



THE IMAGETIC CONSTRUCTION/DECONSTRUCTION PROCESS IN THE 2014 BRAZILIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONSⁱ

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ABSTRACT – This article analyzes the imagetic construction/deconstruction of the leading candidates of the presidential elections in 2014, from different media such as weekly magazines (**Veja**, **Isto É**, **Época**, and **Carta Capital**), campaign materials and publications in social networking; as well to analyze how the portraits of the candidates Eduardo Campos, Marina Silva, Aécio Neves, and Dilma Rousseff were built in these matters. From these elements, it is sought to verify the role of these media in the destabilization of the fragile relationship between the Brazilian social classes that would culminate with the parliamentary coup that occurred with the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff.

KEYWORDS – The 2014 Brazilian elections, image, representation, imagetic construction/deconstruction, political propaganda.

RESUMO – O presente artigo pretende analisar a construção/desconstrução imagética dos principais candidatos das eleições presidenciais brasileiras de 2014, a partir de diferentes mídias, como revistas semanais (**Veja**, **Isto É**, **Época** e **Carta Capital**), materiais de campanha e publicações de páginas em sites de relacionamentos, bem como analisar como foram construídas as representações dos candidatos Eduardo Campos, Marina Silva, Aécio Neves e Dilma Rousseff nesse material. Busca-se, a partir desses elementos, verificar qual foi o papel dessas mídias na desestabilização da frágil relação entre as classes sociais brasileiras que culminariam com o golpe parlamentar ocorrido com o impeachment de Dilma Rousseff.

PALAVRAS CHAVE – eleições 2014, imagem, representação, construção/desconstrução imagética, propaganda política.



Propaganda: building and selling an idea

It is possible that it never crossed Sir John Everett Millais's mind that his work **Bubbles** (fig.1a), whose original title was **A Child's World**, 1886, in which he portrayed his seated grandson watching soap bubbles, would be employed in one of the most successful advertising campaigns in the nineteenth century, the famous British soap Pears. (TUNGATE, 2009)

The company made it was founded in 1789 by Andreas Pears, whose father-in-law, Thomas J. Barrett – a visionary of modern advertising – saw in the work of art a perfect image for his new campaign. Barrett not only bought the painting and acquired its copyright, but also asked the artist to insert a soap from the company on the canvas. A perfect marriage was born between a work of art and a product that did not seek to be the same as the others, but to be the differential.

The image itself has a great expressiveness, in addition to being full of iconographic elements that were no longer systematically used in the period and represented a concept very used in the seventeenth century: the *vanitas*. The genre portrays the beauty and fragility of life and employs a child and other symbols, which extends on both sides of the infant. From one it is possible to see a vessel within which a plant grows; on the other, a broken vase, plus two bubbles of soap, one of which the boy is contemplating;

even the cigarette holder in one hand refers to the ephemerality of pleasure. (BRANDÃO, 2010)

Thus, if any object can be transformed, via propaganda, from trivial to object of desire, the opposite can also be done: for that, the commitment and the work of the advertisers suffice. We see the work of art and publicity as something commonplace in our day, but this was not the vision that was in the passage from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries. That is evident, for example, concerning Millais' work, which had to justify himself several times for having accepted money for his painting **to sell soap**.

The Industrial Revolution, rather than providing a technological increase, with a consequent development in the production of goods, also popularized the printing industry, expanding not only the newspapers – increasingly accessible and cheap – but also the magazines: the image and the word on the job of advertising. Besides, due to this same improvement, another relationship was established between manufactured goods and their consumer market: the systematic use – beginning in first-line products – of the packaging: more than protection and preservation, a relationship was established between the quality of the product and the name of the company stamped on it. (TUNGATE, 2009)

It is evident that the power of propaganda was not only restricted to the commercial appeal, but it expanded: its importance



was also discovered in war efforts when it was used to co-opt volunteers, not only by the army English (fig. 2), as well as American, German, and Italian.

Along with the imperious gaze of Lord Kitchener, the British War Minister, and his accusatory finger imputing to those young men a responsibility and a sense of guilt, which in some way, did not belong to them. To further enforce this imposition, the Leete's recruiting poster is not only satisfied itself with the power of the image, but also with the words that accompany it. With this union, it becomes complicated to escape from such an

appeal "not because of the image itself, but because of the words that explain it, since when they join us, we are forced to believe" (BRANDÃO, 2009, p. 73).

Years after, in 1917, James Montgomery Flagg, the artist who designed Uncle Sam on a similar but more famous poster than Leete's, said with some dismay: "Some of us, too old or too fearful to fight, prostituted our talent by creating posters that incited a crowd of young people who had done nothing to go there... and get shot. We sold the war for youth". (TUNGATE, 2009, 40)



Figure 1a
Bubbles, John Everett Millais, 1886



Therefore, truths are constructed depending on the moment and the occasion. It is evident that such employment is not restricted to the 19th or 20th centuries, but it is much earlier because:

The importance of the imagery's power used by propaganda is indeed not the fruit of our society [...]. There are

several examples taken from Antiquity [...]: Alexander the Great to make himself present throughout his vast empire, caused that his spread statues throughout his domain [...]; tactic used by Octavio Augusto [...]; what were the great pyramids, if not the imaginary demonstration of the power – then of propaganda – that their future occupants, the pharaohs, had in their lives? (BRANDÃO, 2009, p. 125-126)



Figure 1b

Advertising from *Pears Soap*, 1886

In addition to using sumptuous palaces, in the mold of the Egyptians in the

conception of grandiosity, not of funerary employment, modern monarchs (fig. 3)



could not refrain from their imagistic construction – in the manner of Alexander and Octavio Augusto. For this, they used their iconographic expedients:

Most of the King's paintings fit into the genre that art historians call the "solemn portrait," built accord to the "rhetoric image" developed during the Renaissance for the portrayal of influential people. In these solemn portraits, the person is usually presented in full size or even more

significant, standing or sitting on a throne [...]. The eyes of the portrait are above the eyes of the beholder, to underline his superior position. Etiquette does not allow it to be shown wearing everyday clothes. He wears armor as a symbol of courage, or gorgeous garments, as a sign of high social standing, and objects associated with power and magnificence – classic columns, velvet curtains, surrounded the king. Posture and expression convey dignity. (BURKE, 1994, p. 31)



Figure 2
Alfred Leete's poster, published by **London Opinion**, 1914

It is possible to see that any object (trivial or artistic), person (high or low social stratum) or idea (philosophical, religious,

economic, and technological) can be manipulated by the media vehicles of its time, to attend to diverse interests. Thus



these images and concepts will permeate the collective iconophotological collection during a specified period.

