

# THE BODY OF THE POWER: A semiotic study of Lula's figure in the 1989 presidential campaign as portrayed in the Brazilian weekly newsmagazines *Veja* and *Istoé*

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the semiotic constructions of the figure/body of President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva portrayed in the cover stories of the weekly news magazines *Veja* and *Istoé* during the presidential campaign of 1989. The *corpus* is made up of the cover stories whose thematic focus was the presentation of Lula's profile. The weekly media are themselves among the actors in the scenario of political debate: by acting as performers, they engage in political practice as judging observers. By studying the modes of construction of Lula's image in the electoral campaigns compared with those of the other candidate (Collor-89), this paper also attempts to identify the ways in which the weekly news media are present in contemporary society and the persuasive procedures (verbal, visual, and syncretic strategies) they use to "influence" the reader, based on the judgment they arbitrate. To this end, based on a semiotic analysis, we will study the different enunciative mechanisms employed in the production of such discourses. We will therefore examine the figures of the Other evoked in the construction of Lula, specifying the forms of media sentencing expressed in *nodal points*, in the sense conveyed by Laclau. What are the oppositions constructed in the repartition of the political field, accomplished in the news reports themselves, centered on the "personalities" of the actors in dispute? How does one outline the political field based on the opposition of detractors and personalities: Lula and Collor? We speak of Lula-Other to mark the *otherness* established in this construction of oppositions characterized by categories of separation between the Same and the Other, right and left, popular culture and elite culture, trade unionism and social democracy, etc. This study is part of a research entitled "The invention of the Other in the weekly media", which aims to create a paradigmatic DVD that will attempt to act within a process of education for the communication media, in the sense of making explicit the ways in which the weekly magazines can build otherness, in order to make students aware, from the start, of the enunciative strategies of the various types of media texts.

**Key-Words:** weekly Brazilian media, presidential campaigns, politicians' images, discourse analysis.

## INTRODUCTION

This text examines the semiotic constructions of the figure of President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva in the cover stories of the weekly newsmagazines *Veja* and *Istoé*, during the 1989 presidential campaign, and compares some of their aspects to those published during the 1994 and 2002 campaigns. The *corpus* of this essay consists of cover stories that focused on presenting Lula's profile.

Given that each medium constructs the figure of politicians discursively in specific ways, including the candidates' confrontations, we sustain the semiotic principle that the enunciator is himself inserted into the scenario of the political conflict as one of the players, acting as a performer, with his political role being that of an observer-judge whose activities far exceed transmitting knowledge, or simply informing the public. It is in this sense that we refer to the *construction* of the figure of Lula: the media talk about Lula and by enunciating him, establish associations with themes and images that convey emotionally charged narrative paths, which differ from those proposed for the other contending candidates.

Studying the various ways in which the figure of Lula is constructed, as compared to that of the other candidates, it is also possible to identify the various ways in which periodicals manifest their presence in contemporary society as well as the persuasive procedures they adopt in order to "influence" their readers with the judgments they impart. For this reason, we will make a semiotic analysis of the various discursive mechanisms used to produce such discourses.

We will therefore examine the figures of the Other evoked for the construction of Lula, specifying the forms of judgment emitted by the media through catchphrases used by newsmagazines during presidential campaigns. We will also study the relation between *point-de-capiton* (or *nodal points*, as Laclau understands them) and the thematic-figurative constructions of Lula-Other, mainly in terms of the oppositions constructed when dividing the political field, centered on the "personalities" of the contending players, as expressed in the various articles.

We then pose the following question: how is the political field delimited on the basis of the opposition of *actants*-subjects, personalities and *attractors*, Lula and Collor (1989), Lula and Fernando Henrique Cardoso – FHC (1994, 1998), Lula and Serra (2002)? We talk about Lula-Other to highlight the contrast established in such construction of opposites, characterized by categories of separation between the Same and the Other, understood as spaces where the values of the middle classes and

the poor materialize.

