

A SPECIALIZATION THAT COMES FROM SPECIALTY:

bringing closer magazine and specialized journalism in *Vida Simples*

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FREDERICO DE MELLO BRANDÃO TAVARES
University of Tuiuti do Paraná

ABSTRACT This paper discusses the processes that involve the creation of a specialized magazine concerned with a major theme, reflecting on how, based on this context, it is possible to attain the form of a type of specialized journalism. It starts from an analysis of the editorials (“letters to the readers”) of *Vida Simples* (Simple Life), a monthly published by Editora Abril, noting how the magazine, when speaking of itself, allows the perception of its specific characteristics that compose its editorial identity and characterize the “form” of its journalism, its way of “being a magazine”. At the end of the text, there is the observation of how the issue of the quality of life - the central focus of the publication - by incorporating the journalistic logic of the magazine and at the same time being incorporated by it, makes it take on the appearance of a specialty which is consequently reflected in its specialization.

Keywords: Magazine. Specialized journalism. Editorial. Quality of life.

INTRODUCTION

The magazine as a starting point

In the scenario of printed publications, the magazine reached historically a notable place in the constitution and materialization of specialized journalism. As Martínez Albertos (1991) stated, the magazine is the vehicle that characterizes both specialized journalism and the specialized press.

In a magazine there is a verbal text - a privileged expression of interpretation from information - and there is also its “marriage” with other visual resources and the possibility to print different “rhythms” of consumption and uses of the knowledge proposed there. In the magazine there is the possibility of treating certain topics in an elaborated way - which means not only a profound way - of other printed “journalisms”. More than that, in a magazine there is a threefold structure intrinsically associated and proposed for journalistic specialization: medium,

audience, and theme (QUESADA PÉREZ, 1998).

According to Quesada Pérez (1998), the threefold structure of specialized journalism – more than increasing the complexity of the elements that comprise this field of journalism and its practice – makes it possible to think of the fundamental interrelationship between them for the “operation” of this kind of journalism. This would point out its peculiarities based on its “universal” dynamics.

Dominique Marchetti (2002) presents a view in which the articulation of the journalistic field is with regard to two poles - one generalist and the other specialized – and moves in the direction “*aux propriétés des publics (et donc aux fonctions très différentes que les groupes sociaux onfèrent à la lecture des journaux par exemple) auxquels s’adressent les médias et les journalistes et, d’autre part, à celles des médias et des journalistes eux mêmes*” (MARCHETTI, 2002, p.25). In this sense, this articulation which also produces differences is related to audiences and characteristics of the information producers, and its levels of specialization are also related to the type of support, to the specialties and to the places that journalists and these sectors will occupy in the internal hierarchy of the newsrooms. In addition, areas of specialization will be in some way the «reflection» of a social structure, which makes a presence of a «thematic cycle» exist in the communication media, or rather a «flow of themes» that seeks to account for demands present in the society, responding to crossings of social fields.

Within journalism, specialized publications and products present a game in which readers, advertisers, journalists, and a title itself (determined by an identity, a vitality of its own) participate, which calls into question a certain “wholeness” and a specific look at this reality.

Given this context, this paper seeks to point out the sense of singularities involving the nature of specialization in a magazine. It discusses the journalistic place that marks the idea of “being a magazine”, a term that gives dimension to the specificity of a series of processes which characterizes the nature of a journalism called “magazine” (“*revistativo*” in Portuguese) (TAVARES, 2011), affirmed as specific of a communication media and a journalistic practice.

Based on the analysis of *Vida Simples* published monthly by Editora Abril, this paper discusses what is involved in the specialization of this product, seeking to point out the presence of a journalistic specialty which, when materialized, singularizes what normatively is taken as a property of a specialization, i.e., of a journalism considered specialized.

What does it mean to bring the magazine to the journalistic

specialization without saying that it is a given fact? Knowing that specialized journalism tries to adapt to a medium, what does this medium offer for the configuration of a specialty of the specialization? What operations are perceived? Which adjustments? What does it mean to say that there is a kind of specialized journalism in *Vida Simples*? What specialization would this be? Based on an analysis of 108 magazine editorials in which the publication speaks of itself, we tried to highlight these issues. In a perception of the magazine itself that points to its journalistic specialty, thought is given both to its specialization and to what characterizes the latter's constitution.

