

La telenovela y el paradigma de la producción nacional: revisitando el modo brasileño de hacer televisión

Telenovela and the national production paradigm: revisiting the brazilian way of making television

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Resumen

Las telenovelas brasileñas presentan las vicisitudes del territorio nacional y delinean la forma de hacer teledramaturgia en el país. El objetivo de este trabajo es discutir el desarrollo de la narrativa de las telenovelas brasileñas a lo largo de los años, utilizando la trayectoria televisiva de Globo con el producto como objeto empírico. La investigación examina la práctica y la concepción de las telenovelas brasileñas a lo largo de las décadas, teniendo a Globo TV como un elemento esencial del mercado nacional y el reconocimiento narrativo. Se utilizó un análisis bibliográfico descriptivo y exploratorio para entrelazar las tramas de las telenovelas con las perspectivas socioculturales del país en el producto. La base teórica está en Hamburger (2005), Alencar (2004), Balogh (2002), Lopes (2003; 2014), Mazziotti (2006) y Mittell (2012). De esta manera, se puede observar la progresión de las narrativas de las producciones nacionales a partir de la caracterización de las particularidades en el acto de contar una trama, lo que identifica el carácter estilístico de las telenovelas brasileñas desde la perspectiva de la carpintería televisiva de Brasil. Esta trayectoria explica las transformaciones de las narrativas, las posibilidades de rupturas a lo largo de las décadas, las lógicas de producción en congruencia con las derivaciones de la ficción serializada y las proximidades culturales entre los países latinoamericanos y sus respectivas televisualidades. Así, la teledramaturgia brasileña está en constante cambio y la forma de hacer de la TV Globo representa el reconocimiento de la teledramaturgia brasileña en un contexto global.

Palabras Clave: telenovelas brasileñas, ficción serializada, comunicación, televisualidades.

Abstract

Brazilian telenovelas present the vicissitudes of the national territory and outline the country's way of doing teledramaturgy. This study aims to discuss the development of the Brazilian telenovelas narrative over the years, using Globo's TV trajectory with the product as its empirical object. The research examines the practice and conception of the Brazilian telenovelas over the decades, with Globo TV as an essential element of national market and narrative recognition. Descriptive and exploratory bibliographic analysis was used to interweave the telenovelas plots with the country's socio-cultural perspectives of the product. The theoretical basis is on Hamburger (2005), Alencar (2004), Balogh (2002), Lopes (2003; 2014), Mazziotti (2006), and Mittell (2012). In this way, the progression of the narratives of national productions can be observed by characterizing the particularities in the act of telling a plot, which identifies the stylistic character of Brazilian telenovelas from the perspective of Brazil's television carpentry. This trajectory explains the transformations of the narratives, the possibilities of ruptures over the decades, the production logics in congruence with the derivations of serialized fiction and the cultural proximities between Latin American countries and their respective televisualities. Therefore, Brazilian teledramaturgy is constantly changing and Globo's TV way of doing things represents the recognition of Brazilian teledramaturgy in a global context.

Keywords: Brazilian telenovela, serialized fiction, communication, televisualities.



1. Introduction

Understanding the narrativity of Brazilian teledramaturgy allows us to identify the relationship between melodrama and territoriality. According to Straubhaar (2007), cultural proximities enable these spaces to be demarcated through appearance, dress, aesthetics, etc. Lopes (2003) explains that national teledramaturgy, more specifically telenovela, reverberates the socio-cultural construction of the country, in other words, the product portrays the country's imaginary in a privileged way. The ability to create productions and mix fiction with reality generates the primary characteristics for recognizing the plot, the authors and the way of telling and identifying a Brazilian plot. The article aims to revisit the specificities of the Brazilian way of doing telenovelas by observing the elaboration of the narrative possibilities of Globo's TV works.