Therefore, this article will address part of the process of construction/deconstruction imagetive of the leading candidates of the 2014

presidential elections, one of the most intense in this period of democratic stability in Brazil. For this purpose, press images will be used, especially from weekly magazines, as well as those disseminated by social networks, with or without the consent of the candidates.



Figure 3
Portrait of Louis XVI, Antoine Callet, 1789

It should not be forgotten that the approach of politics and communication has become, in Brazil, inevitable since 1989 with the participation of “advertisers, politicians, and political marketing experts” (GADINI. RODRIGUES, 2008, p. 148). Since, increasingly, “media political propaganda follows the [...] model

of advertising. It does not **sell** the candidate for what he is or for his proposals” (*ibidem*), but by the image that is built.



The candidates

In the 2014 election, the two largest and main political-party forces launched their candidates: for the situation, Dilma Rousseff for the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers' Party – PT), candidate for re-election; by the opposition, Aécio Neves, of the *Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira* (Brazilian Social Democracy Party – PSDB). In addition to these two parties and standing out above the so-called **nanicos** (very small) parties, Eduardo Campos appears by the *Partido Socialista Brasileiro* (Brazilian Socialist Party – PSB), then governor of Pernambuco, that raised significant importance and political influence in the Northeast, after the 2010 election in the wake of the former President Lula, of whom he was an ally. His candidacy had gained much importance because he had former senator Marina Silva as his deputy. The well-known environmentalist, who had already become known in much of Brazil due to his strong vote in the previous election.

Eduardo Campos: before the rise, the fall

Eduardo Campos (PSB), then governor of Pernambuco, was a Socialist candidate for the Presidency. Despite not having a national projection and not wanting to relinquish his candidacy, he offered to

Marina Silva, who had already completed and obtained a significant vote in 2010, the vacancy of vice in his coalition. The former governor expected to use her image widely in his campaign material, since the former senator was a figure known in the national political scene and, to some extent, had traffic between those who no longer wanted polarity PT-PSDB as the only option.

Both candidates appear together in almost every campaign material. In the publicity pieces, Campos appears, slightly, above or ahead of Marina under a discrete spotlight, always smiling and with a frank and confident look. Marina, in turn, presents herself with a reserved smile and, despite being a supporting actress, is always highlighted. His name, for example, always comes with the same-sized source as the principal candidate, almost as an extension of Eduardo Campos' name. It is also possible to verify that both names, as presented, have greater prominence than the campaign slogan itself *Coragem pra mudar o Brasil* (Courage to change Brazil).

There is a predominance of yellow, one of the representing colors of PSB – along with white and red – used widely at this stage of the campaign. Such color tends to give the impression of transparency and optimism, as can be seen, employed in various nuances. (fig. 5)



Figure 4

Banner of the campaign plaque by Eduardo Campos and Marina Silva

The candidate despite little chance of going to the second round sought to become a national personality, leaving his regional sphere. He achieved notoriety, but in a tragic way. A fatality occurred: in the middle of the electoral campaign, on August 13, after having granted an interview to *Jornal Nacional*, from Rede Globo, the plane in which Eduardo Campos was when trying to land after a problematic landing, fell in a residential neighborhood, in the city of Santos. All its occupants died. With his death, an atmosphere of commotion and compassion arose around his image, propitious for his heroic affirmation.

The front cover of *Veja* (August 20, 2014), with its black background, was signaling mourn for the candidate's death, as well as showing the highlighted face of Eduardo Campos employing directed illumination. (fig.6) His distant and searching gaze turns to the horizon, glimpsing the future, in which he would sight his project of Brazil. So the *Veja*'s main coverline, *Não vamos desistir do Brasil* ("We are not going to give up Brazil") from the words of the candidate, becomes the campaign slogan used for his vice, Marina Silva. She receives, at first, the **dividends** of the national commotion, spread, to exhaustion, by all the television networks of the country.



Eduardo Campos, facing his unexpected and fateful passage, ends up entering into the role of the mythical figures, in the **pantheon of heroes**, those who end up functioning as catalysts of all suffering by the population that sees in them a messianic figure.

It is important to emphasize the mythical character of the hero, an “archetype that exists for some time immemorial” (JUNG, 2008, p. 90), very present in the collective imagination; when, through his death become a divinity, similar to the Greek Heracles (Hercules for the Romans).

There are, in Brazil, examples of **deified heroes** after his death, as the former President Getúlio Vargas. His suicide was due to “hidden forces,” accord he wrote in his Letter of Testament. It is including his famous phrase “Serenely; I take my first

step on the road to eternity. I leave life to enter history.” In Vargas’s funeral procession, a crowd, never seen in Rio de Janeiro, takes over the border toward the airport, where his remains were being taken to the burial in the Rio Grande do Sul. (fig. 7) Years later, now in São Paulo, another multitude accompanied the coffin of the elected President Tancredo Neves, who died on April 21, 1985, days before he would assume the presidency of the Republic. Even though Neves was elected by indirect vote, he was the first civil president after twenty years of military dictatorship (fig. 8). Something similar also happened, in 1994, with the burial of the racing driver Ayrton Senna, who died at the age of 34 years at the height of its career, in Imola, Italy when São Paulo stopped.



Figure 5
Campaign material by
Eduardo Campos and Marina Silva



Similarly, the death of Eduardo Campos made him a new hero and, like Vargas's phrase, the candidate also left his expression, given in the interview to *Jornal Nacional*, a day before his death: "Let's not give up do Brazil," slogan adopted by the campaign of Marina.