Magazine, specialization, and *Vida Simples*

In the context of studies in specialized journalism, there is a great propensity to associate specialization with a thematic classification. In this vein, specialized journalism is thus explained by its focus on specific topics. In this way, "financial journalism", "sports journalism" etc. are examples of specialized journalism.

In the context of daily journalism, Erik Neveu (2006) associates the emergence of specialized journalism with the growth of the editorial sections in the publications. These sections, more than just organizing the world in topics, play the role of "filters", thus coordinating "the explicit and implicit definitions that journalists make of 'their' subjects" (NEVEU, 2006, p. 84). Mar de Fontcuberta (1993) says in an assertive way that when "*se habla de especialización no hay que referirse al tipo de medio o de audiencia sino a los **contenidos***" (FONTCUBERTA, 1993, p. 50, the author's bold-face).

This observation concerning the content continues, in a certain way, as an afterthought, when the author associates journalistic specialization with the idea of an in-depth treatment in the communication media of a given field of knowledge. According to Fontcuberta (2006), the concept of "specialized journalism" has a thematic reference, and the themes are the true "reason for its existence."

In this scenario, the magazine, as emphasized by Quesada Perez (1998), being perhaps the "most specialized" journalistic medium and, as stated by Vilas Boas (1996, p. 69), "any magazine is specialized, since it aims at a specific audience", would it be possible to say that its specialization is just thematic? If this were so, the specialization of *Vida Simples* would be in its journalistic treatment of only one theme - the quality of life? The answer is "no" to both questions, and therefore we direct our reasoning both to a reflection on the specialization

in the magazine and on its specialty as a journalistic medium (which encompasses a broader process) as well as to the way in which these spheres interpenetrate.

We know that in journalistic production it is necessary to consider its various manifestations within the communication media. The characteristics of the production of journalistic information present the “incomplete totality” of its contents, always subject to choices and other factors that influence its production. Each type of journalism will say something in a certain way about a given matter. In dealing with the reality to which it turns, this same reality would not be exhausted regarding its possibilities of approaches; rather, it will be constructed through a language, a technical and professional apparatus, and surrounded by an institutional, social and material context that will guide directions and approaches, also intervening (in a constitutive way) in its communicative process.

Vida Simples is specialized (it deals with specific themes and audiences) and also presents a journalism that has its own specialization, which can be inferred if we differentiate it from other publications in the same category. However, from the standpoint of production, as indicated by its editor-in-chief Leandro Sarmatz (2008) in an interview granted to us, it is not possible to state that “the journalists that work for the magazine are specialized”.

Thus, if it cannot be said that journalists of *Vida Simples* are specialized - because, as Sarmatz (2008) stated, many of them are collaborators and work for several magazines at the same time and even for newspapers, and for this reason are outside the “specialization of the newsroom environment” – on the other hand it is possible to say that there is a perspective “of a magazine” and “of the magazine” which is translated in the very way of the magazine’s production and the production of its journalists (whether collaborators or not). We can describe this as something which is expressed in the form of writing and expressing topics present in the magazine. It is something that can be seen inside *Vida Simples* in its articles and sections, and that is made explicit by the publication in the way it presents itself, thus characterizing, defining and organizing itself.

From an analysis of 108 editorials of the magazine (103 regular issues from August 2002 to March 2011 plus 5 special issues), we ascertain, after talking to their authors (editors, reporters, and editors-in-chief of *Vida Simples*, varying according to the period of the publication) how the magazine presents its journalistic specialization based on its

own specialty (both thematic and magazine specialty), being tensioned and characterized by it. Some fragments of this research are presented below and illustrate this logic.

Configurations of a specialty: “magazine” characteristics

Despite being a thematic magazine which encompasses themes, journalistic principles related to news values such as the issue of time (season of the year), public and society interests, as well as the affirmation of its frequency are relevant in *Vida Simples*, framing it in a journalistic logic. But there is something in it - a “way of being” - which seems to modify these general characteristics, giving them certain “specialties”, connoting its specialization.

