

## The Fame of the TV machine: stylistic analysis of the SBT channel TV show

Volume 36  
issue 2 / 2017

Contracampo e-ISSN 2238-2577  
Niterói (RJ), 36 (2)  
aug/2017-nov/2017

Contracampo – Brazilian Journal of Communication is a quarterly publication of the Graduate Programme in Communication Studies (PPGCOM) at Fluminense Federal University (UFF). It aims to contribute to critical reflection within the field of Media Studies, being a space for dissemination of research and scientific thought.

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TO REFERENCE THIS ARTICLE, PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING CITATION:

Mazzarino, J Hergesel, J. P.; Ferraraz, R. (2017) The Fame Of The TV Machine: Stylistic Analysis Of The SBT channel TV Show. *Contracampo – Brazilian Journal of Communication*, 36 (2), XX-XX.

Submitted on 22 May 2017 / Accepted on 14 July 2017

DOI – <http://dx.doi.org/10.22409/contracampo.v36i2.987>

## Abstract<sup>1</sup>

Máquina da Fama (Fame Machine) is a reality TV show about the competition between artists performing cover versions and the transformation of guest artists onto music scene phenomena. By the end of 2015 the show was the second most seen by the audience and in the beginning of 2016 it beat Xuxa's TV show several times. The format is responsible for notable moments in TV channel SBT's contemporary history. As Máquina da Fama has become a hit on Brazilian television, this research sought to understand how the expressive resources used by this narrative appeal to the sensibility of the viewer. To answer that question the paper analyzes one episode in which the hostess Patrícia Abravanel establishes dialogue with herself, as if they were distinct personalities, before performing Beyoncé.

### Keywords

Audiovisual; Television; SBT; Media Narratives; Stylistics.

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<sup>1</sup> A previous version of this article was presented in Working Group Communication, consumption and identity: materialities, attribution of meanings and media representations, of the 6th WG Meeting – Comunicon.

## Initial Considerations

Every Monday night, just after 11p.m., the mess lead by Ratinho, at the nightly show with the same name as his, is replaced by multicolored visuals, filled with purple and pink, and festive sonority, with fast and rhythmical beat, on the screen of the channel SBT. It is *Máquina da Fama (Fame Machine)*, a TV show with a live studio audience, hosted by Patrícia Abravanel and directed by Michael Ukstin since 2013, which includes a competition between ordinary people who perform as covers of their favorite artists.

Each contestant presents themselves, initially, as a non-famous person and, after going through make-up, hair, voice and choreography treatments, performs as the chosen artist at a setting built for such. Until 2016, the audience was responsible for choosing the best performances of the night to be awarded prizes ranging from R\$ 2,000.00 up to R\$ 5,000.00. In 2017, the TV show underwent small changes, abandoning the voting and the prizes and prioritizing the musical performances regardless of critical evaluation.

It is relevant to highlight that *Máquina da Fama* is derived from the Brazilian version of *My Name Is*, a product created by FremantleMedia that was named as *Famoso Quem?*<sup>2</sup> in Brazil. The show, formed of a reporter and three judges, along with artistic coaches, was broadcast on Saturday nights and oscillated between 4 and 5 viewership shares – below the expectations of the network's artistic direction (SANTO, 2013, [e]) – during the almost two months that stayed on air.

Given the evidence that the strangeness was caused because the original format did not contain the style marks of the broadcaster (the term "broadcaster" is used, detached from the classical idea of a broadcaster, but as a synonym for "Television station", such as "channel" and "television network"), SBT suggested modifications for the second season, which were rejected by the creator of the program.

Based on that, the channel decided to terminate the contract and to produce its own covers competition, changing the reporter for a TV host and the judges for an audience – configuring, indeed, a TV show with a live studio audience - a defining characteristic of SBT -, besides reallocating the exhibition time of the show to Monday nights. The result was that, in the first month, viewership increased to 7 shares in IBOPE, against just 4 shares of Record TV channel (PORTAL, 2014 [e]).

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<sup>2</sup> Famoso Quem?, SBT. Retrieved from: <<http://goo.gl/9dnEeH>>. Accessed: 15 Feb. 2016.

## Focus and Scope

As a reality show, *Máquina da Fama* combines characteristics of reality with nuances of a fictional universe; its narrative structures tend to be adapted to convey truth, authenticity, and naturalness to what is expressed. Regarding its format and sociocultural impact, Rocha (2009, p.14) observes that television, seeking viewers' reality, "simulates the real world in the mediatic world and, if everything works out, the simulation will be able to persuade the audience that there is no difference between them".

