supplies a "playbook" (or a bible) and "coach" (or producer) who consults the local pro-ducer of the adaptation of the show's fundamental elements. In [the] case of Big Brother [these] elements include no communication with the outside world, the weekly competitions and elimina-tions of contests and, most important, the [round]-the-clock use of the cameras that monitor the [contestants'] activity. When things work well, a format becomes an international brand with dis-tinctive, and carefully modulated, local variations—a classical formula tweaked to suit local tastes. (McMurria 2009, 151)

Culturally, reality shows can be seen as hybrids, stretching beyond instituted genres, subgenres, and formats to constitute a structure whose major characteristic is to share the subject who portrays them: the ordinary person.

For Duarte (2004), genres can be classified as factual, fictional, or simulational. Duarte explains that in factual genres (metareality) there are subgenres like television news, documentary, report, interview, and talk show. In that kind of genre, there is a direct interface between reality and discourse and a commitment to truth and the fidelity of reporting. In the fictional genre (suprareality), in subgenres like the novel and the sitcom, the author recognizes an indirect relation of similarity between reality and discourse. The commitment is to the internal coherence of the story (as Aristotle had already said, in *Poetics*). In the simulation genres (parareality), whose most representative subgenre is the reality show, there is an exchange ratio and/or equivalence between the parallel real and the discourse. In this type of format, the author identifies a commitment to the performance, as if exposure were to replace the report.

Commenting on the first reality TV project—*An American Family*, which was broadcast on American television in 1973—Williams ([1974] 2003, 71) calls it a "drama-documentary" and notes that television "can enter areas of immediate and contemporary public, and in some cases, private action more fully and more powerfully than any other technology." Corner (2002) points out the particularities of the reality show (*Big Brother*), also comparing it to the documentary genre. He talks about a "postdocumentary" culture in which talk show and soap opera formats work in the documentary genre, changing its structure:

> Big Brother comprehensively and openly gives up on the kinds of "field naturalism" that have driven the documentary tradition into so many contradictions and conundrums for near on eighty years, most especially in its various modes of observational filming (e.g., cinema vérité, direct cinema, and the various bastardized "fly-on-the-wall" recipes of television). Instead, Big Brother operates its claims to the real within a fully managed artificiality, in which almost everything that might be deemed to be true about what people do and say is necessarily and obviously predicated on the

larger contrivance of them being there in front of the camera in the first place. . . . Clearly, both the changing formats of the talk show and the soap opera have mapped out in advance some elements of the "structure of feeling" (Raymond Williams's phrase is entirely appropriate to the affective emphasis) toward which a new documentary energy has been drawn. (Corner 2002, 45)

In search of a form of interpretation that enables us to access the subgenre reality show, we refer to Raymond Williams, looking for a structure of feeling that places in focus a culture that in other times was inscribed in the private. Today, it is the non-news item that is made public and whose stars are ordinary people. In coining the phrase "structure of feeling," Williams was searching for a term that could describe and reconcile ideas that, taken a priori, had been seen as antagonistic, such as the materiality of experiences of the "real world"—its structure—and the intangible realm of feelings, while at the same time placing them within the specificities of each particular historical moment. In *Preface to Film*, the phrase appears for the first time:

> I use the phrase *structure of feeling* because it seems to me more accurate, in this context, than *ideas* or *general life*. All the products of a community in a given period are, we now commonly believe, essentially related, although in practice, and in detail, this is not always easy to see. In the study of a period, we may be able to reconstruct, with more or less accuracy, the material life, the general organization, and, to a large extent, the dominant ideas. (Williams 1954, 21)

However, if together with hard concepts inherited from Marxist structuralism we can also catch a glimpse of a philosophical conception of Zeitgeist as a formative idea of Williams's notion of the structure of feeling, to some extent a secularization of the demiurgic aspect of the concept can also be detected therein, conferring the role of historical protagonist of social change not to the *spirit* of a time but to the materiality of human experience. Furthermore, Williams (1977, 131–32) considers "what is articulated" and "what is actually experienced" as situated at the same hierarchical level of concreteness:

> What we are defining is a particular quality of social experience and relationship, historically distinct from other particular qualities, which gives the sense of a generation or of a period. The relations between this quality and the other specifying historical marks of changing institutions, formations, and beliefs, and beyond these the changing social and economic relations within and between classes, are again an open question: that is, an interplay of specific historical questions. . . . We are talking about characteristic elements of impulse, restraint, and tone; specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought: practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and interrelating continuity.

