

AUDIOVISUALS AND FAR-RIGHT IN BRAZIL

AUDIOVISUAL E EXTREMA DIREITA NO BRASIL

AUDIOVISUAL Y EXTREMA DERECHA EN BRASIL

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Received: 04/01/2024
Accepted: 09/01/2024
Published: 11/30/2024

ABSTRACT:

Brazil has revealed extravagant ideas in recent years, from challenging established scientific knowledge to calls for the return of the dictatorship and historical revisions. Audiovisuals have become a critical disseminator of these purposes in the "destruction politics". For example, we see the emergence of audiovisual works that seek to delegitimize knowledge established over decades. This article discusses the antecedents of this discourse in the country, summarizes some of its recurrences, and observes one of these works in more detail, arguing that knowing fascist politics' strategies and methods is urgent and will be decisive for our future.

KEYWORDS: Audiovisuals; Far-right; Fascism; Propaganda movie.

Introduction

In recent years, Brazilian society has lived with the most extravagant ideas, from challenging established scientific knowledge to paying homage to torturers and experiencing many others, such as historical revisions that defend the monarchy and the 1964 civil-military dictatorship. During the Bolsonaro government (2019-2022), we had the environment minister protecting illegal fires and deforestation, and turning a blind eye to timber smuggling, invasions by miners into Indigenous lands and murders of these peoples (Macri, 2021); we had the President of the Palmares Foundation, an institution created to promote Black culture, referring to the Black movement as "deleterious and evil" (Fernandes, 2021); we had the Minister of Women, Family, and Human Rights saying that boys should wear blue and girls should wear pink, besides suggesting the fight against sexual exploitation of children and adolescents through the distribution of panties (Pains, 2019; Damares, 2019); we had the country's Vice President categorically stating that "there is no racism in Brazil" (Schuquel, 2022); and the President himself said, among countless barbarities, that foreign tourists who want to come to Brazil to "have sex with a woman", feel free, they just cannot make the country a gay tourism destination, after all, he said, "we have family" (Portilho, 2022),

besides repeating fake news by saying that people vaccinated against COVID-19 would be at risk of HIV infection (Bolsonaro, 2022).

The authorities' behavior seemed to encourage ordinary citizens to feel safe and protected in expressing their racism, misogyny, homophobia, denialism, and contempt for environmental preservation and civilizing attitudes, all under a very violent impetus. Among a practically infinite universe of dystopias that have marked Brazilian daily life in recent years, I mention these few examples to illustrate how astonished a large part of the population felt. Without a doubt, we were facing a project to destroy the world. In this project, audiovisuals became a vital disseminator of these intentions.

Thus, this article aims to present some purposes of audiovisual productions produced and disseminated in Brazil by segments aligned with far-right ideas, highlighting, in particular, the work *The Hidden Face of Feminism* (Our free translation from Portuguese). Such productions are not of interest here as artistic and aesthetic expressions in themselves since they aim to emulate effects that give them legitimizing appearances. As we know, a significant part of Brazilian society was attracted by the "siren song" of these statements, however wild they might have been. Therefore, it is crucial that we recognize in these works elements of the ideology that sustain them and, thus, identify them quickly, hoping that, as a result, the enchantment for them cools. However, to achieve this, it is necessary to follow a particular path to make more significant connections when arriving at the work.

Why should we familiarize with the far-right audiovisual works?

As indigestible as it is to face the barbarities of recent years, even more so without distancing, we have no alternative but to face them. The main symptom of fascist politics is the division of society between "us" and "them" (Stanley, 2020): who has not experienced this division in recent years in Brazil in the family, at work and school/university, in the condominium, or in friendship relationships?

Audiovisual works with fascist tones have spread at an unprecedented speed, only possible thanks to the facilitation provided by digital platform technology. Furthermore, these productions are fragmented into countless others, enhancing the messages in the many social interaction networks, which exponentially multiply the circulation in the form of small "pills". The more synthesized, the greater the range; a single catchphrase may be enough to meet the target audience's expectations, who, ignoring democratic precepts, festively superimposes fanatical emotion over intellectual argumentation. Hitler, in his book that still feeds hatred-based strategies,

already understood that the masses “had great power to forget” and taught that, therefore, “all effective propaganda must be limited to a very few points that must be highlighted in the form of slogans” (as cited in Stanley, 2020, p. 64). As we were quickly witnessing around us, fanatical emotion is a fundamental element for the uncritical acceptance of the content of these productions, however crude, illogical, or violent they may be. Marcia Tiburi (2015, p. 29) says that hatred is the most efficient way to destroy politics: “It is necessary to humiliate and demean people and populations, thus avoiding the realization of democracy, which proposes an inclusive society for all”.