When referring to the Lula *simulacra* constructed by such enunciators – *Veja* and *Istoé* – we consider the thematic investments constructed in the articles. There are two possible cases: a) the *radical-Lula*, which is a *simulacrum* configuration undertaken on the basis of the thematic investment, which refers to the danger represented by a candidate that introduces a totally unknown route for the republic to follow; b) the *bearded-toad*, related to references in literature for children, that is to say, the anti-prince, the child-eater. The reality of the texts analyzed below display a cross between more or less figurative investments. Generally speaking, we might pose two overlapping questions: a) what are the mechanisms used to embody Lula's image, by means of figures of speech, illustrations or drawings and photos, in order to highlight the Lula-danger, the anti-capitalist? What is the Other's body? Why is it scary? b) What themes and sub-themes drive these choices and how are they configured in the written text and covers?

### Same-Other in the struggle to preserve law and order

The speech of the enunciator is constructed on the basis of its *must-inform*, charting each candidate's truth, on one hand, pointing out the dangers (which emphasize fear) and *enigmas* (candidates that seem to be worthy but are not), and on the other hand, certainties and safe bets (the candidates of the standing Order, of the Same, who leave everything unchanged). The media therefore show how Sameness ought to be attained in power, protecting common men from their own unpreparedness, which might lead them towards the dangerous, perverted course proposed by the radical left. The media construct themselves as the beacons of the order of the Same: the assets of the Nation cannot end up in the hands of the unprepared, of radicals associated with uneducated masses.



Fig. 1 - *Veja* 10/5/94

The euphorically praised candidate has a good body in terms of both height and weight and carries himself well; he has a sound intellectual background and comes from a well-to-do family: each will then receive a coat of discursive varnish emphasizing one such aspect or another – Collor, FHC, Serra. In general, the figure of Collor will assume the mien of a warrior, a transformer who can handle the toughness of politics.



Fig. 2 - *Veja* 12/6/89

The figure of FHC embodies the statesman who welcomes and even smiles at adversity, because he has always known how to overcome it as a passionate winner, ever since he was a child.



Fig. 3 - *Veja* 10/12/94

The figure of Serra incorporates the features of a competent expert. However, the figure of Lula historically has assumed three profiles: a) the agitator at the factory gate, that is, the dangerous left-winger who could potentially jeopardize Brazilian political and economic institutions, capitalism's Genghis Khan; b) the one who is not prepared, who is incapable of governing because he lacks the required knowledge (Lula underneath complex market graphs), as well as being associated with radicals who

could easily manipulate him; and finally, c) the image of Lula *Light* in the 2001-2002 period, capitalism's new convert (*New Christian*).



Fig. 4- 9/4/80



Fig. 5- 12/25/85



Fig. 6 - 5/22/2002



Fig. 7 - 10/23/2002



Fig. 8 - 10/23/2002

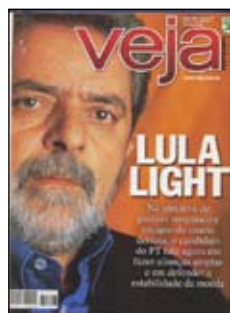


Fig. 9 - 7/4/2001



Fig. 10 - 10/11/2000

Therefore the macrostructure of the semantic opposition Same-Other situates in the place of the Same the one who is competent in preserving the Order, whose *simulacrum*-body does not incarnate the social power of transformation, but the force of conservation (Collor's powerful, raised arms, FHC's firm smile, signifying those who know what they are doing, and Serra's technical seriousness).

What order does this strategy of oppositions aim at preserving? The order of the ruling social and economic elites, as seen in various passages of cover stories and editorials, which excludes the lower social classes.

### Opposition Figures

During the 1970s and 1980s Lula is portrayed as the Rebel-Other, the trade union leader at a time when frequent, intense clashes took place between the ABC metalworkers (ABC is the industrial belt in the São Paulo metropolitan area) and their automobile industry employers backed by the military dictatorship that ruled Brazil. In the first direct presidential elections after the military dictatorship (1964-1985), the contending candidates were Lula and Collor. At the very beginning Collor was a discredited governor of a small northeastern state who became increasingly popular as the "maharajah buster" (where *maharajahs* mean *fat cats* in the civil service), an opponent of old political practices, whose support came from the media and business elites.

