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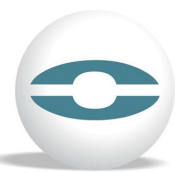
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## Application of semiotics in the analysis of facsimiles: a documentary research

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### ABSTRACT

**Aim:** To demonstrate the use of semiotic analysis in facsimiles to studies using photographic images as research documents. **Method:** We used an analytical matrix composed for four items, the results of which were enlightened by the notions of institutional rites, object representations and Hexis, from a microanalytical perspective. **Result:** The results were contextualized to the image articulating the notion of an imagetic signature, through the symbolic elements in terms of the clothes, veil/cap and cross symbol corresponding to the Brazilian Red Cross. **Discussion:** The discussions were related to the way in which the nurses held and expressed themselves, their clothes and symbols, their behavior towards the general who was being honored and the institutional ceremony. **Conclusion:** The matrix analysis is ratified as an additional documental imagetic research tool, enabling us to decode the symbolic codes for versions and (re)interpretations as epistemological issue.

**Keywords:** Nursing; History of Nursing; Photography

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## INTRODUCTION

The term 'semiotics' has a long tradition of use. It dates back to the Greek doctor, Cláudio Galeno, between 131 and 201 AD, whose theories influenced medicine as least as late as the Seventeenth Century, when the English philosopher, John Locke, proposed the use of the term semiotics to designate the science of signs, corresponding in this sense, to traditional logic<sup>(1)</sup>.

However, for independent initiatives, semiotics, on the one hand, a designation of Anglo-Saxon origin and semiology, on the other, as part of the neo-Latin European culture, were proposed as autonomous disciplines. In the first case, the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) and in the second, the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), whose linguistics course was published posthumously in 1916 by Charles Bally and A. Sechehaye, his students, constituted a theoretical revolution in the study of signs<sup>(1)</sup>.

Semiotics, in philosophical thought, has its origins in the semiotics and semiology terms. These are defined respectively by the philosophical approach of Peirce and Morrisian in terms of semiotics, and Saussure's linguistic approach. In this article we have adopted the term 'semiotics'. The justification for this is based on the charter of the International Association for Semiotic Studies - Association Internationale de Sémiotique, 1969, in order to ensure equivalence<sup>(2)</sup>.

The image, as a document, has been notorious since the 1960s, when Roland Barthes, based on Saussure's design put verbal language at the center of the structure as a model of possible relationships. This was disputed by the French sociologist, Pierre Francastel, who, in the 1980s, denounced the centralism of Barthes' philosophical model, claiming that no form of a cultural complex could be decreased. This was supported by the studies of Michel Vovelle, Georges Duby and Carlo Ginzburg<sup>(3)</sup>.

By intensifying the figurative thinking which interrupted the verbal thinking, it would be possible to translate the understanding of the images in a perceptual and logical way. The structure and semiotics in the process of look-think-describe with regard to the visual world, translates traces which are able to restore the image in terms of its own temporality <sup>(3)</sup>. This provides us with an understanding of the image in a historical context, mainly as a document of facts, and it shows the relationships and social representations of certain moments.

For this, it is necessary that, in its illustrative use, the image as a documentary source does not involve any methodological errors. Generally speaking, people use images to illustrate an argument that has been built based upon its own image. In other words, the image is the imagistic translation of the written speech.

Images are testimonies of deference with regard to the author of the image. This implies that it was influenced by him, given that the author is the one who lists the positions, leading to evidence of looks and trends of the time within the image.

One highlight for analysis in terms of the semiotic perspective is the need to be attentive to the details of the image, using a magnifying glass or a computer, in order to identify tiny details or sharpnesses in the image<sup>(4)</sup>.

Trends, politics, fashion, social structures and culture, all give deference to the author of the image at a certain angle or in terms of the centralization of a subject or an object, together with the attributes of the landscape.

For this to be analyzed, attention should be paid to the object representations that are used to translate the image, i.e., seeking, with regard to people and objects, the time that the image was recorded/captured by the author.

Therefore, the aim is to demonstrate the use of semiotic analysis of facsimiles, through the use of an analytical matrix, using the photographic image as a research document.