In the presentation of this journalistic format, its editorials list some characteristics that permeate the form of the magazine. This is evident in the magazine’s texts, fonts, and look. Its editorials take on a certain didacticism and explain not only the making and language of journalistic material; they also advocate on such issues such as constituents of its informative quality and its differential.

The editorial of October 2005 illustrates this process. The text evokes the more general journalistic issues and crosses them with the “magazine” nature of *Vida Simples*, explaining and justifying this nature and at the same time, lauding its uniqueness.

The intention is that the magazine’s reports not be collections of pieces of information on a topic, written in a manner that evokes the desire to read. Nothing of this at all. We want them to be authorial, to represent faithfully the truth that the reporter built after researching the matter. In other words, we want the journalist to be convinced of what he writes. Or to present frankly his doubts or limitations in understanding the subject, if applicable. Some people can see in this a loss of the much touted objectivity of journalism. But I persist in thinking that this is an honest way of telling a story, assuming the inevitable ignorance of he who has as a profession talking about all matters (Uma palavra..., Rodrigo Vergara, ed. 33, p. 16).

This placing himself in the text, indicated for the journalist, is also justified in giving more importance to the life experience of the reporter, taking it as a theme to talk about a subject and as a reference for the journalistic construction that is intended regarding a given matter. In February 2007, editor-in-chief Leandro Sarmatz comments on this process and how the eye of the journalist focuses on the kind of journalism that the magazine presents.

But for us experiences do not mean only printing stories written in the first person. The reporters’ testimony serves to make us

think more deeply about some subjects. It is not just a test to satisfy curiosity [...], but a first step in our relentless search for the most essential and enlightening information. And - as always - it is written for you in the most honest and crystalline way (Uma palavra ..., Leandro Sarmatz, ed. 50, p. 12).

The reporter himself is also named as a source for reports and other texts, since his narrative, as the magazine itself indicates, should not strive for impersonality and enhance the experience. As Vergara explains:

And where will we go to seek this valuable information? Oh, there are several sources: academicians, of course, and professors of sociology, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, and medicine. There are also those who understand the ancient traditions: Chinese medicine, tai-chi or yoga. But the personal experience of each reporter is also very worthwhile. After all, to speak of what is human, everyone has something to teach. And that is why the magazine's texts begin or end with the author's first-person testimony. It is not a bad habit. It is a necessity (Uma palavra ..., Rodrigo Vergara, ed. 33, p. 16).

This "literary"/authorial character of the text (seen in the above editorial of October 2005) is restated a few issues later when Leandro Sarmatz, in January 2007, presents the text written for the section "Character" of that issue:

As a shrewd, observant, sensitive, curious and tireless reporter (adjectives that define the best reporters, those destined to translate and explain life to us all), Marcia wrote a memorable profile of Krajcberg, of the kind which appear in anthologies of the best literary journalism. She questioned the man, got to know the routine of the artist and brought out the full force of this fascinating character who, after surviving the savagery of the Holocaust, was able to reinvent himself as a man and an artist" (Uma palavra..., Leandro Sarmatz, ed. 49, p. 12).

In other issues, however, the editorial asserts a more "pure" "journalistic" running through the magazine, reaffirming to the reader the nature of the information that *Vida Simples* offers.

All this you will be able to confer in a clear, didactic, and illustrative way. Without beating around the bush. Without circumlocutions. Because in dealing with a topic as important for everybody as therapy, it is essential to have a focus, hit the target, go directly to the point (Uma palavra..., Leandro Sarmatz, ed. 55, p. 16).

These aspects presented by the magazine and its journalism, asserting its identity and way of being, guiding a practice and a way of doing things, are explicit from the beginning of the publication as it underscored by the fourth letter addressed to its readers:

To know is really good, but not knowing can be even better: this is what transforms us into searchers. So, instead of certainties, beliefs

and dogmas, we have been dealing with doubts, speculations, assumptions - things that in other journalistic environments would sound like heresy. The risk of knowledge is the risk of being reconciled (Uma Palavra ..., Otávio Rodrigues, ed. 4, p. 4).