In 1989 the first round of the presidential elections took place on the 15th of November and the second round on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December. At the beginning of the campaign, Gallup polls showed the following figures: Leonel Brizola (12.3%); Lula (12.1%) and Fernando Collor de Melo (6.5%), and the latter was still seen as some sort of Other-phenomenon, ironically presented as the candidate who grew rapidly in the polls "not so much because of his position but because of his image as the young Maharajah buster" (*Istoé* 04/26/89).



Fig. 11 - 4/26/89

These numbers would rapidly change as candidate Collor gained popular support for his modernizing discourse of a “New Brazil”, and when the media and the business elite started backing him too. With the headlines “Gallup exclusive: Collor in first place”, *Istoé* 26/04/89 introduces Collor as “A dark horse heads the polls”, and further reinforces: “Fernando Collor, governor of a small northeastern state, who does not belong to any political party, earns the right to be seriously considered”

Let us move forward in time and examine a cover story published on the 13th of December in *Veja* shortly before the second round of the elections, entitled “The Final Battle to Change Brazil – what can happen to the country under Lula or Collor”. It is now close to the run-off election; the article inside the magazine bears the headline “Each and Everyone’s Brazil” and underneath it another caption reads: “On an historic Sunday, 82 million people will cast their votes to decide whether they want Collor’s or Lula’s country”.



Fig. 12 - 12/13/89

According to the enunciator the issue was not simply a choice between two names, two proposals with minor differences in priorities: “Next Sunday, more than just choosing a name for the Presidency of the Republic and a government proposal which will affect our daily lives over the next 5 years, each citizen will be choosing what type of Brazil he wants”. The classic Manichean discourse imposes two distinct configurations. Now the two Brazils were no longer those of rich versus poor, but those of Collor versus Lula. Datafolha predicted 49-41% of intended votes favoring Collor, and Ibope predicted 49-40%. The enunciator states: the ordinary Brazilian man wonders “what can happen to this country when either Collor or Lula wins the elections?” And continues: “This question makes sense. Not only because the voters have been unable to vote for

the president of the nation for 20 years”, but because the two candidates are significantly different:

“It is true that in terms of their main government targets, both contenders are very similar. As far as the economy is concerned, both intend to break the inflationary spiral and start a new phase of prosperity in a country where the GDP has remained practically stagnant since 1980. Regarding the social question, which affects our everyday life, both candidates also pursue similar objectives: to alleviate those strata where millions of Brazilians survive in African-like misery (...) The point is that the methods announced by each candidate are very different, not to mention the distance that separates them in terms of the alliances and partnerships that they have crafted throughout the campaign. It is therefore quite obvious that that we will certainly have two very different countries as of the 17th of December, depending on who wins the elections, Collor or Lula”.

Let us now return to the beginning of 1989 to see how the passionate discursive route of fear was gradually constructed. *Veja* features two cover stories which construct the figures of both candidates. The one published on May 17<sup>th</sup> does not label Collor on the cover: “Collor – who he is, what he wants and why he is stirring up the presidential succession”. However, Lula was not treated similarly. The cover story published in September labels him as “The Worker Candidate”, whereas the first cover story describes Collor as a “star of first magnitude”, with

“his aquiline nose and abundant hair, where almost invisible grey strands of hair show in photographs and in his TV appearances. Collor plans to turn his polling figures into a time bomb that might blow up the two major Brazilian electoral machines, the PMDB (...) and PFL parties.”



Fig. 13 - 5/17/89



The journalist's view of Collor's body highlights the almost invisible grey strands of hair which convey an elegant and elitist touch to the figure of the former governor of the State of Alagoas. Whereas the reference to his aquiline nose and plentiful hair suggests that he possesses the energy of a strategist, the references to his body are brief and delicate. This cover story mostly analyzes the political features of various political currents, for and against Collor, with the appropriate arguments.

The electoral performance of the PRN party candidate (Collor) is further treated in the *Istoé* cover story published on 6/7/89, not only because "Collor has shot up", but also because if the elections were to take place at that moment, "it would be a one-horse race accompanied by the hectic moves of some dazed also-rans." And so the article moves from irony to explicit exaltation.