The justification for the demonstration of the analytical matrix is based on the development of studies of images, as imagistic documents, aimed at clarifying historical events using imagistic traces, which may complement documents and, in particular, the written word.

## **METHOD**

This is a piece of documentary research<sup>(5)</sup>, whose strategy is to demonstrate the use of semiotic analysis of two facsimiles published in the Fon-Fon magazine. This magazine was first published in Rio de Janeiro in 1907. It was very popular, with a focus in advertising, politics and social themes of popular interest.

The term 'facsimile' comes from the Latin *fac-símile* and has the meaning of doing something similar, in the sense of an exact copy of the printed document. Such a copy can be reproduced in various ways including photomechanical, electronic and electrostatic methods<sup>(6)</sup>. In this sense, the two images proposed for the research demonstration were published in the Fon-Fon magazine, in 1917, a historic year that included World War I (1914-1918).

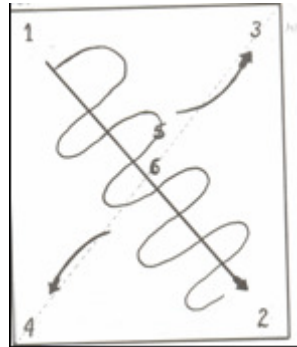
Table 1 contains, in a structured way, the analytical matrix applied to the two facsimiles incorporated in the study. It has four items - identification data, expression data plan, content plan and additional data obtained from other images. These are developed based on two semiotic concepts - expression and content plan. The first refers to the manifestation of this content as a system of verbal, nonverbal or syncretic signification,

and the second, to the meaning of the text, i.e., what the text says and what is its message<sup>(6)</sup>.

**Table 1 – Analytical Matrix applied to the facsimiles used in the study**

<b>1. Identification Data</b>	
Location of collection	Name of public institution or owner
Name of magazine, newspaper or periodical	
Year of publication	
Edition number	
Page containing the image	
Publication date	
Title or headline that accompanies the photo	
<b>2. Expression data plan</b>	
Image credit	Author of image production
Relationship of image to the text	Photo report - kind of news which consists exclusively of photos with subtitles, without any supporting text block or contextualization, with sequenced pictures or not, as opposed to photojournalism
Subtitle	Text to identify picture and/or scene in the picture. Also considered as a text-caption, consisting of a short text and always edited with the photo. The formats may vary between one line to an average of three to five lines without paragraphs. Generally accompanied by a title which reproduces a detail of the art. Thus, the subtitle has the function of enabling the reader to obtain knowledge related to the displayed image. It is considered as a mental trigger to allow the reader to understand the

	<p>photograph. It does not contain information or it is not evident in the picture. It is an invitation to better exploit the image and discover less obvious meanings, but is no less important.</p>
Abstract	
Type of photo	<p>The photo is posed or informal - also known as instantaneous – the latter of which got its start in the 1920s. The introducer of this innovation was Dr. Erich Salomon, a German photographer, considered by Gisele Freund, to be the first to photograph people without their knowledge. The technique was referred to as "snapshot". The practice of this type of photo later served as the basis of photojournalism, releasing the photographer, who until then had been restricted to posed photos. This type of photography enabled differentiated visualization of the photo because it began to represent reality.</p>
Format	Geometric design.
Layout	<p>The photographic layouts are: general plan, when it portrays large environments, usually an exterior; joint plan when it is aimed at people when they are not the central objects of the photo; American plan when people are portrayed from the waist up; the foreground, known as "close" for people or objects; and the detailed plan, the first variant in its maximum representation</p>
The direction refers to the image relative to the page	Horizontal and vertical
Image Location on page	Visualization areas are strategic areas that has