Grossberg (2006) detects a contemporary structure of feeling in which exists a relocation that undoes cultures' identities. For him, "we are in the midst of a conjunctural crisis in which culture itself is being rearticulated and relocated, and in which the 'center' of culture as it were has moved":

> Huge sectors of culture have become so ordinary; they have been so absorbed into everyday life, that they have become residual, insignificant in Lefebvre's sense. . . . [A]s a result of a new locus of relationality, as part of an emergent structure of feeling, its very existence as a (set of) discursive formations is being reconstructed, even as it is involved in a reorganization of everyday life. (23)

In the case of the cultural form we are studying, the reality show, we investigate how one's everyday life becomes spectacle and, above all, we trigger the concept structure of feeling to research how Brazilian social structures are represented in the experience (or feelings) of the "participants-characters" of the program. For this, we take Brennen's (2003, 118) definition: "methodologically, structure of feeling provides a cultural hypothesis which attempts to understand particular material elements of a specific generation, at a distinct historical time, within a complex hegemonic process."

The Aesthetic Origins of the Reality Show's Cultural Form
The cultural time-space that favors the emergence of a protagonist syndrome has an aesthetic of its own, which is constituted by a given structure of feeling that is culturally constructed in the West. Historically, we are able to identify the first "symptoms" of the formation of an agora for protagonism in the movement of notions and practices from private space into public space and in the rituals of the spectacle that is contained

in this dislocation, which was already in place among the Greeks and the Romans, wherein individual feats made their way into public space and were venerated in sports, games, and the arts.

However, it is within romantic aesthetics that the inaugural framework for the protagonism of the common person can be found: at the same time that the bourgeoisie establishes itself, historically exalted through the notion of human rights (including the inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness, as the US Declaration of Independence stated in 1776), there emerges an artistic and cultural movement exalting the emotions and feelings of its characters and distinguishing them, regardless of their aristocratic origins.

Nonetheless, to uncover the aesthetic origins of the protagonist syndrome, we must go beyond these early signals of the emergence of cultural conditions conducive to reality shows examine feuilletons—novels that were published as a serial story printed in a daily newspaper, marking the debut of the large-scale press organized as a culture industry—and *fait divers*, or reality as plot.

The feuilleton, a form of entertainment that involves high levels of emotional investment, is maintained as mass expression and, adapting itself to the new technological supports of the twentieth-century culture industry, arrives on the scene of twentieth-century media culture in an electronic version: first, in the form of the *radionovela* (radio soap), and later in its televised forms. The *telenovela* (a specifically Brazilian or Latin American form of soap opera)—sometimes considered the thread that led to the implementation of modern entrepreneurial capitalism in Brazil through its realist-naturalist form of representation and its themes always so close to the "truth," yet at the same time "reenchanting" the lives of ordinary people on a daily basis—appears as one of the "models" used by audiences in their readings of reality show (see Ortiz [1988] 1994).

To a certain extent, we can question the human "strength" of the character types that are "reproduced" or "invented" by ordinary people when they rise to the status of protagonists of media productions. They neither fall within the realm of mimetic representation of reality nor become "real" by playing themselves within reality spectacle; rather, there is something of an "invented being"—not a vehicle of concepts in a philosophical sense, but the image of something—moving in a universe in which the possibility of affective interaction between "people" and media "characters" unfolds.