The talent show derives from this format, in which ordinary people walk in a mediatic atmosphere and transform themselves into famous people for a few minutes, showing part of their claimed artistic talent. In this genre, originated from reality shows, "talent, however, is not the only requirement analyzed, elements such as charisma and an inspirational story about overcoming challenges can guarantee success in the competition", as suggests Baptista (2014, p.1)

Bringing this notion to covers shows, a subgenre of talent show in which *Máquina da Fama* fits, the contestant needs to convince the audience that he or she can build the personality that they proposed to impersonate. This occurs because, in this type of show, "when reproducing the song of their idol one aims to reach such position as star", generating the concept of "proto-star", according to Novaes (2010, p.6).

Novaes also proposes a justification for the success of this kind of show, both in its production (the fact of having contestants from diverse backgrounds) and its reception. For the author (NOVAES, 2010, p. 10), "the visibility is what guarantees the existing of a subject in front of another, and therefore we have the need for visibility above any essence". Novaes (2010, p. 10) complements that "the primordial to the contestants, in this search for visibility, [is] just appearing in the television world, without any musical knowledge that extrapolates the barriers of imitation".

Besides performances by ordinary people, the TV show also features guest artists that participate in a segment called *Desafio da Máquina* ( *the Machine's Challenge*). In this segment, the contestant – usually a nationally known singer or someone from the cast of some other show from the same network – spins a virtual wheel to find out which pop music sensation he or she will have to impersonate. Then, the contestant walks into the *Máquina* (machine) and, by the end of the show, returns dressed up and wearing make-up just like the celebrity that he or she is about to impersonate and performs in a scenario that resembles the music video from the performed song.

The *Máquina*, basically, is the central character of the narrative. Even though it is a mechanism that resembles a rotating door that only takes the contestant from the stage to the backstage, it assumes the function of being the responsible for transforming ordinary people into the celebrities. It would be the same as a magic portal that, in a 360° turn, prepares a mega production, both in the person and the scenario.

The success of the show can be verified not only by the audience ratings on TV but also online.<sup>3</sup> Following its premiere, the show, that had been oscillating between the second and third places, became stable in its vice leadership and gathers consecutive victories over the show *Xuxa Meneghel*, on Record TV (FERNANDES, 2016, [e]). On the official *Máquina da Fama* YouTube channel<sup>4</sup>, the four most viewed videos are from *Desafio da Máquina*, being, in order of highest views: *Chiquititas* imitating Fifth Harmony<sup>5</sup>; Maisa Silva imitating Lady Gaga<sup>6</sup>; *Carrossel* imitating One Direction<sup>7</sup>; and Sophia Valverde imitating Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*<sup>8</sup>.

Given that the most beloved videos are those in which the contestants belong to the SBT cast, it is proposed, in this work, an analysis about the show broadcast on December 14th, 2015, when the show's own hostess, after establishing a conversation with herself, as if they were two different personalities<sup>9</sup>, executed the task of impersonating singer Beyoncé.<sup>10</sup> It is considered, therefore, that *Máquina da Fama* is a reality show, immersed in the group of talent shows, inside of the subgroup of covers shows.

## Goals and Justification

Not having as a primary goal to comprehend the sociological impingement that this kind of TV show can provoke, but to investigate what happens in the intermission that limits its poetry and its aesthetic, stylistics analysis was opted for

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<sup>3</sup> The term "on-line TV" is used in the sense of "extension of only one broadcaster", that is, "the broadcasting stations websites contain, basically, archive images from the shows, and, eventually, related videos made exclusively for on-line exhibition [...] as opposed to off-line TV (in which it is necessary to wait for the beginning of the show), on on-line TV, the user decides what and when he wants to watch and in what order (unless when, also rarely, the broadcaster offers a simultaneous transmission)" (KLIPP, 2015, p. 2).

<sup>4</sup> *Máquina da Fama* channel. YouTube. Retrieved from: <<https://goo.gl/dXuyjp>>. Accessed: 15 Feb. 2016.

<sup>5</sup> *Máquina da Fama* (29/06/15) – Girls from *Chiquititas* sing Fifth Harmony. YouTube. Retrieved from: <<https://goo.gl/jDSVN>>. Accessed: 15 Feb. 2016.

<sup>6</sup> *Máquina da Fama* (17/08/15) – Maisa Silva turn into Lady Gaga in "Desafio". YouTube. Retrieved from: <<https://goo.gl/uiuszp>>. Accessed: 15 Feb. 2016.

<sup>7</sup> *Máquina da Fama* (06/07/15) – Challenge: Boys from *Carrossel* sing One Direction. YouTube. Retrieved from: <<https://goo.gl/uW2YOA>>. Accessed: 15 Feb. 2016.