	<p>the vision as the main principle. They are fixed to the top left of the paper, because we are conditioned by western writing. It starts from left to right, which characterizes the way in which our eyes work, decisively influencing our behavior in reading. The rational logic for western reading gives rise to the six visualization areas.</p>  <p>The primary, or main zone (1), contains elements of attraction to invoke the reader's attention. The reader then looks instinctively diagonally to the opposite the lower corner NO. DIAGONALLY IS TO 2 (dead zone - 4), the basic route of the eye moves from the upper left NO. THIS IS THE UPPER RIGHT (dead zone - 3) to the lower right (secondary zone - 2). In this sense, the importance of the optical (5) and geometric (6) center of the page is that it needs to offer attractive features for the purpose of reading, rationally, without the quick displacement of vision.</p>
<b>3. Content plan</b>	
Local pictures	Natural, scenes, internal, external and geographic spaces



Pictures of people	Mixed group, males, females, children, many people portrayed; theme of the image portrayed
Personal attributes	Clothing and accessories that people wear and carry
Landscape attributes	Objects, characteristic of the scenes portrayed, elements present for the composition of the shot
<b>4. Additional data obtained from another image</b>	
Source of information	Location information
Possible articulations with image analyzed	

The use of image magnification is of interest to the reading of the imagistic text. This can be done through the use of a computer with zoom controls, and then by projecting multimedia, in order to better capture the content of the material be analyzed. This approach should be used with caution, since it can lead to the distortion of the original image<sup>(6)</sup>.

The application of the matrix to the facsimile offers two types of analytical approaches: quantitative and qualitative. The first one allows the researcher to quantify the data obtained in the matrix, leading to a non-experimental research design which can allow for analytical, observational, case-control, cohort, transversal or correlation studies <sup>(5)</sup>.

In the second approach, the data are analyzed by decoding the signs. In this sense, it can be applied to the historical method, especially when linked to the literature and to the historical context<sup>(7)</sup>.

In practice, this analysis will be limited to a qualitative approach with regard to a microanalytical historical perspective<sup>(7)</sup> interpreted in the light of the idea of Pierre Bourdieu, mainly in terms of institutional rites, Hexis and object representation.

The institutional rite has an enforcement function, through technical and social competence, as an act of social magic<sup>(8)</sup> which establishes, sanctions and sanctifies a state of things, an order established<sup>(8)</sup> The themes of the facsimiles that applied this notion, decoded the power and prestige which existed at a particular moment. This is in the internal sense, as in the external sense it is reported in the press, adding symbolic value to rite and being honored by being integrated into society.

The notion of Hexis is one of the body dimensions used to communicate through the art of body language. It expresses the relationships which exist in the social world. It is a style of articulation, i.e. a body scheme aiming to achieve the principle of social identity and self-image <sup>(8)</sup>, which can be exemplified in the social norm that women should not sit with their legs open, whereas it is permitted of a man.

The object representations are signs of things (emblems, flags, badges, etc.), or acts. They suggest strategies which are interested in symbolic manipulation that has a tendency towards a certain representation (mind) that the others can build on, both of these properties, as their carriers<sup>(8)</sup>. The object representations in this case are the clothes, veil, symbol of the cross, among other symbolic elements in the composition of the imagistic text that we are interested in.

It is noteworthy that the results of the matrix analysis, because the polysemy of the image must be triangulated, not in the sense of truth, but in terms of the verisimilitude because it is one more version and one possible interpretation, which can crystallize the results of previous studies through state of the art techniques.

The analysis of the facsimiles published in the Fon-Fon magazine was based on the legal provisions of Law No. 9.610/1998 regarding the authorization, update and consolidation of copyright law and other measures.

## RESULT

Upon completion of the matrix data, it was organized in the form of written text after viewing each facsimile, in full or in summary, based on the researcher's interests.

**Facsimile number. 01 – No title, 1917, Fon-Fon Magazine. Various aspects of the presentation of his oil portrait made to General Thaumaturgo de Azevedo, President of the Red Cross at the headquarters of the Brazilian Red Cross.**



The facsimile number one is located at the National Library, taken from the Fon-Fon magazine, dated 12/07/1917, page 32, There is no title, but it represents the arrival of the honoree.

The expression data plan of the facsimile, in this instance, lacks identification of authorship. The relationship between the text and the image indicate a kind of photojournalism, which is highlighted in the caption above. The imagistic text shows the arrival of the honoree outside the Institution. The picture is spontaneous in nature. The geometric design is rectangular, which presents the photographic plane in general, as a horizontal page in the viewing zone in regions 1 and 2.