Classical studies of literary theory, intending to establish parallels between people in their daily lives and fictional characters, present premises such as the distinction between well-rounded and flat characters. The former are those whose complexity elevates them to the status of great figures in existential terms; the latter, without psychological depth, are constructed in relation to certain sets of characteristics, and thus are "character types."

It is precisely this classification of flat characters that makes it possible to find here an approach to media characters. They take inspiration from their precursors: the fictional beings of the commedia dell'arte and the feuilleton novel, which are fused and transmuted into the characters of the *fait divers*, radio and television soap opera, and finally, the configuration of models for the character types of current reality spectacle.

In the improvisations of the commedia dell'arte, the most important element was the characters, whose standardizing behavior, language, and situations made it possible for the audience to identify the character type on-stage. These character types came in two general categories: bosses and servants, the latter subdivided into young people in love, old merchants, doctors or army officers, and astute or angry serfs. The misadventures plaguing the pure and naive couple, in the face of the greed or lust of the old or aided by the clever and practical spirit of servants, can still be identified, in some essential way, in present-day feuilleton-style dramaturgy.

Feuilleton characters are present in the origin of a kind of typology that can be located, first, in the way this fiction genre appears in newspapers, functioning even to propel them as businesses, given their function of mercantilist attraction of readers. Another aspect to be considered is the presence of flat feuilleton characters in the genesis of media characters: the hero or heroine who always protagonizes plots, the villain or antagonist, and the Manichaean division of good and evil characters that is repeated in those who have supporting roles. These types are reiterated in radio soap operas and have been rendered eternal in imagery, in Hollywood film and television soap operas, and they are identifiable even today, wherever this type of entertainment is disseminated.

Similarly, although today new types have also appeared (including print journalists and radio and TV show hosts), the roots for a typology of essentially media-created characters can be found in contemporary (or feuilleton-inspiring) *fait divers.* Character types like the ridiculed politician, murdered woman, victimized child, police officer, and passionate villain prevail.

Yet the center of the debate here is the search for a typology of characters that may represent the possible sources of inspiration for the construction of the character types of reality spectacle. In this regard, what

fuels the protagonist syndrome, in addition to feuilleton and *fait divers* characters, is the almost always recurrent types of production, such as the following:

1. The *fotonovela*—a romance or crime story illustrated with photos—protagonized by a young maiden who must confront obstacles (usually placed in her way by a villain, male or female) to finally reach her goal, which is marriage to a charming young man.
2. The radio "soap opera," the first mass product to be directed specifically to a female audience (an initiative of firms that manufactured cleaning and hygiene material for domestic use, from which its name was derived), represented an important step forward in the development of a more "professional" format for the culture industry, beginning in the United States and then moving on to America Latina following the Cuban prototype. Its character types were an audio adaptation of the consecrated feuilleton formula: heroine or plot centered on romantic obstacles or ending with marriage to hero.
3. The telenovela, with regard to personality types, can be separated into two stages. In the first stage, there is little more than the adaptation of protagonists, antagonists, and supporting characters from earlier stages of the feuilleton (from newspaper endnotes to photo and *telenovelas*); in the second stage, new types appear and the heroine, in particular, is adapted to new configurations of woman, from maiden to modern heroine and all her varieties (including the good prostitute).

These media characters are analyzed in terms of their influence on the types developed for the ordinary subjects who enter media environments through reality spectacle. Yet given the limited space we have here, we look at just four types that are easily transported from fiction to reality shows: protagonist couples and their supporting characters.

We can enumerate a number of traits that make up the *telenovela* hero: from the polite, abnegated, and discrete Dr. Albertinho Limonta in *O direito de nascer* (The Right to Be Born) to the young man who in his search for a "true love" moves closer to the feminine, to the beauty standards that come to prevail in the second stage, with "well-built," muscular actors such as Marcelo Novaes or Marcos Pasquim parading around shirtless to exhibit their carefully sculpted shapes that are the result of long hours working out at the gym. Nonetheless, no changes are more imposing than those that refer to the way women's roles shift in the second phase of the telenovela. The modern heroine, like all other heroines of the feuilleton legacy, is lovely (following the patterns of evolution of beauty standards for each period: from beauty queens like Vera Fischer, Miss Brazil in 1969, to today's stars who come from the ranks of fashion models, like "top" model Gisele Bündchen), generous (rather than friends she has "protegés"), loyal and sincere (she neither lies nor betrays), and caring (even in her attitudes regarding the poor and less fortunate, which distinguish her from the villain).