The journalistic knowledge sought and produced by the magazine, in this sense, is pointed out with a degree of simplicity, translated by the words of a humble journalist who does not “know about everything” and at the same time is tireless, not reconciled. The magazine appears to be attentive to the present and in the building of this knowledge it indicates the diversity of issues addressed by it, assuming, in this sense, even though this is not the objective, an attitude of specialized journalism¹:

Our work has been to identify what is in science and its surroundings, comparing, organizing this knowledge and sharing it with you. And without prejudice. We show innovative ideas, alternative practices, religions and several other controversial issues that, yes, open the way to an undeniable wealth (Uma Palavra ..., Otávio Rodrigues, ed. 7, p. 4).

And the constitution of this aspect of journalism (giving importance to a diversity of issues and a magazine practice), which is intended to be “reflected” in the texts, is marked by the highlighting of a last point (editorial 33 seen above also indicates this trace). This is the explicit mention of the sources used in the article presenting people that participate in the construction of knowledge about good living in and outside the magazine and also reaffirming the role of the journalist and of the journalism of *Vida Simples*, as recorded in the editorial of May 2003:

Most people believe that we here are all specialists in everything in this, in that or in anything.. Well, it is impossible to talk here about other publications, but this definitely is not the case of *Vida Simples*. There is not here or among the collaborators any PhD in mysticism or someone with an MBA in transcendence. It is likely that this aspect is really what allows the magazine to go well (and it is doing well). We have nothing against specialists, quite the contrary: we consult several of them each month to nourish our ideas, go more deeply in our researches or, of course, including their opinions in our reports (Uma Palavra ..., Otávio Rodrigues, ed. 4, p. 4).

Thus, between generalization and specialization, the individuals that produce the magazine present some characteristics in the formulation of its profile, and sources consulted have an authority created not only for their knowledge regarding a subject, but through the presence of it in the diversity of knowledge that the magazine seeks to gather and conceptualize as harmonious and decisive in order to think about its quality of life. In the magazine’s first editorial, journalist

Otávio Rodrigues draws attention to the adequacy of the performance of the reporter (in the search for data and sources) for the purposes of the magazine, thus listing the bias of the diversity and balance.

To speak of these matters we have recourse to the formal sciences but also to the alternative ones, religions, oriental philosophies and the most ancient wisdom. We investigated with respect to how to know more, how to live with serenity, how to eliminate false necessities from daily life and the problems we create for ourselves (Uma Palavra ..., Otávio Rodrigues, ed. 1, p. 4).

In addition to the “expert” sources (journalists, specialists, scholars, writers, etc.), ordinary people are also common sources for the magazine texts, both as “cases” that illustrate what the journalist intends to show with his words sewn together throughout the articles, and also as protagonists of the journalistic material produced. In sections like “Open Mind” and “Character” whose focus is on everyday actions that produce “news” and in the construction of profiles of “ordinary people”, this is quite evident. Or in the cover stories themselves, as stated in the July 2004 editorial:

The good news is that it is possible to learn to be this way. Who tells us how are ordinary people who experienced a traumatic experience, were at death’s door and were forced to see the value of being able to breathe every day. We talked to several of these survivors. And from now on we share with you the lesson we learned from them (Uma Palavra..., Rodrigo Vergara, ed. 18, p. 4).

In addition to the textual aspect, a second trace of the personality of the magazine format is related to its visuality. When talking about images, graphic design and visual “solutions” for the content, the editorials point to how the meanings of the magazine are also proposed in this aspect. In the January 2006 issue, whose cover talks about the “importance of the sabbatical period” and the visual aspect’s relevance for the magazine is not only asserted but also explains the meanings sought for the imagery representation created for the theme. A kind of “defense” for the translation of contents, but which in fact can be extended in the sense of an affirmation about the visual logic that guides the magazine:

For this reason, on the cover of this issue we decided to stamp this concept with a little airplane, similar to those that are present in our childhood memories. When traveling to a distant country or to a town lost in a corner of the country, it is natural that we feel free from everyday life and begin to see our own world from the perspective of a traveler. With no strings attached, it becomes easier to discover what really interests us and to better understand two issues as crucial as they are memorable: who am I? Why am I here? (Uma Palavra..., Marcia Bindo and Fernando Nageiborin, ed. 37, p. 14).