Fig. 14 - 6/7/89

### The Other with a Cap

In yet another caption, *Istoé* 7/19/89 discusses "the Outfit of the Presidential Candidates" where the configuration of various styles appears in the following statement: "in the race for the Planalto (Presidential Palace), each presidential candidate walks down the catwalk with his own outfit". Under the general topic of elegance, the differences between the Same and the Other are emphasized by features such as "double-breasted jacket, a small cap, double cuffs, and casual rubber sole shoes". The strategy of producing contrasting images places Lula as the figure of the Other, "the one with a cap", as described in the caption underneath the candidate's photo - a bearded man with unkempt hair, holding a cap in his right hand, as if he had just taken it off his head, wearing a heavy, ribbed long-sleeved t-shirt.



Fig. 14 - 7/19/1989

Collor is the Exacerbated-Same “for he insists on wearing custom-made designer clothes”, in line with the caption “the detail”, underneath his photo, which is centralized in between the text columns, wearing a formal light-colored suit and a striped tie (Fig. 12, page 51). Moreover, the journalist states that he is “the candidate who is most aware of polishing his image and looking elegant.” and is ironically described as “a stiff, ready-made formula”.

Lula is explicitly labeled as “eclectic”, the one “who simply added the deputy’s suit and tie to his former image of the shirt-sleeved union activist, no frills.” Through a contradictory relation implicit in the text, Lula’s outfit is shown to stand out from that of the remaining candidates. He is the Other who does not know what “*black tie*” means, because he uses “suits from Loja Garbo, in São Bernardo do Campo” (an inexpensive menswear shop in an industrial satellite city of São Paulo) instead of custom-made suits. The lack of irony and scorn signals a mode of enunciation which intends to construct a sense of truth about who the candidate is and how he dresses, drawing attention to the complementary relation between essence and appearance.

Let us now analyze the cover story published in *Veja*, 9/6/89 – “The Blue Collar Candidate”. Here the intention is not to discuss “who Lula is and what he intends to do”, but to dwell on his most negative aspects. Here the enunciator plays the role of an ironic, caustic judge who calls Lula the “Blue Collar Candidate”.

“Were it not for his beard, his lisp and his 187 pounds squeezed into a 5 foot 6 inch tall body, the PT (Workers Party) candidate would be the closest possible portrait of the voters who will choose the future

president – after all, no matter how modest his original standard of living might have been, one just has to look at a bus waiting line to remember that millions of Brazilian citizens carry on an even poorer day-to-day existence. However, the current reality of the PT campaign consists in convincing the majority of Brazilians that besides having personally experienced the voters' daily problems *in his own skin* – more than any of the other 23 contenders - Lula is the best-equipped candidate to improve the lives of the millions of people who still live like he used to live, to get the economy back on its feet, as well as to promote the changes that the country expects.”



Figs 16 e 17 - 9/6/89

The strategy in this paragraph is to depict Lula as the figure-of-the-Other, short and chubby, just like the common man, of “modest” means, showing an unbalanced body marked by either lack or excess, having no competence to balance the problems of Brazil. No invisible grey strands of hair this time, on the contrary, the negative traits are there for all to see. The enunciator suggests that the difficulty is to convince the voters that the Other is actually capable of holding the position of the competent president of the Same. There is an inversion between contrast and sameness. Lula is regarded as “same” when it comes to his awareness of the voters' everyday problems (*in his own skin*). Such awareness establishes an ethical configuration, but does not acknowledge his competence to take care of the country, improve the quality of life of the voters and put the economy back on its feet. According to the enunciator, knowledge of the voters' daily life does not empower anyone to rule the country.

The enunciator depicts such incompetence by describing Lula's physical inadequacy, ironically pointing out his faults: his lisp, chubbiness, his disproportionate use of the language (with expressions such as “squeezed into”), and his poverty. This characterization is in sharp contrast to that used for Collor (invisible grey strands of hair, energetic,

obstinate and aggressive, all attributes of those who are brave and strong). Lula, on the other hand, is a corporal deviant, symptomatic of his lack of competence to solve the problems of the voters and the country. His corporal deviance is matched by an equally deviant consistency, thus the enunciator points to political inconsistency and doubtful tastes:

“With a political discourse considered inflammatory by his rivals and reformist by the patchwork of Trotskyites grouped under the PT Party, but who is nevertheless the most left-wing of all those running for President to succeed President Sarney, candidate Luís Inácio Lula da Silva is a Brazilian man with conservative habits. He likes staying home and watching TV, wearing T-shirts and slippers, while his wife prepares his meals and takes care of the children (...) Lula likes to lead this easy-going routine at home, and in the past, when it was revealed that he let (his wife) Marisa do most of the household chores - including cutting his toenails - it caused some commotion among his feminist followers. To this day Lula is too lazy to pack his own suitcases when he travels - his wife also takes care of that (...) His tastes at the table have been the same for many years - more precisely since he left his hometown, Garanhuns, 130 miles from Recife, where he used to catch a South American rodent, the cavy, to feed his family during the droughts. His favorite drink is cognac; at first it used to be Palhinha (one of the cheapest brands available), later he moved on to Dreher (a little less cheap) and now he drinks Brazilian Domecq (as opposed to the more expensive imported original)”.

If on one hand Lula is a common man, with whom millions of people can identify, on the other hand he displays a double contradiction: he belongs to a political party which is both inconsistent (a bunch of stray cats) and dangerous (left-wing, associated with Trotskyites), but first and foremost, he is incompetent, (the number of books in his bookcase is no greater than that of any student), he doesn't quite fit into his body as do the other candidates who were born into the well-adjusted elites, and furthermore, deep down he is a conservative (his wife cuts his toenails and packs his suitcases), he has no taste, he is lazy, etc. The enunciator is a sentencing judge, constructing himself as the one who holds the key of invisibility: one must know how to judge, how to point to the signs of insidious otherness, the traces found in body and language mannerisms which conceal the incidence of peril, the traits of what seems to be but is not.

A later cover story entitled “The Left Wing Rises”, published in *Veja*, 10/18/1989, announced that Lula had risen in the polls, catching up with Brizola, and was now heading for a second-round struggle in the presidential elections. *Veja* asserted that the campaign had veered to the

left and that Lula might reach the second round. "While PT supporters celebrate the achievement, conservative voters hold their breath. 'If Lula takes office, he will disrupt the country', warns businessman Mário Amato, president of *FIESP* (São Paulo State Manufacturers' Association)". Even though it does not explicitly acknowledge it, the magazine identifies itself with Amato's discourse. The strategy of highlighting Lula's unbalanced qualities and proportions is identical to the one previously discussed: to render the narration passionate by utilizing fear.

"In fact, Lula remains behind Brizola in the polls, with only one third of the votes predicted for Fernando Collor de Mello. The fact of the matter is that the PT candidate, with his peasant beard, his Pancho Villa potbelly and his inability to produce grammatically correct expressions, typical of those who never finished high school, has become a real contender with at least a hypothetical chance of moving into the official residence of the head of state in the near future, with all the pomp and circumstance: tuxedos, the constitutional right to rule the nation, notwithstanding the fact that his left-wing inclinations may frighten all those who might have to treat him as the President of the Republic."



Fig. 18 - 10/18/89

The discursive strategy of the enunciator is to emphasize the Same-Other opposition axis: one should fear the (inflammatory) danger posed by the Other, laugh at the disproportionate body of this smug simpleton who intends to rise above his station, taking a position that is above him and above the workers: ordinary men should not rise to power; those who can govern ordinary people must be beyond this laughable universe, with values and habits with which the readers cannot identify themselves. The only way to relate to this community of common, ignorant, unprepared and ridiculous men is through estrangement, through Otherness.

Another problem pointed out by the magazine is that Lula's political platform is the same as that of his opponents: it is a "bundle of general principles". For example, Lula will default on the foreign debt: "Taken individually, the proposals set forth by the PT seem to belong to an economic school where 2 and 2 don't always add up to 4". And then *Veja* explains why these proposals do not make sense.