<sup>8</sup> *Máquina da Fama* (22/06/15) – Challenge: Sophia Valverde interprets Dorothy. YouTube. Retrieved from: <<https://goo.gl/KfiUCr>>. Accessed: 15 Feb. 2016.

<sup>9</sup> *Máquina da Fama* (14/12/15) – Patrícia welcomes herself for the Challenge. YouTube. Retrieved from: <<https://goo.gl/Ow7sLb>>. Accessed: 15 Feb. 2016.

<sup>10</sup> *Máquina da Fama* (14/12/15) – Patrícia turns into Beyoncé in the *Desafio da Máquina*. YouTube. Retrieved from: <<https://goo.gl/IUK8Ut>>. Accessed: 15 Feb. 2016.

as a methodology. It is believed that to verify stylistic traits, both in sonorous character and imagery, is fundamental to comprehend part of the success of the show as a popular attraction.

## Methodology

Stylistics can be verified by four great aspects: the linguistics (BALLY, 1909), the literary (SPITZER, 1968), the cinematographic (BORDWELL, 2008) and the television (BUTLER, 2010). While audiovisual studies tend to turn to the latter two, the analysis of verbal communication make use of the first two. It is believed, however, that television, for being a media that condenses elements of oral and written modalities in its sonorous and visual languages, a combination of all of those subareas are welcomed.

For Charles Bally (1909), the stylistic has as an investigation goal the affectivity manifested through language and the elements of language manifested through affectivity. For Leo Spitzer (1968), the stylistic has the mission to detect the resources used on the texts that made them become visible and reach a poetic status. Over time, it was verified that those two ideas had more similarities than differences and stylistic analysis started to be considered as a process in which it is identified the highlights in language and make interlocutors create affective bonds with the text.

For David Bordwell (2008), the style tends to be the perceptiveness of characteristic marks of a film maker and/or a production company based on the narrative and *mise-en-scène* elements that repeat themselves in film works. For Jeremy Butler (2010), the style is also identified by the production techniques and by the presented aesthetic, but considers also the cultural context of the realization of the product and, therefore, the meanings that it can present. Based on these definitions, other authors find a great parallel between the two ideas, and, as a result, the methodology adopted for cinema coincides with the methodological conjectures for television.

In this study, we propose a unification between the presented spheres. Even knowing that there are relevant studies in the area of the television style, headed by Butler's followers, it is verified that they focus more on North American and European TV series than on Brazilian productions. By investigating the expressive resources that manifest themselves both in the sonorous-imagery and rhetorical-discursive layer, we propose to understand a little bit more about how style is shaped in a narrative built into a program with a live studio audience.

## Stylistic Analysis of *Máquina da Fama*

Here we propose a reading of the scene in which Patrícia Abravanel invites herself to come to the stage and, in front of herself as someone else, initiates a brief interview, strengthening the idea of having two distinct personalities: the hostess (H) and the contestant (C). Both the visual aspects (techniques used to frame and establish the cuts) and the sonority (represented by the dialogue and by the simultaneous speeches) contribute to personify each one of the two Patrícias, making it confusing to the most distracted viewer<sup>11</sup>.

High camera angle. The hostess, wearing shiny white shirt and pants, is walking the catwalk, heading to the stage, with the audience on the side. She turns around. Camera angle changes. American shot. She stares directly to the camera, centered in the shot and being illuminated by the spotlights behind her body, from the center to the sides of the frame. While speaking, with a Latin background music, the character generator shows her Instagram user name and the broadcasting station's logo, with the mention of "closed-caption" right above, in uppercase letters.<sup>12</sup>

In the beginning, the figure of Patrícia Abravanel is treated as star (in both meanings of the word: as in a famous person and as in a sidereal star). At the moment she walks down the catwalk, she receives a rhythmical and tireless ovation by the audience. In addition, a certain allusion to the light emanated by the constellations by the pearly color of her clothes is observed, as well as the illumination in stripes, at the back, referring to those of a real star.

The Latin song<sup>13</sup> suggests the happy atmosphere of the program, a characteristic phenomenon of SBT.<sup>14</sup> And the combination of all those elements described shows that "the expressive qualities can be transmitted by lighting, by color, by acting, by the soundtrack and by certain camera movements" (BORDWELL, 2008, p. 59), as it is noticeable at other moments in this analysis.

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<sup>11</sup> On YouTube video page, there are different comments from users asking themselves who would be the actress that interpreted the second Patrícia or even question themselves if the hostess would have a twin sister. In this study, it was opted to disregard the discussion about the exchange of information conducted at the virtual page, once that such proposition would diverge the focus of this study.