Veja utilizes a photo of Eduardo Campos (fig. 6) to achieve, through the commotion and the sympathy, to attract its reader, still shocked and surprised by the death of the candidate. In this way, it compels them

pathetically, forcing them to mortify themselves and to punish themselves.

Something similar to the *punctum* of Barthes (1984), only in the opposite direction: the puncture does not come from the interior of the "I" in a **natural** way, it is not the reader that allows itself to puncture of involuntary and spontaneous form; but such puncture is created artificially, imposed, taking advantage of the commotion of the moment.



Figure 6
Front cover of **Veja**, August 20, 2014



Figure 7
Crowd drives the body of Getúlio Vargas
to the airport, Rio de Janeiro, August 25, 1954



Figure 8
Population accompanies the funeral procession
of Tancredo Neves through the streets of São Paulo,
April 22, 1985

This feeling is strengthened by the words of the dead candidate himself on the magazine's front cover, seeking to arouse in its readers a sense of disappointment in the face of the present. This situation needs to be combated, and the magazine makes that: on the one hand it presents its

reader the **better** candidate; on the other hand, it persuades it with false hope in the future, provided there are changes. The magazine induces them, of course, to follow its footsteps: to seek a new direction, is to go against *the status quo*.

Marina Silva: a plausible way?

According to many analysts, when Marina Silva, the former senator for State Acre and the former Minister of the

Environment in Lula government in 2002, has obtained expressive voting in the 2010



elections, she would have an excellent chance to win the election in 2014.

However, setbacks occurred as the fact that it failed to register its new party, *Rede Sustentabilidade* (“Sustainability Rede”). In this way, other parties sought the former Minister, but she ended up leaving like the vice of Eduardo Campos, by the PSB and assumed the candidacy after his death. Even though there was no confluence of ideas between both, Marina ended up assuming the role of the heiress of the hero, hence presenting herself as the “face of Brazil.” (fig. 9)

After accepting the candidature, it was modified the campaign material (fig. 10). Now it shows a centralized, highlighted candidate's photo. She is showing a sincere and hopeful smile, as expressed by the insertion of the green color in the upper part of the material that remains with the yellow original. The color inserted has a direct relationship with the candidate, due to its struggle for sustainability and environmental issues; besides, the two together represent the national colors.

If in the previous campaign, when she was the vice of Eduardo Campos, the name of Marina was highlighted; now the name of

her vice, the deputy gaúcho Beto Albuquerque, does not appear in the spotlight. It appears like the other vice-presidential candidates: under the leading candidate's name, in a different and much smaller source.

The **Veja** edition, published after the publication that highlighted the death of Eduardo Campos (August 27, 2014), shows Marina Silva on the front cover with a calm countenance, a restrained smile and a brave look (fig. 9) besides the following question: “Marina President?” The almost same issue had already been asked by **Época** in August 2009, during the 2010 presidential elections (fig. 11): “President Marina?”

Its front cover is green like the mark of her proposals and her former party, *Partido Verde* (Green Party – PV). Now the candidate appears smiling, showing cheerfulness and absolute confidence. Although both front covers have (almost) the same main coverline and present the same person, there are particularities among them. It is possible including to speak of particular **diachronic refraction** of the image if it considers that they both express different ideas among themselves.



Figure 9
Front cover of *Veja*, August 27, 2014



Figure 10
Campaign material by Marina Silva, now PSB candidate for the presidency of the Republic in the 2014 elections



Marina's candidacy portrayed like revolutionary by the magazine **Época** 2009, not only for highlighting the environmental issue but also for being the representation of a possible female nomination that for the first time could be a viable option to win the presidential election. That is because Dilma Rousseff's candidacy was still being developed by President Lula who had already given signs that he had chosen her. It should also add that Marina could be a plausible candidate, due to the proximity of her biography to that of President Lula, whose popular approval, even at the end of his term, was stratospheric. She could thus get

the sympathy of various social strata – especially the poorest ones – yet though the Executive has not appointed her

However, there was a different situation in the context of 2014. Would there be plausibility and consistency in Marina Silva's campaign, despite the dizzying rise in polling intentions; or, would her increase be only momentary, the result of the post-Eduardo Campos commotion? It may be that **Veja's** editorial committee was still examining her for giving her possible support, something that reminds Shakespeare's Hamlet: "to be or not to be, that is the question!"



Figure 11
Front cover of **Época**, August 17, 2009



On the other hand, the magazine **Carta Capital** (fig. 12) ends up, in a way, by synthesizing the two expressions described above, by showing Marina without the cranial top. From its opening emerges a question mark and the following question: “The Marina’s enigma: how to decipher the electoral hurricane?”

Because in the face of the comings and goings of the former minister, she has become a pantomime: she leaves the PT and enters the PV, but leaves this party because Silva has not been able to impose her opinion or take advantage of the millions of votes she had in 2010. She

demonstrates, also, the incapacity of articulation for not having been able to even mount his new legend, the *Rede*, in time to run for the elections. Marina Silva joined the PSB, probably believing could be the candidate in the slate, but the former governor himself wanted to leave, even contradicting President Lula himself. She ends up accepting to be the Eduardo Campos’ vice presidential candidate; after his death, she became the candidate but rejected all political-party agreements previously signed by the dead governor. She shows, therefore, instability and uncertainty as to her political platform if she wins the elections.