Further down, in the same cover story published on 10/18/89, and just as several articles would do in the future, the discourse becomes passionate, resorting to fear, in line with the same fear that middle-class readers feel vis-à-vis such a dangerous candidate. Lula is depicted as an *enigma*. According to *Veja*, Lula speaks

"with his low-pitched coarse voice, he aims to govern for the poor to the detriment of the rich (...) His prescription for the country includes, among other things, a six-fold increase in the minimum wage to be achieved through the reduction of business profit margins, but he has no clear idea of where to get the necessary funds to carry out this transformation without undermining the very existence of most Brazilian private companies."

Some contenders, says *Veja*, without naming them, call him the "Genghis Khan of Brazilian capitalism", since he carries "a vague primer with basic left-wing notions under his arm". *Veja* then shows a list of businesspeople and bankers who explain how dangerous it would be to have Lula holding presidential office in Brasilia. The text boxes where Lula's declarations are summarized include subjects such as the invasion of land by the homeless, the division of large rural estates, the introduction of fixed profit rates, etc.

### **The Humanized Other**

The editorial treatment dispensed by *Istoé* is somewhat different from that of *Veja*. A good example is the cover story published on 10/4/89 under the headline "How Hard It Is to Be a Left-Winger". With his photo taking up almost the entire page, Lula is presented as a "Human Candidate". However, the acknowledgement of such a humanized-Other "who looks like the masses" is followed by the enunciator's doubts. "But, will the masses identify with him?" The "Sé Rally", held outside the Holy See Cathedral in downtown São Paulo, is quoted as being the largest demonstration ever since the movement for direct elections in the early 1980's, a discursive technique that makes Lula's leadership in the streets evident, but which is not reflected in the opinion polls. In this article,

Lula is the Other due to the affective-passionate features that constitute human nature, which are different in the case of a leader. The affective-passionate feature of the candidate's personality (body and soul) is the most relevant topic in this edition.

“Lula has been weeping a lot [...]; the presidential campaign has been shattering his nerves. But his tears might not mean despair or frustration, as his malignant detractors would have it, nor as the opinion polls suggest, insisting as they do in maintaining that Lula is well behind Fernando Collor and Leonel Brizola and painfully close to Paulo Maluf and Afif Domingos.”



Fig. 19 - 10/4/89

By qualifying Lula as a candidate who does not give up, despite his low ratings in the opinion polls, who is capable of revealing his emotions in public, they reinforce his *simulacrum* as a persistent true individual (not fabricated). The use of to-be/not-appear-to-be as complementary categories creates a sense of non-simulation. The PT candidate gets additional qualifications: “Lula is an illuminist, in the sense given to those who tried to enlighten the consciousness of the people in the XVIII century”.

The *Istoé* 11/22/89 cover places Lula and Collor face-to-face, confronting both profiles. It is not only their physical features which differ, as illustrated in the picture, but also their origin, and their way of conducting politics. Collor is the calculating-Same, who uses statistics, opinion polls, computers, “coldly analyzes his adversaries”, creates a party (PRN) to support his candidacy and orchestrates Brizola’s destabilization.

The article by Nirlando Beirão talks about Lula-Other in a peculiar way: aspects of his private life are brought up which reinforce personality traits common to sensitive, simple people but with good taste. The whole narrative setting enables the introduction of the enunciator’s opinion of Lula as an individual who easily learns simple things, such as eating

spaghetti without chopping it up, drinking cognac with no ice, and other “more permanent” things, such as not attributing Third World hunger to First World exploitation. This *Istoé* portrayal of Lula’s life experience is an explicitly subjective assessment. Lula is genuinely the prevailing Other, who overcomes his northeastern immigrant origins, who fights as a trade union leader, who faces up to prejudice, and who is therefore easily recognized by ordinary people like himself. This characterization would never be published in *Veja*. *Istoé* offers the reader yet another image of Lula, by stating that he listens to Pavarotti and that he has come back from a “triumphant tour” of Europe where he was treated as a statesman by European political leaders, such François Mitterrand, Bettino Craxi, Giulio Andreotti, Mário Soares and Michel Rocard, so that he was comparable to the Polish former trade union leader Lech Walesa. The text also conveys a positive attitude when the topic is the campaign efforts of the 44-year-old metalworker with “hardened vocal cords” after attending 140 public rallies. Lula also faces the emotional dilemma of being a worker supported by the labor movement which started in the assembly lines of the ABC industrial satellite cities of São Paulo in the 1970s and which rapidly spread throughout the entire Brazilian political scene, from which he emerged as a political leader as it were, too fast, “not because he was in a hurry, but because Brazilian society was”. The PT leader is portrayed with an image of someone who has prevailed after strenuous efforts, as having achieved through persistence, since he had