<sup>12</sup> To mention the types of film shots, it was adopted the terminology presented by Francis Vanoye and Anne Goliot-Lété (2002).

<sup>13</sup> The soundtrack, in a certain way, contributes "so that Brazil can recognize itself and come close to the Hispanic speaking Latin America, which historical and cultural matrices, social and political conflicts, form a common ground of existence and sharing" (ROCHA, 2006, p. 11).

<sup>14</sup> [...] the happiness shows itself as a key feeling in a relation of mutual dedication: the SBT feels happy in being able to share its programming with the viewer, who, on the other hand, also feel happy in seeing oneself at the SBT and being part of this family" (MARTINS, 2014, p. 14).

H: And this month of December continues to be super special. An artist who I have known for a long time is coming. She's part of the family and has been here many times. Please welcome Patrícia Abravanel!

There is a demarcation of time/space and also of affinity. Firstly, it is highlighted that the exhibition of the program happened during December, which would spoil reruns in another month, a recurring fact in this broadcasting station. Then, before mentioning the name of the contestant, a bond of affectivity and self-exaltation is created, emphasizing that, besides being "part of the family", that is, someone close to the hostess, she is also an "artist" and "has already been onstage many times". The thought of the viewer tends to limit itself: of the artists of the Abravanel family, she is the only one who is present on the program every week.

The charade developed for the viewers (those who have not preciously consulted the program calls or its content synopsis) is, therefore, easily solved. By announcing her own name, however, it is expected to generate a trigger for the feeling of surprise: after all, how could she enter the *mise-en-scène*, if she is already there? The questioning is solved after a quick flashback, recovering, in little moments, some of Patrícia's artistic performances.

In this moment, a brief selection of scenes from the covers already performed by Patrícia is exhibited, beginning with Whoopi Goldberg and going through Carmen Miranda and Jennifer Lopez, in micro excerpts without the audio from the performance, followed by sonorous fragments of Carmen Miranda, Shakira and The Little Mermaid. A flash of light ends the video and the image of the hostess is yet again visualized.

The resuming of such performances done by Patrícia throughout her career helps to endorse the idea that she is an "artist", a star, someone transformed by the *Máquina*, a central character of the narrative. The less assiduous viewers tend to assimilate the boldness of the hostess and her apparent many talents; as for the most loyal viewers, they have the task of remembering each one of those moments and approximating them to the idea that Silvio Santos, the main icon of the broadcasting station, has already praised the development of his daughter as a mediatic phenomenon<sup>15</sup>.

H: Come in, Patrícia.

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<sup>15</sup> More father than a host, Silvio uses Teleton to promote Patrícia. Blog do Maurício Stycer, 20 October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Retrieved from: <<http://goo.gl/oYUeLg>>. Accessed: 15 Feb. 2016.



Camera changes. High-angle shot. Patrícia enters wearing a red shirt and blue pants, also under the applause of the audience. From this moment, there is a change of cameras: first, the hostess is positioned in an American shot; then the contestant is filmed, also in this type of shot; then both of them are framed in a joined shot. The spotlights project countless stars on the stage floor.



**Figure 1** – Patrícia (hostess) and Patrícia (contestant) share the same stage.

Source: Taken via print screen from video of the program.

It becomes clear that, although the way in taken by the contestant was the same that the hostess took, a few seconds earlier, the one that has just entered the stage is still not ready to be considered a celebrity. Her ordinary clothes and basic look, without much make-up or a stylized hair, lead to believe that it will be necessary the help of the Machine so that she can get ready to shine on stage. The outfit and the make-up, resources pointed out by Bordwell (2008) as some of the things that denote style, are fundamental to the success of this program.

H: Hey, Patrícia! Finally you came.

In this speech, the hostess distorts the idea suggested at the beginning: that she hosts the program every Monday night and, with that, being admired through this channel. The effect caused is that the contestant, while a distinct person from the hostess, had already been invited to be there other times (not necessarily for the first time, seeing what was mentioned previously, but as a visit that has not shown up for a long time), but only then decided to accept.

C: Good evening, Patrícia. Good evening, viewers. I'm happy to be here.