Figure 12
Front cover of **Carta Capital**, September 3, 2014



In the face of all this, Marina Silva remains an enigma and her expression, on the front cover of Carta Capital, is neither placid nor resolute as one might even glimpse in **Veja**, nor does it overflow joy and hope like **Época**; but it is unsmiling, bitter, hopeless, as the corners of her lips show pulled straight down. (WEIL, 2013, p. 48)

Faced with the ups and downs of the PSB candidate who probably would not stay in the match, part of the press **leaves** Marina Silva, who starts to lose space for Aécio Neves, especially after the Globo TV debate, before of the first round. The front cover of **Veja** (October 8, 2014) presents this fact in its call: “The final card.” (fig. 13)

It is possible to see when we read its front cover of the magazine that it had already chosen its candidate, it had already made her choice. Even if it says that it does not take sides either by this or that candidate, at least in a direct way, it does so indirectly. As we can see, the color chosen for this front cover is mainly blue, except for Marina's dress (green). So like the front cover, blue is the color of PSDB (Neves's party), and it indicates **confidence**, besides stronger nuances, like **power** or **force**.

On the other hand, it can be argued that the color is because **Veja** used the same scenario as the broadcaster where the debate took place. If the magazine, however, can put the two candidates side by side in the picture; why would it not use a neutral color, such as gray or white, to refrain from any hint of opting for this or that candidate? It deliberately made not; and, to further ratify his choice, it employed the same color in its logo, which, because it was its name, it is a sort of self-image.

As if they were leaving an arena, both candidates are presented to the public so that it can deliberate on who won the clash. On the right side for the reader's view – the position of victory, the prize – we have the aggressive figure of Aécio, demonstrated by his accusatory finger (finger of accuser), by his trunk and head erect, as well as by his duck lips. On the other hand, Marina, who, in front of her opponent, is weakened, is not in a haughty stance. Her face is turned to the left, the same place where she is, and here it represents defeat, her finger points, precisely, to her opponent, as if she considered him the winner of the debate.



Figure 13

Front cover of *Veja*, October 8, 2014

Aécio Neves: heir to Tancredo?

Aécio Neves was governor of Minas Gerais and, that moment, was a senator by the same state. Neves utilized the trump card of the expressive voting in Minas (he was twice governor) and the fact he was the political patron the former governor Anastasia, to be a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic by the PSDB in 2010. However, despite his incommensurable desire to reside in the Planalto Palace, he still had to participate

in the party's convention with others pre-candidates: the governor of São Paulo, Geraldo Alckmin, and the now-senator, José Serra (also the former governor of the same state).

The party's defeat three times consecutive with candidates from São Paulo and with a speech of **new**, **novelty** and **change**, Aécio Neves became the candidate of the PSDB to the presidency of the Republic in 2014.

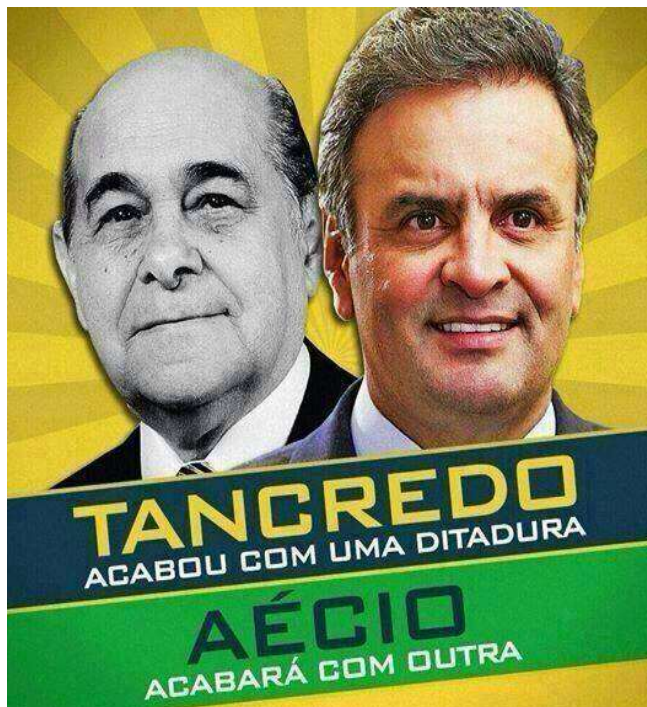


Figure 14
Publication on page *Dilma Não*

The fact that Neves was the grandson of Tancredo Neves, the president who died before assuming, was explored by his marketing team (fig. 14), bringing up the hero's question and all its implications. When he died before assuming the presidency of the nation after a long period of military dictatorship, coincidentally on the date of the commemoration of another national hero, Tiradentes, the elected president by the Electoral College (Tancredo's election was not direct) assumes the heroic attributes.

There was no time to form any negative and collective memory that could go against him, creating an imaginary haze of an unblemished ruler. The candidate's

marketing team sought to explore the idea of an "unblemished hereditary" as there was in the monarchy, whose divine consecration was extended to the children and grandchildren of royal families. It is worth noting that the search for such an idea is not strange to us; after all, Brazilian society has long experienced the monarchy. Not by chance, we use his terms even today, for example, "we call the soccer player Pelé, as the King of Football; or the singer Roberto Carlos simply 'the King'; besides we witness the election of the King and Queen of Carnival every year." (SILVA, 2013, p. 50)

Such idealizations, of course, are not restricted to only a part of the population,



but present themselves in all social spheres and seem to point out that

in the various spheres of interpretation, both more cultured and refined, and

more popular, than the conception of king derives from the original qualification of one who stands out in his social group and therefore enjoys a certain status and recognition. (*ibidem*, p. 50)



Figure 15
Publication on the page *Dilma Não*

It is not by chance, therefore, that such an ideology is still present in the political discourse of today, even indirectly. No wonder, Schwarcz (2000) quoting Burke points out that the monarchs were the inventors of **political marketing**:

At the heart of his analysis is the notion of strategy, in which propaganda emerges as a means of securing submission or assent to power. With this monarch, glory, victory, prestige, and greatness are transformed into

images sharp enough to guarantee the stability of the kingdom and to imagine its future permanence. (p. 257)

It is interesting to see how people's lack of memory is used to create facts that do not fit the factual reality. When the propaganda says "Tancredo ended a dictatorship" (fig.14), seeking to channel the whole process of more than twenty years into a single man, it is as if all those that have fought against that state of exception, had no importance. How the



president Dilma herself, the candidate of the situation, who had been arrested and tortured for fighting against that regime.