Connected to this textual and visual production, another feature of the “magazine” process presented concerns the functioning of the magazine which characterizes its identity. In an editorial of January 2004, in the 13th edition of the magazine, the editorial talks about *Vida Simples*, at the same time calling attention to its editorial formulation.

And as *Vida Simples* is not an “alternative” magazine, but with alternatives, I recommend the reading of our cover story on homeopathy, a medical practice that aims to heal our body as a whole. And do not fail to enjoy the summer time: it is time for sunbathing (without abusing), putting your feet in the sand and on the earth, take care of the garden, delight in the profusion of fruits of our country (mainly in the form of exotic and irresistible juices). All this you can find in this issue of *Vida Simples* (Uma Palavra ..., Marcia Bindo, ed. 13, p. 4).

Thus, the editorials present themes that constitute the issue, indicating its structuring and encouraging, in an “authorized” way, a cadence of contents and the publication as a finished product - with its own logic and a contract with the reader, signed by an indirect editorial plan and repeated monthly.

The “Attitude” section, written by the great educator, thinker, and writer Eugenio Mussak (who every month presents us with articles about positive changes in behavior) talks precisely of the importance of taking risks and being not afraid to face responsibilities (Uma Palavra... Marcia Bindo, ed. 13, p. 4).

This issue also goes even further. We have a rich discussion on how our body has answers to several ills that afflict us. And columnist Eugene Mussak also invests in this harvest with his customary intelligence and clarity (“Letter to the Reader”, Leandro Sarmatz, ed. 85, p. 12).

Without losing the subjective tone evoked by the presence of the subjects, the magazine often indicates its know-how also by highlighting the processes for choosing its themes. The contextualization at a time and in a space makes the publication fit inside a daily life, emphasizing the subjective dimension of its themes (always crossed and justified by the identification between professionals and readers) and its role in the constitution of its journalism as something that stitches themes together.

We who keep talking about the importance of living the present, are the first ones to remember that the passing of dates for celebration does not change anything. Time is running constantly, not in daily or yearly leaps. But the ephemerides we ourselves create (and it has happened for millenniums) have their function. They are reminders, milestones where we stop to think and even make a party. It is as if we were celebrating who we are, preferably with plenty of emotion, so that next year, when that same date arrives, we could remember who we were, what we were doing and what happened to our plans made at that time (Uma Palavra ... Rodrigo Vergara, ed. 31, p. 12).

And if there are ephemerides created “by ourselves” (such as birthdays, weddings, etc.), other types of specific episodes (the anniversary of Tom Jobim’s death - December 2006² issue - for example), periodic events (such as the World Soccer Cup) or higher impact events (Michael Jackson’s death - July 2009 issue) are also present. Journalistically, they make up the theme of the magazine, as “hooks” for the magazine articles or as metaphors for the presentation of matters to be addressed in another issue that make the magazine’s present subjective in another way, adapting it also to a no less personal news making.

While we were working on this *Vida Simples* issue, we were stunned by the news of Michael Jackson’s death, an idol of all our newsroom journalists – and of the entire planet. (Just one moment because I’m going to dance a “moonwalk” in his honor and I’ll be right back) (Letter to the Reader, Leandro Sarmatz, ed. 82, p. 8).

The presence of Mother’s Day, Michael Jackson’s death, and several other “factual” matters (summer, the World Soccer Cup, etc.) offer a touch of personality to the journalistic content and also makes reference to a possible common thematic universe shared by the reader and present in his imagination. Sarmatz’s words about Michael Jackson are quite illustrative in this regard. The event of his death is brought to introduce the theme of “courage”, which is the cover story of that month’s issue. The “idol” (Jackson) is pointed to as a symbol of courage, a kind of courage (among various others) as the author highlights in the continuation of the editorial.