From this point, there are not just two people interacting; the public watching from home becomes the third participant of this dialogue, a collective character, even though it does not come to interact or change the expected course of the narrative. By greeting the viewer, the contestant creates a bond not only with the hostess before her, but with everyone that is paying attention to her speech. In other words, it creates an invitation to the public to participate on the show, another particularity from the programs with a live audience from SBT, encouraged by Silvio Santos.<sup>16</sup>

As Bordwell (2008, p. 29) would say, the viewer tends to concentrate themselves on the faces of the characters on the scene, on the dialogues that are being built and on the gestures that are executed, paying attention to how those elements justify themselves to the unfolding of the narrative. The faces and bodies that complement them, the words and the effects they produce, the gestures and the choreography that they perform, those characteristics are petals of a same stylistic seedling. As a species of plant, *Máquina da Fama* proposes an approach at times informative, at others simply charming, creating affective bonds with the audience without them having complete awareness of what is happening.

H: How did you find out you were a singer?

The possibility of her being a singer does not exist; the role is automatically appointed to her. Even so, the act of singing is not suggested as an innate gift, nor as a result of a continuous effort, but as a derivative discovery from an experience.

C: It was here that I find out I was a singer. (Laughs). In fact, once, back then, I went on Mara Maravilha, that I think I really wanted to sing. I went there, and I took the microphone out of her hand, and danced so much. I think that there I already had some wish to be a singer.

On indicating the location in which the role of singer was given to her, Patrícia assumes that participating in *Máquina da Fama* is a process for every person to showcase their talent. Still in the speech, she remembers her past, already known by fans, when she came out from the audience of the *Show Maravilha*<sup>17</sup> and invaded the stage, earning the cameras' attention and splitting the

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<sup>16</sup> In the programs with a live audience from SBT, the personality that is on the scene “[...] makes his way directly to the live audience and, by positioning himself in front of the camera, to the viewers at home. To dialogue is, then, an essential quality for this genre, helping making it be recognized as such.”

<sup>17</sup> *Show Maravilha* was a child program hosted by Mara Maravilha and broadcasted by SBT at the end of the 1980s. Patrícia Abravanel's participation, still a child, happened in 1987, according to information

spotlight. Her adopted enthusiasm is noticed by the polysyndeton<sup>18</sup>, besides the colloquialism – registered, mainly, with an apheresis<sup>19</sup> – approximates it to the popular language level, another element that permeates SBT<sup>20</sup>.

(The hostess nods, smiling, as if consenting in real time with what the contestant communicates.)

C: So, at the time they gave me a program like that... (Shakes the hand in both ways, as if indicating the closeness with the hostess.) You know, right? Like *Máquina da Fama*. Then I felt fulfilled, it was like a childhood dream. (Laughs.)

H: How many shows so far?

C: There were several shows. There were... The first one I did was the Carmen Miranda one, it was sensational. Shakira. Then Frozen, after that it was Ivete. Then it was Whoopi, that was really fun. The J-lo, huge production. Then it was Xuxa. Then it started that thing of me going back to my childhood. Xuxa, the Little Mermaid, and then... here I am today.

(The audience applauds.)

It is visible that, while the hostess assumes a more formal attitude, using short phrases and the standard of the Portuguese language, the contestant shows herself looser, expressing herself in a colloquial way. The break of the parallelism<sup>21</sup> on the contestant's speech is the biggest representation of its popular style, making one believe that there is no script – which made her answer the questions spontaneously – or, even, of a disciplined script in this stylistic care. The ovation from the audience corroborates to the acceptance from the viewers.

H: Tell us which one of those you most liked.

C: Everyone had something different. I loved playing Xuxa. (A silent set piece from the performance is shown, in concomitance with her speech.) I think

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from the SBT's archive. Verify video in: "Cante Se Puder – Patrícia Abravanel remembers her participation on Mara's show". YouTube. Retrieved from: <<https://goo.gl/C1786h>>. Accessed: 15 Feb. 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Polysyndeton is a figure of construction that consists repetition of a coordinating conjunction at the beginning of each speech and that tend to result in a "suggestion of movements, states or actions that happen quickly and rhythmically" (HENRIQUES, 2011, p. 114). In this case, there is a constant repetition of the conjunction "e" ("and").

<sup>19</sup> Apheresis is a figure of harmony, also considered a 'metaplasm', generated by the "suppression of phoneme or syllable at the beginning of the word" (MONTERO, 2005, p. 64). In this case, there is the neologism "ranquei" ("took out")

<sup>20</sup> The SBT, founded over the concept of popularity, appropriates categorically of this neotelevision style [...] The SBT is a channel that mirrors the ordinary citizen and relies on the strategy of identification and approximation with the public" (SOUSA, 2011, p. 46).