The aim was to answer how the Brazilian telenovela narrative has developed over the years, using TV Globo's trajectory in audiovisual production as the empirical object. The hypothesis is built on the territoriality of melodrama and the ruptures in the history of national productions and their relationship with emerging themes in Brazilian society. The methodology adopted was descriptive and exploratory bibliographical analysis since this article is part of the master's thesis entitled "The Mystery that surrounds the screens: an analysis of the narrative resource "Who dunnit...?" in the telenovelas *The next victim/ a próxima vítima* (TV Globo, 1995) and *The party/ o rebu* (TV globo, 2014)". The research examines the practice and conception of Brazilian telenovela over the decades, with TV Globo as an essential element of market and narrative recognition.

The theoretical foundation is based on Hamburger (2005), Alencar (2004), Balogh (2002) and Lopes (2003; 2014), Mazziotti (2006) and Mittell (2012). In this way, the study uses the division of the telenovela paradigm (Lopes, 2009; Hamburger, 2005) to elucidate the progression of the narratives of national productions that characterize the particularities in the act of telling a plot, which identifies the stylistic character of Brazilian telenovelas from the perspective of carpentry in the rise of TV Globo and the relationship with the reality of the country.

2. The Brazilian telenovela paradigm: brief notes

The trajectory of the Brazilian telenovela began in 1951 on TV Tupi, with the production *Your life belongs to me/ Sua vida me pertence*. The story chronicled a couple's life and was shown twice a week (Alencar, 2004). The conventions of fiction in Brazil originate from plots based on radio soap operas and Cuban cigar factories, which were influences on the creation of American soap operas (Alencar, 2004). Lopes (2014) divides Brazilian telenovelas into three phases, each of which is outlined in the table below:

Chart 1 - Phases of Brazilian telenovela		
Between the 1950s and 1960s	Between the 1970s and 1990s	From 1990 to the present day.
Works recognized for their strong melodramatic cloak-and-dagger style.	Introduction of the Brazilian space in the narratives.	More realistic stories.
Texts imported from countries like Mexico, Argentina and Venezuela	Original Brazilian stories	Staging facts, social and political themes.

<p>The telenovela <i>The Right to Be Born</i> is a first significant phenomenon of this phase</p>	<p>Beto Rockefeller is a landmark Brazilian production company.</p>	<p>Social construction of the country through telenovela.</p>
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Note. Prepared by the author based on Lopes (2009) and Hamburger (2005).

This configuration presents the paradigm of the Brazilian telenovela and outlines the narrative transformations based on the way the Brazilian product is made. In the 1960s, the insertion of videotape in national broadcasters allowed telenovelas to be recorded, and so the first daily story called *2-5499 ocupado* appeared on Excelsior in 1968, adapted by Dulce Santucci from the Argentine original by author Alberto Migré (Alencar, 2004). The first years of Brazilian production were based on melodramatic plots from Cuba, Venezuela and Mexico. Many were adaptations of radio soap operas for TV and advertising agencies produced the stories. "It was the advertising agencies that selected the texts, hired the cast, sets, costumes and coordinated all the productions, because the broadcasters did not have the minimum structure required" (Mayer, 2010, p. 25).

The greatest success of this early period of telenovela in Brazil was the adaptation of the Cuban classic *The Right to Be Born*, a radio drama that was a great success in Latin America, written by Felix B. Cagnet. For Straubhaar (2007), cultural approximation allows similar productions to dialog with spaces with similar values. This happened in Latin America through the folklore stories already recognized in different countries in the same territory. The first phase of the Brazilian telenovela began with the introduction of the genre through melodramatic screen plays in the 1950s and 1960s.