This “time hook” and its use to introduce or frame certain issues also mark a strong editorial side of the magazine, which is the importance given to ordinary knowledge, the common sense that fills a social *ethos*. “Harder themes” of the quality of life are associated with cultural issues, making use of topics such as nostalgia and “Brazilianness”. And these elements, more than just components of content and guidelines, are treated as tools for a prescriptive construction that runs through the publication, as well as its texts and its uniqueness. Talking about regional, Brazilian, religious, nostalgic issues (which refer back to a time, a generation - as Michael Jackson himself) also becomes a way to talk about the proposed social and individual welfare, thus characterizing it at the same time.

[...] as it is Carnival time, *Vida Simples* recalls the rich and entertaining history of Carnival songs - true gems of the humor, charm, and intelligence of Brazilian people. “Now the funnel gang has arrived ...” (Letter to the Reader, Leandro Sarmatz, ed. 89, p. 8).

And if, as we have seen, certain items and contents have a journalistic motivation and purpose in terms of the information produced, the recurrence of these contents builds a set of topics that, within the thematic universe of the quality of life, also organizes the way the magazine is made and its conception of life and human behavior. The editorial of March 2010 shows this trace:

The cover story of this issue, under the responsibility of the gifted editor Marcia Bindo, is terrific. It is the second time that the topic of sex appears in our magazine so prominently. The last time this happened was in the distant year of 2004. Why so long without speaking of such an important subject? Precisely because a matter of such magnitude should not become routine, an endless verbosity. The role of sex and pleasure in our life should never be underestimated. Therefore we waited too long: we wanted to have new and intelligent things to present. We succeeded. ("Letter to the Reader", Leandro Sarmatz, ed. 90, p. 8).

On emphasizing the resumption of the same theme, the magazine justifies this choice and highlights the importance of the topic which should be seen also due to the complexity that it presents and the diversity that makes up its characteristics, and therefore should be explored from different angles. Resumptions that explain the magazine's universe and give direction to its specialty, and consequently, its journalistic specialization.

Specialization that comes from a specialty: relations and globality

Compared to daily journalism, the presence of journalistic characteristics of and in the magazine can be seen as having a certain particularity. If we take the words of Otto Gröth (In: FAUS BELAU, 1966, 1965) and his reflection on the four main characteristics of journalism (Universality, Current nature, Periodicity and Dissemination) which form the basis for an functional interrelation and from which emerge the laws of "pure journalistic science", the look at the magazine takes on certain connotations. These are functional relations, according to Gröth, that provide the bases for thinking about the difference "of degree" which exists between newspapers and magazines, and from which we can think of the specialization of this journalistic product. According to Ángel Faus Belau (1966, p. 91):

La teoría de Gröth sobre la Revista es la más completa, científicamente, de cuantas conocemos. En ella se estudia la publicación y sus relaciones con el Periódico. Se da determinación de sus características, cosa hasta Gröth no realizada. Se establece una tipología para la clasificación de las revistas que es la más útil entre las existentes, ya que como expresé en otros trabajos, "las

clasificaciones actuales se realizan de acuerdo con los contenidos o con la Periodicidad”, como base de diferenciación entre Periódico y Revista.

The characteristics of the magazine in relation to the newspaper are taken in accordance with the limitations of the characteristics of the former in relation to the latter. Such limitation, less than a demerit, is related to a clipping that the magazine presents in relation to the newspaper.

In relation to the four characteristics, the limitations are present and draw attention to a few aspects. In the “limitations of universality”, instead of saying that magazines lose in universality, it is worthwhile to say how it is “transformed”. It is a fact that magazines tend to give a “complete view of the world” – this is the case of *Vida Simple*s and “its” quality of life - even though it is an *a priori* objective of the newspaper. However, as proposed by Gröth, magazines do not intend to complete, but “exclusive” in a certain way, which also focuses on their current nature.