<sup>21</sup> Parallelism "is the repetition of ideas through approximate expressions" (BECHARA, 2009, p. 644). In this case, Patrícia doesn't follow a same structure in her phrases: while some are complete, formed by adjective and deeper explanations, others limits themselves in just mentioning the name of the person impersonated, followed or not by a linking verb.

that I realized a lot of people's dream when I walked out of that spaceship, sensational. (A set piece from the performance as J-Lo is shown.) I loved J-Lo, it was beautiful. (A set piece from her performance as Shakira is shown.) Shakira, in which I danced. Well, all had a... (Patrícia on the stage is shown again.) A taste like, really tasty. I loved doing... I love... For me, I would perform here every week.

It is noted that, by interrogating the contestant about her previous shows, the contestant opens up space to retrieve, once again, Patricia's performances, initially exhibited in analepsis.<sup>22</sup> This constant visibility of the performances strengthens the idea that the contestant did an admirable job in previous editions and is going to repeat the success in the present challenge. That is reassured in the hostess' next speech.

H: Well, we can see that you are brave. (Directs her stare to the cameras.) But will she be ready to face the *Desafio da Máquina* (Machine Challenge)? Let's see!

(The *Desafio da Máquina* intro is shown.)

The layout used to illustrate the segment is similar to the one adopted by SBT in the prize draw from the consecrated *Pião da Casa Própria*<sup>23</sup>, that is linked to the image of Silvio Santos. It is noted that the construction of the sliced circle is different: while the Pião is surrounded by a wooden frame that resembles the image of petals from a flower, the *Máquina* is formed by stripes of light that start from the center and go to the edges. Still, it is important to observe the possible intention in associating the form linked to the image of the father, for so many years, to the image of the daughter<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Analepsis is a figure of construction that, mostly known as retrocession or flashback, is "a recession in the timeline of an event that occurred before the time of the speech" (HERGESEL, 2015, p. 60).

<sup>23</sup> The *Pião da Casa Própria* or *Pião do Baú* or even *Pião da Felicidade* was a scenographic object from the program *Festival da Casa Própria*, that started in 1986, and the consisted in giving away prizes to the contestant that got the same numbers or a higher number after spinning it. From 1994 to 2002 and from 2007 and 2009, the Pião got a segment in the program *Tentação*. Later, the Pião integrated the program *Pra Ganhar É Só Rodar*. After a period off air, the program went back to the broadcaster schedule in 2016, rebranded and exhibited on Wednesday nights.

<sup>24</sup> Here, the stylistic analysis incorporates the second dimension proposed by Butler (2010), taken over by Rocha (2016, p. 31), of examining the functioning of the style within the textual system.



**Figure 2** – Comparison between the designs from *Desafio da Máquina* and *Pião da Casa Própria*.

Source: Taken via print screen from videos of the programs.

H: Let's go, spin the roulette, then, for Patrícia's *Desafio da Máquina*. Let's see who is there for you. It is a diva, but which one?

The wheel starts to spin. All the images are of Beyoncé.)

The roulette, central piece of *Desafio da Máquina*, indicates the artist to be impersonated, is notably a digital version of the iconic *Pião*. The unused, however, is in the fact that all images, in this show with Patrícia, are of just one celebrity: Beyoncé. Therefore, there is no possibility of another artist being chosen; still, the participant gets so euphoric, that she hopes that the roulette stops on Beyoncé's image and, when it happens, celebrates profusely.

As pointed, the dialogue does not cease while the roulette spins; the sonorous language, mostly verbal, acquires a strong significance to the narrative. This phenomenon brings back, in a certain way, the idea registered by Simone Maria Rocha (2016, p. 48) whereof "the experience of watching [the] television is, likewise, an experience of listening to the television". Besides, to privilege the sound is a strategy to guarantee the maintenance of the viewer's attention and, consequently, of the meaning of what is created on the screen. By emphasizing the sound, the television product fills in the blank left by the needy image, in order to avoid the reduction of its transforming value.



**Figure 3** – Roulette from *Desafio da Máquina (Machine Challenge)*.

Source: Taken via print screen from video of the program

C: Beyoncé! Beyoncé!

H: Beyoncé!

C: Diva, diva, diva... A lot of divas! Woo hoo! Beyoncé! Beyoncé!

H: Is everyone Beyoncé?

C: What is this, oh my heavenly God!

H: It is not possible. There is some scheme with the production. (Turns her eyes to the contestant.) Did you ask for Beyoncé? (The speech occurs while the contestant is still yelling: " Beyoncé! Beyoncé! A lot of divas..." .)

C: Beyoncé!

H: It is not possible.

C: Look how pretty. Look how pretty she is.

H: Over there there is also Beyoncé!

C: Supreme Diva! Mega Diva!