The starting point for modernization came in 1968 with the telenovela *Beto Rockefeller*, created by Cassiano Gabus Mendes, written by Bráulio Pedroso and shown on TV Tupi. From this story, we find the second phase in the trajectory of the Brazilian telenovela, which, according to Lopes (2009), introduces contemporary Brazil through the big cities, the use of external recording, colloquial language, some ambivalent characters, and social repertoire shared with the viewers of that period. It tuned in to the liberalizing anxieties of a young audience, both male and female, newly arrived in the metropolis, in search of education and integration into the poles of modernization. The conventions that were adopted from then on were based on the fact that each soap opera had to bring a "novelty," a subject that set it apart from its predecessors and was capable of "provoking" interest, comment, debate from viewers and other media, and the consumption of related products, such as books, records, clothes, etc (Lopes, 2009, p. 25). In line with Lopes (2009), the telenovela became the product that most discussed Brazilian reality by mixing it with fiction.

The third phase, called naturalistic by Lopes (2003), in the 1990s, triggered the consolidation of national productions and the solidification of the Brazilian way of doing teledramaturgy. We can identify innovations in Brazilian telenovelas based on social and technological transformations. From the 1990s onwards, Brazilian telenovela television fiction took shape in different places, with different narratives and new possibilities for telling Brazilian plots. From this perspective, the trajectory of the Brazilian telenovela shows the narrative possibilities in the national territory through the growth of the market and the professionals' way of doing things, based on the carpentry created by TV Globo, which characterizes the specificities of the Brazilian telenovela paradigm.

3. TV Globo and Telenovelas: Narratives, style and possibilities

TV Globo's participation in the trajectory of the Brazilian telenovela elucidates the popularization of the way this product is made. Lopes (2003) states that TV Globo paved the way for the creative and marketing process of this product in the country. Set up in 1965, the Marinho channel began the process of producing telenovelas with *Lost Illusions/Ilusões Perdidas* for the 6pm slot, in the same year as the station's inauguration. Gloria Magadan, a Cuban exile, accumulated the functions of producer, writer and supervisor of the productions that adapted stories from distant territories for the Brazilian public (Memória Globo, 2021). The stories considered to be cloaks and swords formed part of the constitution of the trajectory of Brazilian telenovela, allowing new ways of telling them to Brazilian viewers.

Overall, Gloria Magadan wrote hits such as *The Sheik of Agadir/ O sheik de agadir* (1966), *I'll Buy That Woman/ eu compro essa mulher* (1966), *The Shadow of Rebecca/ a sombra de rebecca* (1967) and *The Mad Queen/ a rainha louca* (1967). However, innovations in the format grew and Magadan's style became obsolete. During this period, numerous stories were shown under the leadership of Gloria Magadan and the classic melodramatic line. However, with the influence of Beto Rockfeller's narrative style at Tupi, TV Globo decided to invest in more Brazilian plots. Janete Clair, a radio drama author responsible for making the stories more Brazilian on TV Globo, introduced narratives that were close to Brazilian daily life and showed new aesthetics.

From the 1970s onwards, stories with political themes were introduced in the 11 p.m. slot, as in the country's first color telenovela, *The beloved/ Bem-amado* (1973) by 21 Dias Gomes (Alencar, 2004). It tells the story of Odorico Paraguaçu, a populist and demagogic politician who hires a hitman to inaugurate a cemetery. However, things do not go according to plan, and he ends up being murdered by the hitman (Xavier, 2021).

In this context, after the success of Janete Clair and Dias Gomes' plots and the departure of Glória Magadan, TV Globo's teledramaturgy outlined the format it is known to this day. These innovations made the hegemony of melodrama more flexible, which allowed for important changes to the national product and "[...] presupposes considering this process of elaboration and intertwining of traces of the original cultural matrices." (Borelli, 2001, p.34).

In this period, TV Globo took the first steps towards the marketing concept by presenting specifications that were incorporated later into the genre. The latent historical and political context of Brazil's military regime contributed to changes in the way telenovelas were made in the country. The transformations due to the pressures of censorship generated a complex part in the trajectory of teledramaturgy in the country. Several telenovelas were censored because of issues with progressive content perceived by the censors, such as the classic case occurred, in 1975, with the telenovela *Roque Santeiro*, written by Dias Gomes and banned from airing hours before the premiere, being rewritten ten years later in 1985 (Alencar, 2004).