“seven months to tear down the wall of prejudice (...) so as to explain to Brazil that this was not about electing a president who produces impeccable plurals, but rather about electing a capable popular leader who, backed by an authentic political force, the PT (Workers Party), that surrounds him, is able to command a bloodless revolution, an in-depth reform of the structure of privilege and power.”

*Veja*’s cover story published on 11/22/89 announces “The clash that will decide Brazil’s destiny – President Collor versus President Lula”.



Fig. 20 - 11/22/89



According to the magazine, “in the final confrontation metalworker Lula and former governor Collor will have to show the voters which one is the true candidate of NO.” *Veja* sustains that in the first round of elections the voters voted *against*, rejecting the “aging world of traditional politics”. “What voters of both candidates want to express is the same NO”. Collor is thus constructed not as the candidate who opposes Lula-Other, but also as a “candidate of NO”. The discursive strategy was to dilute the opposition at the political level, by refusing to correlate either political project with the context of Brazilian politics, where Collor would stand at the top of elitist conservative politics, and Lula would embody the politics of change. The opposition is thus dislocated to other topics at various levels. The captions underneath their photos enunciate this opposition as follows:

Collor has a university degree His father was a senator	Lula was a northeastern immigrant with a high school diploma
He was a mayor, a deputy and a governor	He was a metalworker
He built his candidacy on his own He set up his own party	He relies on PT militants
He promises to hunt down the ‘maharajas’, attacking traditional politicians and the Sarney administration	He is supported by the left wing (and consequently has a dangerous project)

*Veja*'s cover story published on 11/29/89 summarizes the final dispute as follows: “Lula and capitalism – changes promised by the PT divide Brazil”, where Lula is once again portrayed as Lula-Other, a threat to Brazilian capitalism.



Fig 21 - 11/29/89

Before commenting on the cover story it is worth looking into the editorial of this issue of the magazine, which is entitled “The false opposition between capital and labor”. According to the editorialist, “some people” are trying to “sell the idea that both in the campaign and in the elections themselves there will be a major dispute between capital and labor”. The text sustains that judging by the differences between the two candidates it is impossible to say that the alternatives available to the voters on December 17<sup>th</sup> are those of either “a government that will run the country without capital or one that intends to abolish the existence of the workers”. According to *Veja*, the process under way is quite the opposite; it is “the combination of free market economy mechanisms with an improvement of workers’ rights and welfare.” If it is true to say that jungle capitalism is not contemplated as the political agenda of any relevant political force worldwide, it is equally true that no political party defends Marxist orthodoxy and the dictatorship of the proletariat either. Whoever is eventually elected president will have to deal with the real world, where capital and labor move ever closer together”.

The strategy here is to retract the allegation implied in the aforementioned cover headline of the potential PT danger by stating in the editorial that Brazilian capitalism is not under threat. This kind of strategy is frequently used by *Veja*, that of stating something only to retract it later on, because in so doing it simulates both a broad coverage of diverse public opinion and a democratic attitude, fulfilling its role as the model-setting enunciator of what the future of the country should be.

The title of the article inside is: “The Lula Hypothesis. The PT candidate divides the voters with his economic agenda and triggers a discussion on the fate of capitalism in the country”. In the first round of the elections Collor got 20 million votes and Lula 12 million. According to *Veja*,

“In the final run up to the elections, there has never been a candidate such as Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, nor has there ever been a real chance of a party such as the PT being elected to administrate the federal government apparatus, which employs 3 million people and which is present across the board in our society, where complex and serious decisions are made. A party which comprises, within its various factions, trade unionists showing different degrees of aggressiveness, strike leaders and left-wing cultists who love praising Sandinism in Nicaragua, Fidel Castro’s communism and class struggle, ...”