H: Guys, how she transforms herself. There are several versions of Beyoncé here. (The roulette stops.)

C: Beyoncé! (Elongated festive interjection.)

In a matter of seconds, the word Beyoncé is mentioned, at least, twelve times. The *épanode*<sup>25</sup> generated by the incessant repetition of the name of the artist and the *epizeuxis*<sup>26</sup> from the adjectivization "diva" emphasize the idea that the contestant is a huge fan of the American singer and that imitating her will be a way to transform herself into someone yet more glamorous. It is, therefore, an homage, more than a challenge or a competition.

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<sup>25</sup> Construction device that "is useful to the comical, rhetorical or lyrical exploration by its obsessive character [...], consists in repeat without cease a word" (SUHAMY, 1994, p. 70).

<sup>26</sup> Construction device that "is characterized by repetition followed by vocabulary" (HENRIQUES, 2011, p. 141).

It is worth pointing out that Beyoncé's image is evidenced, mainly in academic subjects, as representing the African American women's empowerment and the fight against racial prejudice. As is pointed out by Mateus (2016, p. 14), "from the moment in which she [Beyoncé], as a black woman, owns an identity speech, the edges of institutional racism become more evident". The force of imagery of the personality is a key element to justifying Patricia's euphoria.

H: Congratulations! Beyoncé. I'm just impressed that you might have... She must have a scheme, it is not possible, with the production. There is only Beyoncé there. Now, will there be a scheme in the show of the challenge also? Let's see what is the challenge that the *Máquina* prepared for you.

(It is exhibited a part from the music video that must be imitated.)

C: Really, really hard. But I love challenges. I was desperate to impersonate a diva, I was desperate to impersonate Beyoncé and I think that nobody believes that I can succeed, not even myself.

(The hostess smiles.)

C: But I really want to see if I can face it. And I was talking to the people backstage, and Lu, who prepares the rehearsals, she said the women change after impersonating Beyoncé, they become more... (Shows, with her hand, her body from top to bottom.) Get it?

Supporting the joke that the contestant is not the same person as the hostess, she implies that the contestant negotiated with the production before spinning the roulette. And maintaining the feeling of surprise by supposedly not knowing that she would impersonate Beyoncé, the contestant acknowledges how difficult the challenge will be and, in anaphors<sup>27</sup> that aim at restriction (of all the divas, Beyoncé; of all people, herself), she reveals her desire to impersonate the singer.

The communication imagery has its importance amplified at this point. As the sonorous communication becomes centered almost entirely on the verbal language, the visuals offers an indispensable complement to the message, especially in two moments. The first one is the insistence on framing the hostess silently assenting the contestant's speech, reviving the idea of a live conversation and of the existence of two different people; the second one is the gesture that the

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<sup>27</sup> Figure of speech (trope) that "consists in starting several verses, phrases or parts of successive phrases by the same word or group of words" (SUHAMY, 1994, p. 72).

contestant makes to inform, in verbal ellipsis<sup>28</sup>, that impersonating Beyoncé makes women more confident and attractive.

H: We can tell that this is going to be a challenge... is going to be one of the most audacious challenges of your career. You have to handle the costume, that hair, give face... Do you think you can handle?

C: Of course! I don't have any doubt. I don't even know if I can do it, but I'm here. Let's go. So scary.

The hostess uses a gradation in climax<sup>29</sup> to intensify the difficulty of doing a Beyoncé impersonation, singing and dancing simultaneously. The hyperbole<sup>30</sup> generated by the question lets the contestant in conflict, making her express herself in paradox<sup>31</sup>: right after saying that she thinks she is able to transform herself into Beyoncé and give a performance onstage, she feels insecure and assumes that she is not certain that she will be able to execute the task successfully; she recognizes that it is the moment to face it, but confesses she is frightened.

H: Patrícia... (Shakes her finger in front of herself, as if indicating the proximity between the two Patrícias.) I know you, Patrícia. (Pauses.) I don't know, are you ready?

C: I think so.

H: So, enter the *Máquina* as Patrícia Abravanel, Silvio's daughter, and come back all diva and powerful, as the pop star, Beyoncé.

(The contestant walks towards the *Máquina*, while the audience applauds.)

Patrícia Abravanel keeps with the expressive prank of being two distinct people, although she clarifies that she knows the other one as being herself. The importance of the *Máquina* – as metonymy<sup>32</sup> to refers to the make-up artists, hairdressers, costume designers, choreographers and vocal coaches – to the

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<sup>28</sup> Construction device in which "the subtended word was not used earlier, because its presence is noticed with clearness in the context or situation" (HENRIQUES, 2011, p. 147).