Even more absurd is to say *Aécio acabará com outra* [“Aécio will end up with another” (dictatorship)] even though we know that we live in a state of full political rights in which we can even express any opinion for or against the government itself; including calling, even, an elected president of the **dictator**.

This attitude, far from being unconscious, is a well-known strategy of political propaganda whose aim:

is not the personal instruction of the individual, but rather to attract public attention to certain things [...]

All propaganda must be presented in an accessible form and must fix its intellectual level so as not to be above the heads of the least intellectual of those to whom it is directed. Thus its purely intellectual level will have to be that of the lowest mental common denominator among the public it is desired to reach¹. (HITLER, 1943)

Of course, the Führer knew very well whom he wanted to attain, as well as the means to reach his objectives. That does not differ from those who make use of the same methods used by Nazi Germany. Shortly before, in **Mein Kampf**, Hitler asks the following question: “To whom

should propaganda be made to appeal? To the educated intellectual classes? Alternatively, to the less intellectual? Propaganda must always address itself to the broad masses of the people!”

Mass does not mean only **poor** or **uncultured**, but the one with little discernment to read and understand the world around him. It is present in all social strata, inclusive in academia. It is said that German is one of the most educated people in Europe, so how could they have followed an Austrian who dropped out of school because he was too lazy to study? (FEST, 1973. TOLAND, 1978)

The rationale for this is one: the mass will never question what it received, whether it be untruths, facts, or data, just invented, from history. However, for propaganda to have the desired effect and be efficient, it is indispensable that it contains little information, but that it be used to exhaustion, in a persistent, continuous, constant, unalterable way. Then will it succeed, for “the reception capacity of the great mass is very limited; his understanding is few; however, oblivion, great.” (p. 198) It is no wonder that it can be said: “Tancredo Neves ended with a dictatorship.” Many people do not even know that Brazil had one!

¹ English translation from:
<https://www.magister.msk.ru/library/politica/hitla002.htm>.



Figure 16
Publication on the page *Dilma Não*

After the defeat in the first round, Marina supports Aécio publicly, confirming a political alliance between the PSDB and the PSB, a fact that displeased some socialist members, like its president, Roberto Amaral that renounces.

Once the socialist's support to the former governor of Minas Gerais it announced, another pamphlet was posted on the Internet (fig. 16), where it remained the

preference for a blue color. Aécio, unlike the other image, appears here with a **plastic** smile, trying to demonstrate confidence after the support received: "Together we will be stronger." However, the photograph employed does not demonstrate this. It is enough to compare it with the one that was transmitted by **Veja** in October 2010, when he was elected to the Senate and his candidate for the Minas government (fig. 17).



Figure 17
Front cover of *Veja*, October 20, 2010



Figure 18
Front cover of *Isto É*, May 8, 2013



Now the position of the candidates is reversed compared to previous images. Aécio is on the left and his figure in front of the Marina, something unusual, at least in the face of what we saw before.

It should not be forgotten that Aécio's image needed to be built to be a viable option for getting votes from the anti-PT population and his candidate for re-election, Dilma Rousseff. He should appear as someone fully prepared to solve, miraculously, all the problems of the

country, as a superman, as supposed the image used by **Veja**. (fig. 17)

Such a construction, of course, was not done overnight, nor on the eve of the second round, but through a slow process that began in 2010. The candidate became, at that moment, as a possible option to defeat *petism*². **Veja** declares, almost formally, his choice for the former governor even before the PSDB's party convention, stating that the candidate could be “[...] a decisive factor in the presidential campaign.” (fig. 17)



Figure 19
Front cover of **Veja**, October 15, 2014

The same one did the magazine **Isto É** in the edition of May 8, 2013, whose front cover brings the representation of the

candidate in a haughty posture, with the words “I am prepared to start a new time

² How the members of PT are known, from the Portuguese acronym PT.



in Brazil” (fig. 18), image very close to that adopted by royalty, as we saw earlier.

After realizing the first round, **Veja** in the edition of October 15, 2014, reveals with the great emphasis on the rise and the turn of the candidate Aécio Neves that goes to the second round with President Dilma, demonstrating once again, a definite option for one of the candidates.

It should be pointed out that this does not mean, *in totum*, a **sin**, an attack on the good press, as long as the magazine explicitly states its position to its readers; employing, of course, the proper channels for this, without compromising journalistic integrity, a fact somewhat questionable, according to what we have seen so far.

Dilma Rousseff's image deconstruction

If on the one hand there was an **artificial construction** of the figure of Aécio Neves by the media that chose him as a candidate to defeat *petism* (especially after Marina Silva's ineptitude to stay ahead). On the other hand, there was an inverse path to the representation of President Dilma, the candidate of the PT: her image was deconstructed, almost desperately, also in

an artificial way, as well as everything she accomplished.

How this occurred was so brutal and virulent during the election period that a part of the population was only aimed at the defeat of the president, regardless of who won the election. The result of this nonsense has produced (and it will produce!) damaging implications for Brazilian society itself. The Congress elected in 2014, for example, was the most conservative since 1964 and, worse than that, it will intend to modify many achievements realized throughout the Brazilian democratic stability.

Dilma Rousseff, the first woman president in Brazil, was elected by the PT for the first term in 2010, with 56.05% of the votes in the second round, and was re-elected in 2014 with 51.64% of the votes, also in the second round, according to the TSE, in one of the most disputed elections in recent Brazilian history.

As it happened in the 2010 election, Dilma also had the broad support of former President Lula and his figure, still very positive and influential for the large portion of the population. Although the Rousseff's image has been positively assessed throughout her first term, as her government's popularity ratings at the time show according to Datafolha³, there

³ According to Datafolha: 42% approval on October 21, 2013, and the same value on December 8, 2014; reaching, even at 65% peaks during part of its first government, according to Datafolha:

<http://datafolha.folha.uol.com.br/opiniaopublica/2014/12/1559419-responsabilizada-por-petrobras-pela-maioria-dilma-tem-avaliacao-estavel.shtml>



was a massive deconstruction of her personality and her administration before the 2014 election. For example, in July 2014 the survey conducted shows yet 32% approval, according to the same institute⁴.