If, on the one hand, talking about such audiovisual works can contribute to giving greater visibility to ideologically nefarious projects, disseminating perverse intentions, on the other hand, we cannot pretend that they do not exist and that they are not very much alive among us, spreading increasingly more and occupying new, virtual, and physical spaces. Ignoring these works will only delay the development of instruments to combat them. We cannot cover our eyes – by doing so, the problem will not disappear, and it will become increasingly difficult to face it.

When observing these audiovisual works, one is not indiscriminately defending the appeal to “freedom of expression”, believing that all viewpoints should be appreciated side by side. This is often the claim of its producers. However, it is not about opinion. Instead, it is a tactic that aims to naturalize the most senseless statements, making them similar to any other and, therefore, acceptable. One cannot use the same ruler in the face of crazy voices as if it were possible to believe that all viewpoints should, without distinction, be heard. The repertoire of extremist statements is dry. They are driven by passion, which is characteristic of propaganda. They cannot, therefore, be equated with responsible and well-founded arguments at the risk of placing on the same scale statements that, for example, ensure that “a woman was born to be a mother” and another that says that “you are not born a woman, you become a woman.”

The first example is a phrase based on religious belief, uttered as dogma by the Minister of Women, Family, and Human Rights shortly before taking office in 2019 (Minister, 2018). The second is Simone de Beauvoir’s most famous phrase, which was formulated based on extensive argumentation – and, even so, subject to criticism – inferring that there is no feminine essence, that “woman” is a category elaborated within the rules of society which, in turn, distributes roles per the interests of the patriarchy. Treating both phrases with the same attention would be equaling their value and accepting that the first is not a piece of antifeminist propaganda to convince

at all costs, imposing its “truth” without justification, and that, therefore, it becomes fruitless to debate it. However, this does not mean we should ignore the strategies, methods, and purpose of wild narratives in our current times.

Not talking about these works implies potentially more significant harm because the danger of stupid statements is that they become more trivial daily. The absurd ideas of these narratives precisely aim to lead to their trivialization, overcome through fatigue, make it seem normal what was previously an aberration or eccentric, and carry out the saying: “Water dripping day by day wears the hardest rock away”. Stanley (2020) discusses the increasing normalization of statements initially considered “extraordinary” by then-president Donald Trump (2017-2020), which, every day, began to cause less indignation. What normalization causes, as the author says, is the transformation of what is morally extraordinary into ordinary; that is, little by little, we begin to tolerate what was previously unthinkable, as if this were how things should always be and always were. Unfortunately, we have intensely experienced this trivialization in Brazil in recent years, when the most prominent aberrations were said and done daily. It became less and less strange each time.

The term “fascist” and the deconstruction project

Tiburi (2015, pp. 23-24) calls fascist “a prevalent psychopolitical type”, whose characteristic is to be politically poor, and this impoverishment is due to the loss of the “dialogue dimension” since it (dialogue) becomes impossible by losing the “dimension of the other”. The author says: “the fascist cannot relate to other dimensions that go beyond the absolute truths on which he established his way of being”. Until recently, it was common to hear objections when using the term “fascism” to designate certain behaviors on the part of Brazilian society. Such disputes sometimes referred to the historical imprecision of the name since it was limited to Italy in the first half of the 20th century; sometimes, they said that the term would be an exaggeration and disproportionate to the analogy with Mussolini’s ultranationalist ideology (Boito Jr, 2019). However, Stanley (2020) uses the term to refer to Trumpist politics and the then governments of countries such as Russia, Hungary, Poland, India, and Turkey.¹ The author is convinced that the exaggerated nuance that some attribute to the word is precisely due to the normalization with which fascist ideology has been nesting among us as if it were nothing more than spontaneous and innocent “freedom of expression”.

¹ Stanley’s book was initially published in 2018, so the Bolsonaro government could not join these countries yet.

Even assuming new characteristics throughout history and considering the particularities of each country's context, fascism continues to be an authoritarian model that radicalizes the desires of the conservative right, especially in escalating inequalities, and which revolves, preferably, around a charismatic leader, as Stanley says.

I identify with the urgency of such forcefulness and the certainty that we live in profound gravity, for which we must speak plainly. By taking this movement seriously, which is being orchestrated worldwide and has a strong foothold in Brazil, we will be able to scrutinize this deconstruction project and, thus, constantly affirm its abject nature and the need to fight it continuously. The deconstruction strategy is so conscious in the fascist project that Bolsonaro said he did not intend to build anything in the second month of his government. On the contrary, he said, "We have to deconstruct a lot, undo a lot, and then we can start doing" (as quoted in Marin, 2019).