<sup>29</sup> Thinking device that "is defined by the successive accumulation of words or expressions that intensify progressive(ly) [...] an idea" (HENRIQUES, 2011, p. 149).

<sup>30</sup> Figure of speech (trope) that "violate the reality, exaggerating the ideas, not rarely until the absurd, without finding any limit" (MARTINS, 2008, p. 265 – first edition in 2005).

<sup>31</sup> Thinking device in which "two opposite ideas are conciliated in a way to contradict the common sense" (HENRIQUES, 2011, p. 149).

<sup>32</sup> Figure of speech (trope) that is based "in a real and not pondered relation, therefore, not comparative[...]; the real relations of qualitative order that lead to use [...] a word by another, to designate a thing with the name of other" (GARCIA, 2007, p. 114-115 – first edition in 1967).



contestant transformation is highlighted by euphemism<sup>33</sup> followed by hyperbole that work together. (This is also a sample of how stylistic devices, so dear to the verbal language, can manifest themselves in an image in motion).

By intensifying the idea that Beyoncé is “a powerful diva” and “a pop star” and letting, in counterpoint, the idea that Patrícia would be just “Silvio’s daughter”, as if this antonomasia<sup>34</sup> did not characterize a relevant mediatic personality, the hostess defends the idea that the production of the program is responsible for transforming someone that is there just because is a relative of the owner of the channel – a jargon that even she uses when participating in her father’s program – in a multitalented artist.

After the entrance of the contestant in which there would be a portal specialized in personality modifications, the program continues with the participation of ordinary people. Only on the last part of the show, when the program is ending, Patrícia returns transformed into Beyoncé and executes her performance onstage, with a specific setting and dancers helping her.

## Final Notes

Joy is the predominant feeling in *Máquina da Fama*, evidenced by smiles, festive music, lightning movement and, especially, by verbal speech established onstage. The attempt to bring the viewer to the TV is another observable aspect: each one of the “Patricias” represents a group – while the contestant dresses and expresses herself in a simple way, such as most of the Brazilian people, the hostess maintains a more educated and ethical posture, an illusion created to the references of the mainstream media.

The play of scenes, intercalating the contestant’s speech with the hostess’ and the record of visual expressions being done independently of whom is speaking, is a resource used to emphasize the existence of two people onstage. They break, consequently, with the idea of present time (after all, there are not two “Patricias” at the same real time) to the construction of the time of the speech (the characters communicate within a chronology created by the narrative).

The dialogue, in turn, both of which are on the screen and with the people at home, is an indispensable phenomenon to the development of the narrative – another factor commonly perceptible in the SBT programs. Besides, the playfulness

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<sup>33</sup> Figure of thinking understood as a “expressive means that sweeten the brutality or social inconvenience” of ideas (LAPA, 1998, p. 21 – first edition in 1982).

<sup>34</sup> Figure of speech (trope) that “consists in a substitution of an own or a common name [...] usually formed by a grouping of words” (GARCIA, 2007, p. 121-122 – first edition in 1967). It is a derivation of the metonymy.

in the construction of the *Máquina* as a character, even with everybody aware that it is a metonym for indicating all the professionals involved in the production – maybe, therefore, it can be considered that this is the most relevant figure of speech to this work.

Other figures of speech used are loaded with intentionality and work as an activating resource of feelings in the viewers. The polysyndeton, for instance, suggests the contestant~s enthusiasm; The apheresis, followed by the breach of parallelism, directs the mediatic personality speech to a colloquial language level; The analepsis, by itself, assumes the purpose of rescuing the past to generate expectation, in the present, of something that will be accomplished in the near future.

The repetitions are commonly delimited by *épanode* and epizeuxis, that collaborate to the creation of a euphoric atmosphere; as for the anaphora, which usually would offer the feeling of accumulation, has the duty, here, of restricting the purpose of praise. The ellipsis, in turn, acts as a transformer of the linguistics of modality, leaving to the visual the mission of expressing the idea omitted by the verbal. To intensify the feeling of difficulty in the task to be executed, the gradation in climax presented itself in company of the hyperbole.

It was also noted that the paradox helps in the feeling of insecurity, transmitting to the audience the doubt of whether the performance will be successful. Back to hyperbole, it complies another role by joining the euphemism, contributing to the highlight of the achieved transformation. The antonomasia appears, at this point, as an attempt to make the “before” inferior and to make the “after” superior. Lastly, it is possible to say that Silvio Santos’ daughter entered the *Máquina* and came back as Patrícia Abravanel, with her own personality, but respecting SBT’s style of acting.

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