So without the help of Lula, it would be difficult Rousseff to maintain herself in power (fig. 20).



Figure 20
Campaign material of the coalition
Muda mais (“Change more”)

Parties, political groups, and sympathizers of anti-government candidates created several websites on the internet in 2014 elections. Also, several pages appeared on social networking sites such as Facebook with the intention of deconstructing the president Rousseff and his government, such as *Dilma Não* (“No Dilma”) or *Revoltados online* (“Revolted online”), to mention two. These perpetrated a strong, pamphleteer, and offensive campaign against the president, not only throughout the election period but also before it. Its

themes ranged from government issues – such as incompetence, corruption, inflation (as if such problems had only emerged from leftist governments) – to come to her private life.

Images like figures 21, 22 and 23 were nothing more than a window-dressing for a pseudo-criticism of corruption because they were centered only on scandals involving the PT. We do not forget, however, that they “only emerged” after the effective independence of the

⁴
<http://datafolha.folha.uol.com.br/opiniaopublica>

[/2014/08/1502079-aprovacao-ao-governo-dilma-rousseff-sobe-6-pontos-e-alcanca-38.shtml](http://2014/08/1502079-aprovacao-ao-governo-dilma-rousseff-sobe-6-pontos-e-alcanca-38.shtml)



Brazilian Federal Police (PF); carried out precisely by the PT governments, since their rise to power in 2003.

In this way, they used scandals massively as *mensalão* or *petrolão* not to correct the chronic corruption that has always devastated the country in the most different spheres of power, but to destroy an enemy, or cover up the embezzlements themselves and their allies. It becomes merely political propaganda (in its most negative sense).

Domenach (1968), in **Political propaganda**, explain this use as a “law of simplification and the single enemy.” That is, “to concentrate on one person the hopes of the field to which one belongs, or hatred which is felt by the adverse field.” (p. 52) It explains the reasons for the outbursts of hatred that have settled in different media: the choice of a **single** enemy to destroy it. On the other hand, it constructs themselves in friends and allies “cloaks of invisibility” for all their faults and failures, imputing to them “false hopes of salvation.”

It is scarcely worth tracing the ills of corruption and the disapproval of the

corrupt and corrupter if there were among them the benevolence of some hidden by their peers. That was so clear with the shrill scream of the mass media in focusing only a few, scapegoats, to protect others. So, instead of finding an effective way to fight corruption to punish all those responsible, regardless of which parties, it needs to see the **real culprits**. In short, everything is merely political propaganda, whose aim is “to influence the opinion and behavior of society, so that people adopt a certain opinion and conduct” (BARTLETT *apud* DOMENACH, 1968, p. 6)

Thus, what would be a great achievement of so-called democratic societies, which is freedom of expression and the press, with its right to free speech, is minimized. The struggle for truth and liberty of actions ended up mitigated and depreciated when imputing to only one party (whatever) or, in a particular way, to just one person all that is wrong and perverse in the Brazilian political system. That becomes clear when analyzing the employed images in the deconstruction of President Dilma Rousseff.



Figure 21

Publication of website *Dilma Não*

The new **champions of justice**, acting according to the “prescriptions of political propaganda,” know that one of their fundamental qualities is to persist in the same subject since it is presented in various ways in order not to provoke boredom and to annoy its recipient. (HITLER, 1943. DOMENACH, 1968) Thus, to deconstruct the image of someone, as the President of the Republic, it is necessary to show only facets of **truth**.

An example of this is to charge the Federal Executive to do more for the public high school (that is in Brazil is a Federation State competence), even knowing that this is not their prerogative, or that interferes

with the price of the bus tickets (municipality competence). That is pernicious because it deprives itself of knowing the real culprits by the misuses that occur every day, besides not encouraging an effective inspection by the population.

Such attitudes demonstrate that those who act in this way are not concerned with such wounds; hence minimalism in pointing out a single culprit for the country's past troubles. They fear only in combating and deconstructing those who have destabilized, to a certain extent, their status quo.



Figure 22
Publication of the website
Campanha Limpa

Even worse than divert the population's attention to the **visceral** problems of our country, these groups ended up provoking a significant collateral effect. They instigated the widening of certain frustrations that were dammed and dormant by the Brazilian elite, mainly because of the hated **social adjustment**, which more accentuated, throughout this decade.

Together with such aversion and aggressivity, other prejudices exploded, systematically sold by the mass media: misogyny, class and gender hatred, the idea of the superiority of one class over another. Consequently, it destroys itself myth of **kindness** of the Brazilian people, as well as the “myth of racial democracy” of Gilberto Freyre (2003, p.160), now characterized more clearly by social issues.

It is exposed in figure 23 all the misogynist hatred and its perversity: the apparent electoral debate gives way to fortuitous violence imprisoned not only against the President of the Republic but against every woman. Utilizing specific keywords,

continually employed throughout generations for denigrate the feminine figure, the author of the pamphlet distills, the bill drops, centuries of dislike to the female sex. Reinforced and highlighted in red and prefixed by the personal pronoun “I” (which qualifies itself, continuously, in a negative way): “dirty”, “devil”, “cow” and, as if that was not enough, reinforces such predicates with the words “rot” and “corruption”, also associated, in a degrading way, to the female sex.

In *Histórias íntimas* (“Intimate Stories”), Mary del Priore (2014) shows us that these words have long been used to denigrate, in a particular way, the Black and Ladine Women, as the satiric poet Gregory of Matos should have written in the 17th century, in many poems attributed to him. According to Priore, Matos did not dare to “play with the honor of the whites women, whom he described only in a courteous tone, while the Black women of Africa or the Ladinhas referred with a special contempt: ‘cow hip’, ‘fallen tit’, ‘horrible smell’, ‘atrocious vase’, ‘fret whore.’” (*ibidem*, p. 46-47).