In this sense, we should be accurate about the discourse that guides the apparent confusion of the extreme right's ideas, one of whose aims is to impose new "truths". Referring to the Bolsonaro context, Bignotto, Lago, and Starling (2022, p. 14) say that the method of destruction adopted by the then government uses several tools. One of them is language, which, in the case of its most significant representative, is "truculent, the sentences are poorly articulated, and the repertoire is limited"; the President says the same thing repeatedly, expanding the volume and considering every dissenter an enemy, thus starting to insult him. Heloísa Starling (2022, pp. 90-91) says that Bolsonaro's topics are

communicated without room for fact-checking or disagreement - as well as insisting on the close connection with God that serves as his signature. Its discursive matrix does not depend on reflection, nor does it include a method of thought. It is emotional. It spreads through society via a circuit of recurring sentiments that call for political engagement, destroy what remains of public space, and pollute private relationships. Bolsonaro's language – Bolsonarism – spreads very quickly in Brazil. It is transmitted by sad affections such as resentment, nostalgia, intransigence, and threats.

Even considering the singularities of the Brazilian President, we can observe similarities with the audiovisual productions I am highlighting in this article, notably the repeated presence of ideological elements that revolve around particular themes, such as two of his most obstinate inventions: "cultural Marxism" and "gender ideology".

Background to the fascist discourse among us

We have been overwhelmed by the reality of recent years. However, the strategies of fascist ideology are present today and have also been present in other historical periods, such as Brazil and other countries.

What may seem new to some was, in fact, already extremely troubling for Maria Lacerda de Moura, who authored several books in the 1930s warning of the danger of fascism. She was referring to both Italy and Brazil with its then emerging integralist movement, as can be seen, for example, when she says, "Waving the strings of this macabre guignol of fascism, racism, and soon – integralism – is the clergy of all times (...)" (Moura, 2012, p. 14).

An important example of Brazilian audiovisual production with a solid ideological bias is the Social Research and Studies Institute (IPES), which, according to Cardenuto (2009), was created by the country's business elite, frightened by the threat of communism after the Cuban Revolution in 1959. The institute was officially founded in 1962 and became strategic in articulating and financing the military coup that would take place two years later. The IPES aimed to present Brazilian issues and propose liberal solutions, with the legal façade of a mere agent participating in national politics while surreptitiously acting in Congress in order to halt the progress of left-wing proposals while agitating society against Jango's Government, which they considered to be aligned with communism, according to Cardenuto (2009, p. 62), who says that at first:

With the support of several media owners and directors or prominent men in the press, the IPES disseminated doctrinal news or propaganda, without necessarily presenting its name, on several television and radio stations, in national newspapers and magazines, and through plays and films.

In the second stage, the IPES abandoned its legalistic tone, escalating the military's preparations against the Presidency, assuming that the media should warn the population about the risk of communism and that, to avoid the threat, it would be worth imposing a new government, even if by force, increasing the fear of leftism, Cardenuto says.

According to Denise Assis (2001, pp. 21-2), since it was founded, the institute has had headquarters at prime addresses in Rio de Janeiro (Avenida Rio Branco) and São Paulo (Avenida Brigadeiro Luiz Antônio) and then expanded its activities to Porto Alegre, Santos, and Belo Horizonte. It had four rooms in Rio de Janeiro alone, where documents, seminars, and films were produced to influence segments in companies,

unions, and student unions towards the idea of a parallel government that would soon replace that of President João Goulart. The author also argues that this massive and scientifically elaborated propaganda paved the way for Jango's downfall, which would result in the civil-military dictatorship of 1964-1985.

IPES produced 15 films between 1962 and 1963, the principal director of which was Jean Manzon, along with Carlos Niemeyer. In analyzing the films, Cardenuto highlights the ideological propaganda character of some, using demagogic and totalizing readings; in another, education was approached as a pragmatic notion, preparing for the job market and liberalism; in another, the dishonest association between Nazism and communism; in others, the propagation of fear of leftism and the feeding of the anti-communist imaginary. Cardenuto (2009, p. 72) draws attention to the proximity between IPES productions and the political propaganda in the United States after the Second World War when they produced many anti-communist short films. The author also points out that the institute's films were shown on several television channels.²

It is crucial to bring up Steven Bannon, known to us for mentoring Donald Trump's strategies in the United States and becoming a sort of advisor to the Bolsonaro clan. However, Bannon's lesser-known but revealing facet is his time in the movie business. He was a Hollywood producer in the 1990s and dedicated the following decades to directing and writing conservative documentaries. From the synopses of these films³, we can see that they address topics such as the rise of the Tea Party, a 2009 movement that is said to be the origin of the new global right (*Generation Zero*, 2010; *Occupy Unmasked*, 2012)⁴; allegations of corruption by the Obama administration and the Clinton Foundation (*District of Corruption*, 2012; *Clinton Cash*, 2016); conservative women leaders (*Fire from the Heartland*, 2010); Christianity, the Bible, and culture war (*Torchbearer*, 2016). In a short video that analyzes three of Bannon's films, the author concludes by saying that Bannon calls for a war in this highlighted trilogy, but not one similar to those in Vietnam and Iraq, but one that "resets the whole world".⁵

² IPES was not an isolated case in the country's history. Several institutes with similar purposes are operational, publishing books, promoting training courses, and having a YouTube channel, although audiovisual production is not central.