The content plan is a natural place in the external environment, probably in the courtyard of the Brazilian Red Cross, in downtown Rio de Janeiro. The imagistic text is composed mainly of a female group. This group is composed of 16 women in uniform with light colored, long-sleeved dresses and some others with shorter dresses and a veil. The

women bear the Red Cross symbol of a cross in a dark color on their uniforms. In the center of the imagistic text is General Thaumaturgo de Azevedo, who is being watched by nurses from Training School for Nurses of the Brazilian Red Cross. The landscape attributes can be seen in the background, possibly the outside of the Institution.

**Facsimile number. 02 – No title, 1917, Fon-Fon Magazine. Various aspects of the presentation of his oil portrait to General Thaumaturgo de Azevedo, President of the Red Cross, being inaugurated at the headquarters of the Brazilian Red Cross.**



Facsimile number two is located in the National Library, taken from the Fon-Fon magazine, dated 12/07/1917, page 32, untitled, representing the moment of the presentation.

The expression data plan of the facsimile, in this instance, lacks identification of authorship,. The relationship between the text and the image indicate a kind of photojournalism, which is highlighted in the caption above. The imagistic text shows a moment of the presentation inside the institution. The picture is a spontaneous type. The geometric design is rectangular, which presents the photographic plane, usually horizontal and viewing zone in the regions 1, 2 and 5.

The plan content is of a natural scene of the internal environment, probably without specific identification inside the premises of the Brazilian Red Cross. The people in the

imagistic text are a group of approximately 23 people, many of whom are male. This group is composed of ten women wearing institutional uniform, light color, highlighting the veil and the symbol of the cross in the dark. Three of the men are in dark clothes, probably suits, with probably light shirts highlighting their ties in the dark. The other males and females have their backs to the camera or the image is unclear. Either way, they seem to be wearing two-piece suits. Near the center of the imagistic text on the right side, it is possible to identify General Thaumaturgo de Azevedo flanked by two women in Red Cross uniforms.

The landscape attributes include parts of pictures hung on the wall, flowers, furniture in general, highlighting the oil painting of the General, which is ornamented with flowers, and is located on the left hand side of the imagistic text.

## **DISCUSSION**

Before decoding the data from the matrix analysis, it is worth noting that the additional data obtained from the other image, were not applied because of the accumulated knowledge of the authors on the history of the Brazilian Red Cross and of the Training School for Nurses of the Brazilian Red Cross, through the production of articles, a doctoral thesis and research reports.

On the other hand, this does not mean that other images were not needed. In practice, it depends on the accumulation of cultural resources on the part of the researcher(s) for the application of matrix analysis. The reason is that the fourth item is needed as a tool in the analysis and can thought of as being optional.

From here, after appropriate caveats, we will consider the analytical decoding of the facsimiles. We decided to start with the body position of some of the individuals photographed in support of the honored guest on his way into the building. This can be understood as indicating an attitude of deference.

This attitude was expressed by the state of the bodies in the photograph. The body language indicates a state of deference to support the arrival of the honored guest as well as the facial expressions of a smile, that represents the symbolic efficacy of Hexis<sup>(8)</sup>. This symbolic efficacy occurs in the sense that the physical expression of affection, such as laughter and tears, is present in the expressions of the body. Furthermore, the symbolic effectiveness is recognized as a collective capacity to act in various ways by operating in a mimetic way that is clearly expressed<sup>(8)</sup>.

In facsimile number one, when receiving the honored guest with deference, the people pictured showed a state and body language which indicate symbolic effectiveness in the frozen image that was published in the Fon-Fon magazine. Furthermore, it is understood as a way of materializing the symbolic belief among those portrayed of the power and prestige of the guest, which is represented in the honor paid to the institution.

In the facsimile, where the nurses flank the honored guest, it is interesting to identify the effect of light<sup>(9)</sup>. Put another way, the light colored uniforms of the nurses surrounding the the honored guest, highlighted him due to the fact that he is positioned in the imagistic center.

As mentioned previously, facsimile number two is below facsimile number one. Such a page layout in the illustrated medium, offers a sense of continuity to the events.