Such a threat is constructed as dangerous, instilling fear by means of expressions such as “there has never been”, “union activists who show different degrees of aggressiveness”, “left-wing cultists who love praising

Sandinism (...) and class struggle.” But it begs the question: which left praises class struggle? At this point *Veja* inverts the argument, since it is in fact the magazine itself that foments class struggle by displaying prejudice against Lula-Other. The enunciator demonstrates his aversion with caustic irony, emphasizing differences between Collor and Lula in terms of class, personal style and degree of competence.

The Ibope opinion poll for the second round, to which the article published on 11/29/89 referred, forecasted results of 38% for Lula and 50% for Collor de Mello. As a result,

“Since last week Lula’s candidacy has turned into the most dreaded political prospect ever experienced by Brazilians who do not subscribe to his recipes for fixing the country, or who are quite simply terrified by them. Those members of the population who have their own businesses have the impression that it is going to become far more difficult to work, invest and make money in case the Lula hypothesis materializes. People who after a life of work have managed to stash away a few assets, even if it is only a house they rent out, wonder what might happen to them (...) Powerful businesspeople fear that Lula will jeopardize their businesses, enlarging state bureaucracy, promoting a hostile atmosphere for investments that have already been made or need to be made (...) Finally, some are convinced that the political proposals of the PT candidate to promote an instant distribution of wealth and general welfare through edicts may lead the Brazilian economy into general bankruptcy”.

In this paragraph we can see the thematic construction of fear. However fear is not directly instilled by the enunciator, who places himself as a kind of social cartographer, pointing to but not naming those who are afraid of Lula, and their motives. He is, so to speak, a third party who fears Lula. It is the Brazilian people in general who fear Lula, historical witnesses and participants in the given context, those “who do not subscribe to his recipes for fixing the country” or who are “quite simply terrified by them”, “those members of the population who have their own business” and who are afraid of what? Of the fact that:

- a) It is going to be more difficult to work, invest and make money;
- b) Lula will make business more difficult by “promoting a hostile atmosphere for investments” and profits;
- c) There will be “general bankruptcy”.

The strategy is never to be upfront about those fears, to hide behind vague hearsay: “they say”, “prominent Brazilians are afraid”, “It is necessary to consider this when voting”... The enunciator disguises his absence and sets up a concealed entity which is fearful of Lula’s

candidacy. This entity would be public opinion, a merely discursive figure used to disguise the enunciator's own voice. The difference between the two candidates as constructed in the article can be summarized in the following *Veja* sentences:

“Collor may be elected and conduct either a wonderful or a disastrous administration, but no one is nervous about his agenda – whichever way it goes, everyone is certain that the basic mechanisms of Brazilian society will remain practically the same as they had been before his term of office, after all, he will not have been that different from his more or less successful forerunners.”

The magazine bets on a candidacy that will not change anything, that will let Brazil remain as it was before and, provided everything remains as it was, success or failure are irrelevant. In the article the enunciator's discourse contradicts the editorial analyzed above:

“The Lula hypothesis, however, is quite different. Like Collor, he can also be elected and has, at least in theory, the same mathematical chances of conducting a good or a bad administration. However, there is no doubt that his government will be completely different from anything the country has ever seen since King Manuel I of Portugal divided the coast into hereditary captaincies”.

The adverb “however” appears twice, to reject the items “in theory”. Lula's similarity with the presidents that ruled the Nation at the beginning of the Republic lies in his beard; his party does not look like any other since 1945, “from Brigadier Eduardo Gomes to General Eurico Dutra and Getúlio Vargas, from Juarez Távora to Juscelino Kubitschek, from Henrique Lott to Jânio Quadros”, and unlike them, Lula does not come from “the higher ranks of society”. His body is an Other, his stock is an Other. He is not similar to the Same who have been ruling the country. Moreover, “none of them represented any kind of break with the general standing order”. *Veja* wants to preserve the “general standing order”, and avoid “any kind of break” so that a candidate who does not come from “the higher ranks of society” is dangerous. Such a discourse acts as a persuasive strategy deterring the voter by means of a should-not-want-to-vote for Lula; not only does it negatively sanction the PT candidate, but it also arbitrates his interdiction as an individual that must not be the president in order to avoid the risk of altering a state of affairs that must not be changed.

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