Despite the political tensions, the melodramatic matrix permeated the national territory through the conflicts in the story and was re-signified in the country. The telenovela presented specifications that were later incorporated into the genre, such as parallel plots, dramatic conventions that complexify the plot, changes due to pressure from censorship or lack of interest from the public, a greater variety of scenarios and a greater number of characters. As a result, the production can convey a greater dynamism such as the ideas of modernity that the genre would stand out for (Hamburger, 2005).

According to Hamburger (2005), the stories then focused on Brazilians' discontent with the new republic. The plot of *Anything goes /vale Tudo*, for example, showed the public a

kind of reality that transformed this production into a period document (Motter, 2001) by mobilizing questions about the direction of the nation through melodrama in association with politics (Hamburger, 2005). In the 1980s, TV Globo consolidated national productions and solidified the Brazilian way of doing fiction through innovations based on social and technological transformations. For Hamburger (2005), diversification made it possible to strengthen a style that characterized national productions as the narrative of a nation, also discussed by Lopes (2003).

From the 1990s onwards, TV Globo established itself as a producer of television fiction in different places, different narratives and new possibilities for telling Brazilian storylines. These productions show new perspectives on Brazil, narratives, technologies and style. During this period, the carpentry of teledramaturgy demarcated the territory from a stylistic perspective and differentiated itself from the national or international market. National productions began to be identified by the traits of the authors (Souza, 2004). Telenovelas increasingly dialogued with Brazilian daily life. "They set out to intervene in certain specific subjects, chosen by the authors according to the affinities of their respective styles" (Hamburger, 2005, p.131).

In contemporary times, the Marinhos broadcaster directs this way of telling a well-known storyline in congruence with stylistic and narrative aspects present in the global market panorama of serialized fiction, based on new formats that encompass or go beyond audiovisual limits (Balogh, 2001), such as miniseries and superseries, as well as works created especially for streaming.

4. Far beyond melodrama: revisiting the history of telenovela making in Brazil

By investigating the trajectory of the telenovela, we can identify the narrative possibilities in the course of the attempts to evolve the storylines from the carpentry of TV Globo. The paradigm of the telenovela, named by Lopes (2003; 2014), explains the narrative development of teledramaturgy from the 1960s onwards and, consequently, the plot probabilities in each period through the consecration of TV Globo in the production of the product. In this context, through an exploratory descriptive study, we characterize the following traits related to the trajectory of telenovelas in the country: the product paradigm, novelization, and serialization.

This configuration shows how the Brazilian product was made since Lopes (2003) divides the telenovela paradigm into melodramatic, realistic, and naturalistic. At first, the stories were based on Mexican and Venezuelan melodramatic stories. This phase saw the first national success and the initial gradual modification of Brazilian plots. Then, in the next phase, the need to broaden fictional horizons allowed professionals to make new attempts, such as the hybridization of melodrama. In this context, the Brazilian television is made is shaped by telenovelas plots and the way narratives are created. National fiction, from TV Globo's perspective, acquires a distinctive palimpsest with an ideological, socio-cultural and technological aspect (Hamburger, 2005).

These stories have changed and the narrative possibilities have intensified. The model for making the Brazilian telenovela, and for teledramaturgy, is an agile, modern and colorful prototype whose advent belongs to the aesthetics of theater (Mazziotti (2006). In this way, derivations of folkloric products such as miniseries, superseries and teleseries have become denominations from a dramatic and experimental point of view, such as police telenovelas. This configuration of TV Globo's palimpsest presents these new formats, complex narratives according to the ways of watching and the development of technology (Mittell, 2012).