Figure 23

Publication on the page *Dilma Não*⁵

As if these adjectives were not enough, it was believed that feminine beauty itself should be rejected (as in the image of the president, whose muddy hands dirty her whole face). She needs to become ugly, so that it would not be an instrument in the hands of the devil who would employ her to distort men, denying them salvation, since she is “the old friend of the serpent and the Devil-considered in these times as a vehicle of perdition for the health and soul of men. That ‘good-looking,’ synonymous in the 17th century with a

beautiful one, was the worst!” (*ibidem*, p. 29)

In this way, the woman not only becomes a vehicle of the devil but also becomes a diabolical being:

The woman's body became diabolical. Her uterus, seen as an evil. Its secretions and its fur, used in spells. His pleasure, ignored by medicine, by many men and even by many women. For those who wanted the blessings of the sacrament of matrimony, virginity was obligatory. (*ibidem*, p. 52)

⁵ “I promise to make the more dirty campaign of the history of this country. I promise to do the devil to win the election. I do not stop lying even if the pigs fly!” (Note: the idiomatic expression in Portuguese uses not “pigs” but “cow”. “Cow” is an offensive way, in Portuguese, of referring to women, It means no dirty like “pigs,” but “whore”).



The weakness of the president's charisma, as well as of his administrative mishaps were employed to attribute all the present evils of the country to her. That is no strange in a country like Brazil where there was a fourth political power instead of

three: the Moderator that gave to Emperor absolute power in the Brazilian Empire. However, that is no reality in the Republic; then the mere replacement was not enough to solve all the problems of the nation.

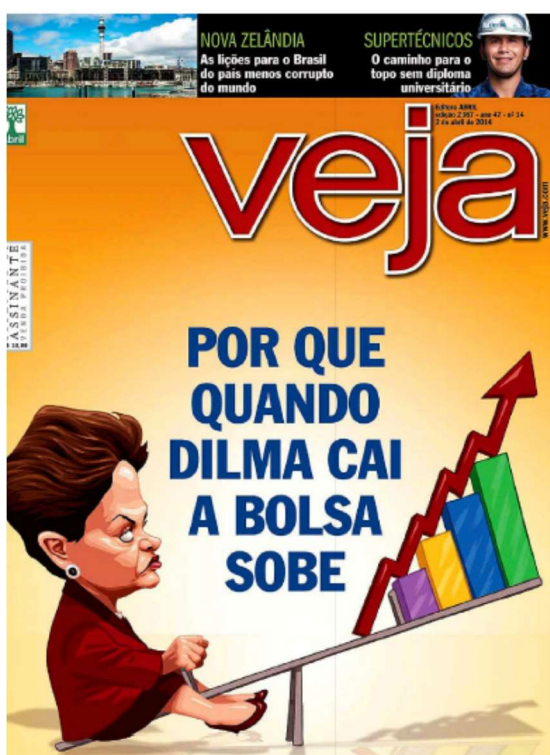


Figure 25
Front cover of *Veja*, Abril 2, 2014

In this way, it believes that all responsibilities are in the Presidential hands, excluding those of other powers, such as the Legislature and the Judiciary.

Veja, unable to disguise its total lack of exemption, despite still say itself exempt, also actively participated in the

deconstruction of the image not only of the president Dilma, of her party, and also of former president Lula along of the year 2014.

The front cover of the edition of April 2, 2014, using the red color in its logo and the representation of the president's



clothes – explicit references to the PT –, seeks, once again, to reinforce, negatively, the image of Dilma. When using a child's play, a seesaw – a reference to childhood that may want to induce its probable imputability –, it seeks to demonstrate how the **rise** and the **decrease** in the voting intentions, would affect, directly, the financial market. Her fall in the surveys would condition to an improvement in the economy, which would be reflected in the rise of the stock exchange.

They have not, of course, shown that there are innumerable variables in the capital market, whose fluctuation is not only subject to instability, to rumors, to market moods, but also mere profit-making. Never, therefore, due to a single person, even if it is from a country like Brazil or the United States: the capital market is a Global State, using the national states at its pleasure.

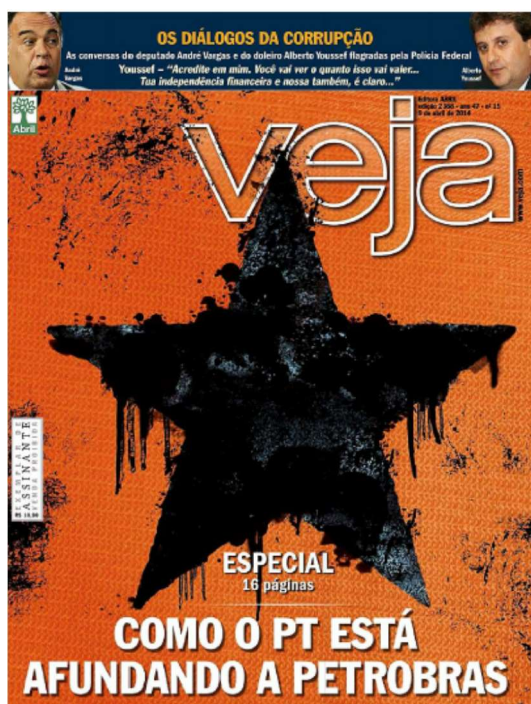


Figure 26
Front cover of *Veja*, April 9, 2014

The following edition continues with the theme of economic loss and the possible relation between this damage and the PT government. The main coverline *Como o PT está afundando a Petrobrás* (“How the PT is sinking Petrobrás”) by itself would

already represent a great catastrophe since the company is considered an inheritance of the Brazilian State. However, despite all the exposure of the so-called *Operação Lava Jato* (“Car Wash Operation”), Petrobrás remains the largest company in Brazil and



Latin America, as well as one of the largest in the world.

A fact that draws attention to the front cover, in addition to its so-called **bombastic**, is the representation of the star of the PT that is red, but now is black; and the back of the front cover that could be black, is faded red/orange, the color of the uniform of the company's employees.