El prototipo de esta “exclusividad” es la revista especializada, que limita su actualidad a un sector determinado del todo representado por la Universalidad. Su temática se concentra en terrenos y procesos de la vida estrechamente ligados entre sí, como pueden ser la moda, el deporte, los toros, las actividades manuales, etc (FERNÁNDEZ DEL MORAL; ESTEVE RAMÍREZ, 1996, p. 141).

Regarding “Periodicity” and “Dissemination”, other aspects of “limitation” appear. If we have a limitation of the current nature due to the content, it is directly tied to the periodicity. In addition, if the focus is on the periodicity, its limitation in magazines is also linked to the “universality”.

In the case of a magazine like *Vida Simple*s, for example, the “Periodicity” creates a deliberate repetition of content, causing an editorial intermittence (based on the distribution of content in sections and time) and of the meaning of quality of life constructed there.

Therefore, in *Vida Simple*s it can be said, from the standpoint of contents and of how they incorporate journalistic processes, some of the issues addressed by Gröth gain visibility. The thematic “exclusivity” implies a selectivity of matters that interfere directly - by their recurrence – in the kind of completeness that is offered for the understanding of what is being treated. This recurrence is also connected to the periodicity of the magazine, interlacing it with an editorial issue, to a kind of public (and therefore of a community) and to some factual occasional questions (related to the present in which and of which the magazine talks). And these questions which at the same time mark the “magazine” characteristics of the publication and give it a reflexive, circular logic whose processes speak directly of its “organic nature” and give dimension to the meanings

that are built on the quality of life and on its editorial globality.

In the August 2010 issue, for example, the presence of a subject already covered by the magazine, again with a highlight on the cover of the issue, is explained and justified by the editorial, which anticipates the differential of the report in question and contrasts it with what had been previously performed. In this differentiation there is not only a distinct position of knowledge on the same subject, but the movement of deepening the magazine accomplishes about its referents as it communicates to the readers its search for the completeness of topics and the its accomplishment, reiterating its exclusivity.

There are certain themes that are imposing. They are more important and more substantive questions that mobilize our thinking every time they appear. Due to this reason, it is worthwhile returning to them - because they are inexhaustible. This is the case, for example, of the cover story of this issue, another text from the prodigious production of Liane Alves, which deals with perfectionism. [...] If the reader has already noticed it on his side, it is practically the second time we deal with this universe. Earlier, in 2008 we had a cover with the come-on "Nobody's perfect." Today, we present "Perfectionism" on our cover. Of course, the quest for perfection and the desire to be perfect are not identical attitudes. The first is a natural, obvious condition. As for the second, that's the rub because it's one thing to nurture the (sweet) illusion of perfection, and another thing, completely different, is to live our whole life in order to achieve perfection in every way possible. It is an inglorious struggle, as you can imagine - and it ends up shredding the person's self-esteem ("Letter to the Reader", Leandro Sarmatz, ed. 95, p. 8).

The cover themes are the guides for the other themes that permeate the magazine. The pulsation of these themes, from a movement back and forth and of permeability through the sections is the most marked characteristic. But there are other themes that have not yet reached the highlight of a cover and are constantly resumed.

In this sense, observing this context, it is important to remember that from the point of view of the contents that are added to each subject every time it is repeated, the repetition of themes also operates in a series of unfinished thematic sets which, when combined, give dimension to the characteristics that constitute the quality of life of *Vida Simples* and underline its distinct "universality"³. Its referential condition is explained as something external to the magazine and that can be formulated (the idea of quality of life as a general precept for "those who want to live more and better" is the magazine's slogan), but also as something that is inherent and present within the logic of the magazine like a "department store" - just like its etymological definition (TAVARES, BERGER, 2009) - has (a place where there is "everything" about the quality of life within

a specific selectivity), and which at the same time, is unique, shaped by a set of content options chosen to constitute “the magazine” quality of life of *Vida Simples*. It is something possible (or made possible) by its (singular) “magazination”, its own journalistic and communicational process (TAVARES, 2011).