According to Balogh (2002), Brazilianization allowed dramatic structures to be perfected and introduced professionals from the theater to TV. The melodramatic matrix permeated the narrative through the conflicts in the story and with new resignifications of style. The telenovela presented specifications that were later incorporated into the genre, such as parallel plots, dramatic conventions that complexify the plot, changes due to pressure from censorship or lack of interest from the public, a greater variety of scenarios and a greater number of characters. As a result, the production can convey a greater dynamism, such as the ideas of modernity that the genre stands out for (Hamburger, 2005). This decoding is related to the other two stages, realism and naturalism.

The realistic phase of the telenovela, in turn, points to the more ideological nature of the productions, as the 1970s and 1980s represented the history of Brazil. The telenovela *Vale Tudo*, shown in 1988, for example, presented the narrative based on the question "Is it worth being honest in Brazil?" which revealed moral and ethical issues among the characters, who lived in Brazilian society during the period of re-democratization. According to Hamburger (2005) this story reproduced, at that time, the discontent of Brazilians with the new republic.

From the 1990s onwards, in the naturalist phase, Brazilian television fiction took on different places, different narratives and new possibilities for telling Brazilian plots. While the realist period encompassed realistic plots with a more ideological slant, pointing out political and social issues in the plots, the naturalist period brings with it a mixture of fiction and reality, incorporating themes into the narratives that Hamburger (2005) calls intervention telenovelas. For the author, this diversification made it possible to strengthen a style that characterized national productions as the narrative of a nation, as also discussed by Lopes (2003).

According to Balogh (2002), this configuration represents television production in Brazil based on the mode of production developed by TV Globo, which has developed into what we know today. Balogh (2002) states that television is an anthropophagic vehicle, adding different formats and genres to its programming. For this reason, television fiction has been produced for over seventy years and has benefited from elements found in cinema and theater by introducing them into serialized stories.

In terms of drama, Brazilian television is made up of telenovelas, miniseries, series, superseries and, more recently, exclusive streaming productions. Telenovelas, known for their popular reach, differ from the structure by the number of chapters, more characters and diversity of nuclei. Comparato (2018) states that telenovelas have a longer macrostructure, i.e. the engineering of the plot, and "[...] we study how many chapters there should be and make a plan of the main facts, changes and critical points to be developed in each of the weeks of the telenovela's duration" (Comparato, 2018, p. 175). For Balogh (2002), miniseries refer to dramatically dense stories. According to the author, the time slot dedicated to miniseries has been decoded for experimental productions - something that used to happen with telenovelas in the 11 p.m. slot.

From this perspective, the way a storyline is told has become hybridized, sedimenting serial productions according to each culture (Balogh, 2002). The elements present in the telenovela spread to other productions created during these periods. While in the United States we have sitcoms, in England the theatrical tradition, in Latin America we see telenovelas as the main production of television serial fiction. According to her, in Latin America they came from the radio tradition, the pamphlet and the melodrama. This allowed us to identify the space in which the productions were inserted and popularized. Hamburger (2005) explains that the process of creating telenovelas is characterized by the construction of the

narrative at the same time as the show, which allows the narrative to change according to the audience's reception. "The organized routine, fragmented into stages, is reminiscent of the Fordist production line tradition; however, the making of soap operas also involves cast members or social pressures on the narrative often lead to delays and/or reordering of the text" (Hamburger, 2005, p. 43).

In Brazil, telenovelas continue to be the most watched programs, guaranteeing audience loyalty and financial returns for companies (Jost, 2012). Attempts to break away are usually through miniseries and, more recently, superseries, a term created by TV Globo as the company that had monopolized the product's production methods until then. "They become a space to test the limits of the televisual and face the challenge of innovating language or overcoming the constraints of visual language itself" (Balogh, 2002, p. 127). In Latin America, the main product - the telenovela - has the melodrama genre, which wanders between genres and formats expanded by television and streaming through the form of storytelling, based on repetition and hooks. The audiovisual content obeys the industrial demands that originated in the serial, which sliced up productions in specific places called hooks to hold the audience's attention. "The cut and the emotional suspense open gaps for the viewer's participation, inviting them to anticipate the subsequent development of the plot" (Machado, 2000, p. 88).