Yet these qualities, which accompany the evolution of women's roles after feminism, may also include a successful professional life. In addition to this, a woman must take on and synthesize the agenda of the "politically correct," which means defending ecological issues, an end to political corruption, and above all, the cause that allows her greater scope within personal interactions, that of minorities: the modern heroine has friends who are poor, black, or gay, and may even have a daughter with disabilities, like Helena does in the telenovela *Páginas da vida* (Pages from Life) (which aired on Globo from July 2006 to March 2007), in which she adopted a child with Down syndrome.

Sensuality is also has become part of the repertoire, expressing itself both in the very low-cut neckline that took some time to lend its support to the "rebirth of breasts" that Morin (1989, 17) identified as the aesthetic standard for Hollywood stars and in the greater audacity with which women relate to men. Although sexual initiative is often relegated to those with supporting roles (e.g., the heroine's brash and uninhibited female friend) or the villain (e.g., the femme fatale of the feuilleton), the modern heroine's attitude toward sex and love rest at quite a distance from the behavior of the feuilleton maidens: she is no longer a virgin, and her sexual life is showcased in "bedroom scenes";[1] she can and usually does change partners over the course of the story line. Furthermore, just like the movie stars of Brazilian Hollywood, the young heroines of today's soaps syncretize feminist gains of sexual freedom with the regressive values of the feuilleton, insofar as the final chapter continues to be marriage.

However, Brazilian telenovelas also include another eroticized female type, which we refer to here as the good prostitute. At a first glance, the character reminds us of the female saloon owner of North American

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[1] According to Rivera (1968), bedroom dramas that explore conflicts of passion through fragile plots that omit the crudest aspects of human existence diffuse the "softened" view of the world that can be associated with the feuilleton.

westerns: the wise woman who is generous and experienced, who distributes "lessons in living" and lends her support to the *hero* but does not marry him. In its Brazilian variety, television adapts this type to the Northeast that is portrayed, for example, in Jorge Amado's novels. These women are the owners of "castles" (brothels), as is the case of the protagonist of *Tieta do Agreste* (Tieta of the Hinterlands) (Globo, 1989) or supporting character Margot in *Terras do sem fim* (Lands with No Limits) (Globo, 1982).

Yet the good prostitute Capitu (the name of the protagonist of Machado de Assis's novel *Dom Casmurro*, the most famous female character in Brazilian literary history), played by actress Giovanna Antonelli in *Laços de família* (Family Ties) (Globo, 2000), is unprecedented. Far removed from earlier standards for this type of character, she does not resemble the cheerful and caricatured *quenga* (whore) of the telenovelas of the period. Rather, she is portrayed in terms similar to those of other heroines in *Laços de família:* suffering and courageous—she hasn't had an easy life—she has been taken in by a family and her work as a prostitute is presented as a job like any other, only more lucrative and involving some particular risks.

The Character Types of *Big Brother Brasil*

In television reality shows, an example of the modern heroine can be found in Juliana Lopes, who took part in BBB4 and was Marcelo Dourado's girlfriend. The behavior she demonstrated was worthy of this type: politically correct, she did not discriminate against the "poor" program participants, who often sought her out on matters that demanded a higher level of schooling. In fact, this season of the reality show was known as the "BBB of class struggle," a phrase of Marxist ideology to express the conflict of interests between the workers and the ruling class in a capitalist society, which the writer Martha Medeiros used in a report appearing in the Brazilian news weekly *Época*:[2]