Amid the chaos of the world, says Ponte (2005), journalism tries to give to its content a “sense of coherence”, constructing the news based on some models and bringing its subjects closer to the consensuses that permeate the expectations of its production. From the discursive perspective, it is related to the idea of Charaudeau (2006) that the meaning constructed by all kinds of information “depends on the treatment imposed upon it”. And the intelligibility of its content will be “broader (vulgarization) or narrower (specialization) according to the types of psychological, social or ideological standards that have been contemplated” (CHARAUDEAU, 2006, p. 43) in its transaction process, which also goes beyond the content to be dealt with, beyond the first relation that establishes and conducts the informative act through the language.

Thus, every discourse, before representing the world, represents a relationship, or, more accurately, represents the world when it represents a relation. And this is also true for the information discourse. The person informing, caught in the meshes of the transaction process, can only build his information based on specific data of an exchange situation (CHARAUDEAU, 2006, p. 42).

In view of this, considering the journalistic desire to speak about the world, the relational dimension (either from the perspective of discourse or from another perspective) present in this activity, and also recalling the words of Stuart Hall (2003) on the asymmetries between the poles of encoding/decoding in communication processes with the presence of the media, it is necessary to think, from journalism in general (and within the context of the subject dealt with here), which aspects participate in the configuration of the “how” that constitutes its communication, marked in a decisive way by the affectations of the product about “what” it says and “to whom” it says, as well as by the game that takes place in the “articulation between the various fragments in circulation” (LEAL, 2006, p. 21) that inhabit this context.

In all aspects of *Vida Simples* which has been supplemented by other “magazine” elements (visual, productive, “projectural”, etc.), insofar as we seek characteristics of a procedure that runs through the magazine, also focusing on its specialization, a kind of stitching together permeated by issues that go beyond its specialization and reflect its affectations with society comes to life.

In the unveiling of the processes that characterize the magazine and form it - as is briefly mentioned here - something appears that questions its interlocutory universe and that acts in a broad meaning that condenses its contents in a unique informational and communicative process.

In *Vida Simples* the theme of the quality of life, on incorporating the journalistic logic of the magazine and being incorporated by it, covers it with a specialty that focuses on its specialization, allowing us, from the point of view of our research, to think of the magazine in the “between” of its operation and its theme. Or rather, at the meeting and straining of both, to think of it based on what specifically weaves together its meanings and practices, with repercussions for its integrity and its way of being a magazine.

Thus, based on *Vida Simples* we prefer to think of - and we affirm - journalistic specialization as: 1) an action (marked by the logic of its public - audience - and a visual and textual production) which, coupled 2) to themes (linked to a specialization), will result in a specifically “magazine” specialization. In this sense, a magazine is doubly specialized, but more than that, from the third specialization formed here in which other questions are added, it is itself a unique product with its own “specialty” which marks and makes possible a specialization.

NOTES

- 1 A classic definition of specialized journalism divulged by the pioneers of its study in Spain, proposes: “*la especialización periodística es aquella estructura que analiza la realidad, proporcionando a los lectores una interpretación del mundo lo más cabada posible, acomodando el lenguaje a un nivel en que se determine el medio y profundizando sus intereses y necesidades*” (ORIVE; FAGOAGA, 1974, p. 69).
- 2 The cover image is an icon of the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro and the text of the editorial begins with an excerpt from the lyrics of the song “Samba do Avião” (Airplane Samba). Both are used to present, in fact, the cover story that refers to Jesus Christ and that also relates to a time “hook”: the year-end Christian holidays and a belief in this religious symbol.
- 3 We prefer to use the term “distinct” rather than “limited”, as pointed out by Gröth (In: FAUS BELAU, 1965), considering that the characteristics of the magazine, though varying in degree with regard to the newspapers, as the author says, have this variation within a logic of specificities that does not necessarily dispense with a comparison with other vehicles to be organized.

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Frederico de Mello Brandão Tavares is PhD in Communication Sciences from the University of Vale do Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS). He earned Bachelor and Master Degrees in Social Communication from the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). He accomplished his doctoral internship at the Rey Juan Carlos University (URJC) in Madrid, Spain. He is currently Professor of the Postgraduate Program in Communication and Languages at the University of Tuiuti do Paraná.