Latin, and consequently national, fictional construction practices feature the characterization of telenovelas, in other words, the novelization of the plots so that the productions are closer to the script already recognized by the productions. For Straubhaar (2007), this is due to the cultural proximity between the territories. Therefore, the productions of these locations express the demarcations of these spaces, such as appearance, dress, style or humor - even though not everyone has the same access (Straubhaar, 2007).

However, we can see from the evolution of national entertainment the developments in line with US productions, which have specificities in each work. The use of remakes to update the technological production of classic works stands out in this context through the showing of remade works entitled "novela das 23". The first reference to the format was called "novela das 11" and took place in 2011 with the remake of Janete Clair's 1974 telenovela *O Astro*, in honor of the 60th anniversary of the telenovela in Brazil. The story had 64 chapters and experimented with shorter soap operas. TV Globo directed this way of telling a well-known storyline by updating the plot and stylistic issues in line with the global market panorama of serialized fiction.

In line with Silva (2015), contemporary serializations are even more intertwined with serialized formats when it comes to continuous seriality. Silva (2015) explains that the contemporary episodic plot occurs in both ways and the continuity does not end at the end of the season - it can often continue without resolutions. For Silva (2015), understanding these narratives requires knowledge of cultural matrices, the industrial format and conceptions of the world. The author takes into account the insertion of each product in their respective cultures and viewers.

According to Martín-Barbero (1997), formats point to the consumption logics of each territory in congruence with cultural matrices, which help to understand the rules of the format in question. Currently, there is a telenovela name for digital platforms, such as *All the flowers/ Todas as flores*, by João Emanuel Carneiro, shown exclusively for on demand content with 85 chapters, called "the nine o'clock telenovela of streaming". In this way, the new formats, whether in terms of number of chapters or themes, in congruence with the melodramatic matrix, promote ways of telling a story and, often, due to technological

conditions and the culture of series (Silva, 2014). In this way, through a strategy of seriesophilia (Jost, 2012), the approximation of contemporary social practices to new formats allows a new perspective on other ways of telling a story.

While series are becoming more novelized, telenovelas are turning up more serialized from a plot and aesthetic perspective. For Mittell (2012), the new narrative possibilities, which generate greater complexity in stories, come from the new technologies and ways of watching them. As a result, national production has brought together different genres and formats, from the embryonic system to the narrative, aesthetic and marketing success of TV Globo, and has been re-signifying itself by adapting to the new ways of telling a story, from broadcast TV to streaming platforms.

5. Conclusion

By revisiting the specificities of the Brazilian way of doing things, in the development of the narrative possibilities of TV Globo's works, it is considered that the trajectory of the Brazilian telenovela is constituted by television carpentry when it entered the television field as the holder of the market prospects until then. Although other broadcasters kick-started the transformations of the product in question, it was through the Marinho's broadcaster that the narrative and stylistic trait endured and characterizes, to this day, the primary elements for the recognition of Brazilian teledramaturgy in a global context. The making of telenovela in Brazil is based on the constant attempt to break away from melodramatic plots and on the everydayization of plots. The production of national teledramaturgy, by grouping together the possibilities anchored in melodrama and in the structure of the *foletim*, transforms this televisuality, which comes from Latin American territoriality, into a stylistic feature of national production.

In addition, the changes in the way we watch serialized fiction since the popularization of streaming platforms and serialization allow for latent recognition of the folkloric elements of other serialized productions, the serialized configuration of telenovelas and the attempts at ruptures in convergence with the marketing aspect by standardizing stylistic characteristics. Therefore, TV Globo is seen as the holder of these possibilities and ratification of the content of old works which, through reruns and reminiscences, can be seen as a way of making telenovelas intertwined with attempts at rupture, which have formed the paradigm of the product in the country.

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