> It was obvious that this season of the *Big Brother Brasil* show would not be like the previous ones. Two participants who were chosen by a lottery system brought ordinary people like the babysitter Cida and the office boy Tiago into the house. And it sparked the class sentiments of participants such as gas station attendant Solange and cemetery gardener Rogério—candidates who were chosen by program producers, perhaps because they combined physical attributes and unusual jobs, people who have to sweat to earn their daily bread. On the other side of this unprecedented strife in the Brazilian version of this reality show are the models represented by the Argentine—eliminated last week—and Marcela, the entrepreneur Buba, and wrestlers Marcelo Dourado and Zulu. There are those who seem flaky, like Juliana, also a model, who teaches English and good manners to those lacking in them, Géris the nurse, who takes on the role of advisor to the poor. . . . Last week, it was Zulu who referred to the other group as "the poor." The greatest fear of each group is to see a member of the other group as leader. And the worst nightmare of the "rich" is to see him/herself up against the wall with one a member of the poor group—the latter they see as protégés of the program's audience.

The politically correct young heroine is transposed on television reality shows as a type inspired in the "model and actress," who after leaving the confinement of the program usually moves on to join the ranks of the Brazilian women who pose nude for magazines and sites geared toward a male public. This is what happened to Juliana, who after engaging in erotic and romantic scenes under the quilts of a double bed with Marcelo Dourado, left the house and went on to do two photo essays for men's magazines (*Sexy* and *VIP*).[3] As Douglas Kellner (2005, 10) explains:

> Eroticism has frequently permeated the spectacles of Western culture, and is prominently on display in Hollywood film, as well as popular forms such as burlesque, vaudeville, and pornography. Long a major component of advertising, eroticized sexuality has been used to sell every conceivable product. The spectacle of sex is also one of the staples of media culture, permeating all cultural forms and creating its own genres in pornography, one of media culture's highest grossing domains.

The hero is one of the types that constitute the protagonist syndrome, well exemplified in Marcelo Dourado, the "Mohican" of BBB4, a wrestler with a college degree in physical education and the owner of a Porto Alegre gym.

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[2] "Luta de classes na tevê" (Class Struggle on TV), *Época* 300, February 11, 2004, http://revistaepoca.globo.com/Revista/Epoca/0,,EDR62730-6011,00.html.

[3] Each edition of *Big Brother Brasil* has at least one sexy heroine character type who is photographed naked.

In this edition of the reality show, Marcelo (Mohican) would fight with a rubber doll with a human face, placed in the home garden.[4] When Marcelo was disputing his stay in the house with the event promoter Marcela, his mother appeared in the crowd that had gathered in front of the house—her body was covered in gold glitter, a reference to Marcelo's last name.[5] When he lost the ninth contest in which the public chose who would remain in the game, Dourado said, "I'll get out of this madhouse."

However, Marcelo Dourado got a second chance years later as a cast member of BBB10, which he ended up winning. In this season, he took on a completely different role, claiming to be a slum dweller in Rio de Janeiro. His award was 1.5 million *reais*, tax-free (approximately US$770,000 in 2010), and he won with 60 percent of the 154 million votes. On March 30, 2010, the UOL website provided the following commentary: "This guy's charm is that he has always been a loser. That's the image he gives out."[6] Yet if Dourado presented himself as a poor boy, his participation did not fail to create controversy through "a series of statements that eventually was creating a division between heterosexuals and gays inside the house." Globo "even had to disclose at the request of Justice, a statement explaining the [facts] of HIV transmission after some [misinformation spoken by the] winner . . . ('heterosexual does not catch AIDS')."[7] This change in attitude of a participant who was excluded from BBB4 and went on to win BBB10 reiterates the idea that the reality show is built through characters whose type can change, depending on the tactics the participant adopts to win.