In terms of the unveiling of the painting in tribute to General Thaumaturgo de Azevedo, as the second President of the Brazilian Red Cross, the period in which such recognition and authorization of the Institution occurred, on the national and international sphere, is registered, through these images, as an important stage in the history of the Brazilian Red Cross.

By recording this moment in the illustrated media, the images (facsimiles) transform all the objects involved. Put another way, the oil painting of the honoree, framed in an image which slices through time and space, with the picture of the institutional rite, makes everything an object of distinction in the sense of deference<sup>(4)</sup>.

The picture of the honored guest can also be understood as honoring the one who assisted the institution. In this sense, the unveiling of the image of the honored guest and its exposure in the Brazilian Red Cross headquarters, brings viewers the conviction that what is seen really happened at that moment, and is a reality perceived by the observer.

The uniforms and symbols on the bodies of nurses, is recorded in an element in the matrix analysis under name of personal attribute. This records the distinction in various ways, and needs to be decoded to be read and understood.

These attributes are object representations which, when decoded, show meanings that form the imagistic signature, understood as a marker to distinguish the origin of the formation of each School of Nursing<sup>(9)</sup>.

Applied to the two facsimiles, it is possible to identify the imagistic signature of the institution - Practical School of Nurses of the Brazilian Red Cross - through the clothes, veil/hat and cross symbol located on the head and chest which represents the characteristic symbols of the institution.

On decoding, the symbolic elements - clothes, veil/cap and cross symbol on the costumes of the nurses of the Brazilian Red Cross, they can be understood as follows: the clothing is a type of social control and excess, allowing distinction for the person who wears it. It offers a position in society and/or in an institution, in terms of the activity and the occupation. The veil/hat is decoded as a mark of honor, religion, sign of decency, modesty, distinction and responsibility, while the cross symbol bears the meaning of

being a guardian, a missionary bringing goodness and charity. The use of the color red, in an asymmetric and geometric way, is the internationally known symbol of the Red Cross <sup>(9-10)</sup>. In this case, the symbolic set represents distinctions through symbolic elements as an imagistic attribute.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the historical period of World War I, when Brazil entered the international conflict, the institutional tribute to General Thaumaturgo de Azevedo, conducted by the Brazilian Red Cross, through the object representation of a picture did not occur by chance.

By applying the matrix analysis to two facsimiles on the topic of institutional rites, during a time of international conflict, without linking the Brazilian Red Cross intentionally, it is understood as analytical ingenuity, because the institutional rite performed with regard to the first President of the institution with the military rank of a general officer, could have possibly lead to the personality cult of militarism in the period under consideration.

The symbolic elements presented, to be decoded on the literature either directly or indirectly, contributed to the unveiling of some institutional codes, which are tangential to the building of the image of the nurse through the clothes and her symbolic props in order to represent the distinction of an imagistic signature, which should not be confused with the object of desire of other institutions in their advertisements, either in terms of training nurses and even in the marketing of pharmaceutical products, among others.

It is worth mentioning that the meaning of the word 'nurse' may initiate a certain mental image of females in white costumes who are dedicated to caring for patients. In the same way, it is believed that, in the last century, when lay people saw material images with symbolic elements that had the intention of representing these 'nurses', they conveyed a notion of credibility which is associated with charity and kindness.



The symbolic elements on the bodies of nurses – clothes, veil/cap and cross symbol - are trails that allow some understanding of the past in order to theoretically trace the history of society, from the perspective of semiotics by microanalysis.

On the other hand, we cannot fail to mention the limitations of the demonstration. In this paper we have analyzed two facsimiles of an institutional rite on the part of the Brazilian Red Cross, in terms of the deference shown to one of the former Presidents of the Institution by the nurses. Their presence illuminated the guest's arrival, through the effect of light, giving more prominence to the honoree, as the light that illuminates an actor in a scene.

To understand the gaps in the studies and theoretical essays, among other intellectual ideas, is to enable the advancement in research, either to crystallize assertions, allow improved versions and (re)interpretations of the results as a feature of epistemological vigilance.

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