The representation of the star clearly shows that the magazine wants, metonymically, to extract the party from power, damaging its name and identity. Since, more than oil-covered, the symbol was **erased, annihilated, plucked**, through its black covering, that is, the absence of color, hence the color of mourning.



Figure 27
Front cover of *Veja*, October 29, 2014

So like the ancient Egyptian priests did with the heretical pharaoh Akhenaton preventing it from being able to rest in peace in the other world, erasing the name of the pharaoh after his death by revenge. *Veja* makes the same with Dilma, Lula, and the PT.

The question that arises is: does the magazine want to talk about the **probable** sinking of Petrobrás or its willingness to sink the PT? That is because it should be remembered that in terms of investment, comparing only the eight years of Fernando Henrique Cardoso with the



eight of Lula, it is possible to verify that there was a significant increase of the expenditures of Petrobrás. Not to mention that in 2002, the company's market value jumped of US\$ 15.5 billion jumps in 2014 to the US\$ 104.9 billion⁶; and today, despite the crisis, it is around US\$ 116.078 billion; that is, there was an increase in the value of the company by at least 650% over a decade.

The magazine should also have informed that the world was still suffering the consequences of the crisis that hit it since 2008, with the bursting of the real estate bubble in the USA, a fact that seems to ignore, at least in Brazil. Another important detail about the fall in Petrobrás' market value, also not disclosed, is the fact that the average price of oil has plummeted more than 50% in the middle of the crisis, since "The average value of oil in July to September [2008] was US\$ 135, but then fell to US\$ 48 between October and December." (FOLHA DE S.PAULO, 12/21/2008)

Such a fall, of course, affected the company in two ways: by increasing its market value in one moment and then significantly depreciating it. If this were not enough, the option of exploring the pre-salt layer required very high investments that increase the nominal value of the company's debt.

Last but not least, there is the crisis triggered by corruption schemes, as well as its impudent use by the press to destabilize the government, as if this did not affect the country as a whole either. The accused must be investigated and, if condemned, punished in the form of the law, as long as there are not double standards because Petrobrás is a public good and heritage of Brazil, not belong this or that group or party.

The magazine, therefore, in obliterating the star from the way it did on its front cover (fig. 25), besides cutting the red color that represents the party of the president, as it was made, insists on being subservient to obscure whims that do not aim at the verification of the truth, but only to get a scapegoat. With this, it turns not the attention to the real culprits of Brazilian troubles that end up perpetuating itself in the mud of corruption.

On the eve of the election, days before the standard edition goes to the newsstands, **Veja** uses its final card to try to curb possible re-election of Dilma Rousseff by bringing the Petrobrás scandal, the so-called *Petrolão* to its front cover, whose bottom is black (fig 27). The magazine, in a measure of desperation, tried to criminalize both the president Dilma – whose face (on the left side, in the reader's view) is partly hidden – as did former

⁶ <http://www.petrobras.com.br/fatos-e-dados/nosso-valor-de-mercado-e-seis-vezes-maior-do-que-em-2002.htm>



President Lula, also with part of the face covered (in the opposite side, the right). It was affirming that both had all the knowledge of all the irregularities inside

the Petrobrás. There is a red letter between the two in bold letters: *Eles sabiam de tudo* (“They knew everything”).



Figure 28
Front cover of *Veja*, November 12, 2014

The front cover seeks to reinforce the idea of darkness, of obscurity, of anonymity not only through the representation of the faces in it, in which both seem to come out of the shadows – a vision of Greco-Roman hell – as well as by the word *tenebrosas* (tenebrous) used in your text. Unlike most front covers, *Veja* seeks to maximize content written on it so that more people can have this **information** without even having to read the reportage. The front cover had a single function: to be an electoral pamphlet, only in reverse, that is, it was not to vote for who was represented there, but to do the reverse.

No wonder, the front cover was widely distributed on Election Day as “political propaganda.”

The magazine knew that it would not be enough to attack the president Dilma, so it flees from the commonplace of political propaganda, as we have indicated earlier, and uses the more, the better. Thus, it would need somehow, to attack the source that still supplied and gave survival to the candidate of the PT in her possible re-election: the former president Lula, even knowing of his high popularity. Perhaps, therefore, it has inserted him on the right



side (of the reader), as a way of not **demonizing** him as the left side (the side of the lost!).

The photographs used present two figures with some affliction demonstrated by a loss of focus in their eyes, and by a slight pulling down on the lips that demonstrate dissatisfaction and sadness. Probably they have been taken at some moment of fatigue or the end of some election marathon. This fact leads the reader of **Veja** to believe that these are expressions of people who owe something, who hide something, hence the non-presentation total of their faces, covering half part of them. Nothing can be safely affirmed because one cannot read the eyes of any of them, something that can confuse the reader.

The front cover of **Veja**, of November 12, 2014, on the other hand, sets aside the darkness and, in the face of the victory of the PT candidate, shows all his displeasure by the final result of the election. Unfortunately, the candidate supported by it (despite all the attempts to get him to victory) was the other.

The magazine represents Dilma with an appearance of expectation and meditation: hand on chin and eyes lowered. Once again, the use of the blue color of the opposition party, not the party of the victorious candidate, is seen. The main coverline of this edition is *A solidão da vitória* (“The Loneliness of Victory”), it is as if the magazine changed place with the candidate, after all, who was **defeated** was the own **Veja**.

Differently, one can see the front covers of the other magazines. **Época**, October 27, 2014, in which it can see the smiling president and the so-called “I am willing to dialogue,” delivered in his inaugural speech in Brasília. **Istoé**, November 5, 2014, shows only the eyes of the president-elect, under whom there are a series of complaints to her, and it says “Change already, Dilma”; and **Carta Capital** (which explicitly supported the re-election of the president), in its October 27, 2014, edition, shows Dilma, dressed in red, celebrating among the population.





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ⁱ The article was originally published in BRANDÃO, Jack (org). **Novas questões sobre a imagem**: de objeto de pesquisa a pesquisa do objeto. Embu-Guaçu, Lumen et Virtus, 2015.

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