And, in the best tradition of commedia dell'arte, the Zannis who protagonize the comic action of these plays were well represented in the figure of Cida Santos, the babysitter who won BBB4. She was a poor girl elevated to the status of millionaire through the democratizing designs of the audience—those who voted to eliminate or keep participants and took pity on Santos when she reported never having been to the dentist.[8] Nonetheless, the audience reserved the right to ridicule her poor grammar or her actions, such as when, after drinking too much, she flirted with the mechanic on the show, Thiago Lira. When Lira, who had been given the nickname "Dotadão" (well endowed), got onto the program by lottery, his present was a party thrown exclusively for him and the women (called "sisters" on the show). But he and Santos soon became the Zanni character of social stratification in this "class struggle" version of the reality show.

Moreover, the most markedly comic character was Solange Vega from the 2004 season, who sang "in English" the phonetic transcription of what she had understood to be the title of Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie's song "We Are the World." In no small stroke of irony, a song meant to raise funds for starving Ethiopians made this poor and ignorant young Brazilian woman a source of ridicule. A Google search of the expression "Iarnuou" is revealing: approximately 1,030 results include the name Solange, many of which contrast Vega's pronunciation with the correct English-language lyrics.

DaMatta (1987, 87–88), in the section of his book "Do You Know Who You Are Talking To?" refers to a "ritual of recognition" that helps to "place people within a hierarchy" in situations of conflict or dispute, and he goes on to observe that although the role of the Brazilian "citizen" "is part of the system of ideas around public ethics, election rallies and programs of political parties, asserting that all people are equal before the law, this is not how citizenship as a social role is experienced in the daily life of our society."[9]

The ritual of recognition, in the case of commentaries on the poor girl, seems to run through the more than one thousand Internet sites that establish a hierarchy between "us," or we who know the English language, because we have money to pay for instruction," and "them," or those whose ignorance is reason for ridicule. In other words, this is a structure of feeling located in a space of tension between what one social stratum experiences—its ambitions to be among those who embody standards that are considered desirable for media visibility (and therefore participation in reality shows) and those who are or believe themselves to be among the protagonists of a new way of moving within the "nonplaces" of a globalized culture, thus freeing themselves of an uncomfortable identification with third-world citizenship.

Furthermore, this feeling of belonging to the segment made up of "citizens of the world," which is articulated in English and includes mastery over the technology that constructs sites and blogs and everything else that

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[4] The nickname referred to Dourado's haircut.

[5] *Dourado* in Portuguese means "golden."

[6] "Marcelo Dourado vence o 'Big Brother Brasil 10' com 60 % dos votos," UOL, http://televisao.uol.com.br/bbb/ultimas-noticias/2010/03/30/marcelo-dourado-vence-o-big-brother-brasil-10-com--dos-votos.jhtm.

[7] "Dourado vence BBB 10 depois de polêmicas", *Gazeta do Povo*, March 30, 2010, http://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/vida-e-cidadania/dourado-vence-bbb-10-depois-de-polemicas-0cx1xhbdtlcxb2hl71mlejrda.

[8] Santos won R$500,000, approximately US$250,000 in 2004.

[9] DaMatta's (1987) sociology is developed through an analysis of daily life in Brazil, focusing on its rituals and models of action. He takes a deep look at the spatial dimensions of the dialectical duality that his sociology establishes (house versus street, individual versus person, market and North American individualism versus Brazilian relational society).

exemplifies the conventions of belonging to the universe of the "superior," is not located at the cognitive level. If it were, it would also include the "politically correct" ideas of those who sing "We Are the World" and claim, as the song does, "it is time to heed a certain appeal" that comes from the hungry and the poor. In fact, it is a subjective knowledge of cosmopolitan experience: a structure of feeling that tells the poor girl she doesn't know what she is saying and therefore, rather than being an equal, is merely a comic character.

The same "picturesque" type of action is reserved for the poor boy: types like the one represented by the cowboy Rodrigo Leonel, from *Big Brother Brasil* 2, a horse trainer and aspiring country music singer who made it onto the reality show because Globo "wanted a participant who looked like a cowboy and would walk around in a cowboy hat," according to the news weekly *Veja* on July 31, 2002. Or the childish figure of a television cartoon, winner of the program's first season, Bambam (Kléber de Paula Pedra), who stood out for all his "grammatical and lexical blunders" in Portuguese, as noted by a Spanish speaker, the Uruguayan Fernando Andacht (2003, 85).

To a certain extent, disqualifying these characters as ignorant or picturesque takes us back to a view of culture as a process of increasing enlightenment (exemplified by "proper schooling"—like speaking English correctly—and adjudicated by those who belong to the "do you know whom you are talking to?" group), which deepens patterns of inequality. In contrast, the "magic eye" of television broadcasters, in producing types, feeds what is their own media protagonism. It illustrates Martín-Barbero's (1997, 39) argument on the "lightness with which this alleviated communication, due to the weight of conflicts and the obscurity of its social actors, in a process in which differences are liberated," portraying the social world without promoting equality.

This article, then, has traced the course of a certain pattern of behavior that can be perceived in ordinary subjects when they are observed on the media stage. There are certainly other roles and forms of presentation that those who have been part of the audience take on that are not discussed here—as well as performances that are not easily placed within any typology.

Final Considerations

Our study of the subjects who inhabit the "real world" yet at the same time are similar to those who populate the universe of fiction—and who, furthermore, create their reality show persona within the time-space of the media (whose synthesis can be seen as a structure of feelings of personality celebration)—has responded to our initial perplexity, as described above.

All these "person-characters" who have emerged as central figures within contemporary leisure modes constitute a simulacrum (Baudrillard 1996) that is proper to the condition of media modernity, in which types of acting are forged by those who appear on reality shows to show their own "reality." In the entertainment industry, the reality show means the loss of people's referencing of themselves, to be replaced by the standard mass media performance; in other words, the unit of reproduction is the real rather than the model. Meaning is given not through the real but through its operationalization via codes in which the subjects no longer recognize themselves as people—they are but character types in a reality spectacle.

We have sought to identify the structures of feeling that reveal a culture in which what in other times belonged to the private realm is now a nonevent that goes public, with an ordinary person as star. We have presented merely a first attempt to map media characters and types of acting that can be encountered in those who participate in reality shows.

Specifically, in the two reality shows studied, we realize the deep Brazilian social inequalities and a kind of "cultural hypocrisy" reflected in how the public reacts to the "poor side" of the program, disqualifying their way of life, but "generously" handing the ultimate prize to Cida Santos (who is a Zanni). And if it happens in the sphere of reception, which decides who wins the show, it is also reflected in the different characters that Marcelo Dourado builds on BBB4 and BBB10. In 2004, on BBB4, his character was part of the group that referred to another group as "the poor." In 2010, on BBB10, Dourado portrayed himself as a poor boy, a loser in life, and thus won the top prize. And he won despite expressing his prejudices against homosexuals. What does this say of the Brazilian public who elected the reality show champion? Sympathy for the poor but homophobic?

Rather than declaring our own conclusions here as definitive, for now we content ourselves—like Miranda in *The Tempest*—to look in wonder at the spectacles that reality presents. Thus, let us take a brief look back: in 1623, when Shakespeare created his bizarre and perhaps "feuilletonesque" characters, including Prospero, the duke whose power was usurped by his brother, who threw him out to sea. On an island paradise in the New World, in America, among ogres and other fantastic creatures, Prospero becomes an accomplished magician. His daughter, Miranda, growing up on that island, does not recognize herself as a civilized English

woman. Getting her first glimpse of men from the Old World who set foot on the shores of the island after a shipwreck, she exclaims: "O wonder!/How many goodly creatures are there here!/How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world/That has such people in't."

Author Information

Ana Luiza Coiro-Moraes earned her PhD in social communication from the Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS). She did postdoctoral work in communication and culture at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) and is full professor of communication in the Graduate Program of Cásper Líbero College, São Paulo, Brazil.

Flavi Ferreira Lisbôa Filho received his PhD in communication sciences from the Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS). He is associate professor in the Department of Communication and the Graduate Program of the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM), and leader of the research group Cultural Studies and Audiovisualities (CNPq).

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