³ Synopses of Bannon's audiovisual productions can be seen at https://www-thewrap-com.translate.goog/steve-bannon-movies-shows-wrote-directed-produced/?_x_tr_sl=en&_x_tr_tl=pt&_x_tr_hl=pt-BR&_x_tr_pto=wapp. Access on Nov. 15, 2022.

⁴ For the Tea Party and its influence on the new Brazilian right, see Delcourt, 2016.

⁵ The video is *The Film of Steve Bannon* by Adam Frelander. Available on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulgOc4kyprQ>.

The relationship between Bannon's tactic of creating audiovisual works with controversial interpretations and the rise of audiovisual works in Brazil, especially by the *Brasil Paralelo* production company, which we will discuss later, should be looked at more closely. However, from the outset, we can see similarities in both projects' themes and the activist purpose.

Films with dark ideological messages are nothing new in history. However, the originality of the most recent works lies in the wide dissemination facilitated by the intermediation of social networks, as we have already mentioned, which expands the reach at breakneck speed. Jenkins, Green, and Ford (2015) say that the media landscape is reshaped when people share the countless media texts they receive daily on many platforms. Instead of distributing these media contents, as printed newspapers did (and still do), for example, which have a small number of producers who create finite products for the masses, these contents now circulate driven by the public, who are no longer just consumers of ready-made messages, but people who "shape, share, reconfigure, and remix content", in the words of the authors. It is precisely digital platforms that offer tools for these actions informally and instantaneously.

So, while the IPES propagated its bad faith campaign in companies, unions, student unions, and on television in the early 1960s, today it seems naive to limit these boundaries since, beyond these physical spaces and many others such as churches, the dissemination of ideas in the virtual environment is practically infinite, expanding in geometric progression, promoted by countless creators.

Recurring features of the fascist project

We can summarize some characteristics of recurring fascist politics reflected in audiovisual works, such as:

A) Promoting anti-intellectualism, with frequent attacks, especially on universities, and disparaging knowledge deriving from scientific research while seeking to occupy this space with their creative realities modeled solely on their desires (Stanley, 2020).

B) Selecting "communism" as the central enemy and that, in 21st century Brazil, the delusional strand of "cultural Marxism" was imported from the United States by the astrologer Olavo de Carvalho, who blames communism for contemporary ills, such as the fanciful "gender ideology" and the "insatiable" rights claimed by identity groups such as Black people, Indigenous, women, and LGBTQIA+ people (Castro Rocha, 2021).

C) Believing in conspiracy theories, which cast suspicion on enemy targets, as in the case of Brazil today, where the idea that the left encourages homosexuality in

schools allegedly circulates. These theories do not need to be well-founded; they have to feed “irrational emotions” and only make sense because they comfort fears, resentments, and prejudice (Castro Rocha & Bignotto, 2021, 2022).

D) Summoning a mythical past, which invents a glorious past, unjustly destroyed, without mentioning any obscure hue (Stanley, 2020), as can be seen in the Brazilian context by exalting the civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985).

E) Seeking economic compensation to sustain the support of the masses seduced by fascist premises (Bignotto, 2022). Regarding the media universe, this compensation comes from the economic market that revolves around ideology and feeds it. Works produced by media networks, audiovisual producers, and book publishers, which advertise themselves as journalistic, cultural, or educational, are broadcast on traditional media such as radio, television, books, magazines, and newspapers, but above all, on the internet through large platforms and social networks, with a not insignificant financial return.

F) Showing fondness for authoritarianism, which generates an impoverished language, interrupting dialogue and the subsequent emergence of violence (Tiburi, 2015). Also, in the media universe, we can think of countless examples in which there is no room for divergence in the works produced, and consequently, the arguments tend to converge in one place.

G) Showing strong delimitation of gender roles, which preaches the patriarchal family as the ideal to aspire to (Stanley, 2020).

Noteworthy is that gender roles – and religion – are overly present in far-right audiovisual works. The patriarchal family is an ideal of the fascist project. Stanley (2020) argues that the centrality of patriarchy in fascist politics is due to the analogy that can be made between the father of the patriarchal family and the leader of the nation, both providers who act under a strong authoritarian hierarchy. The author, exemplifying the actions of Nazi Germany, which, through its propaganda department, preached that women’s greatest vocation was to be mothers and that their role was to raise children for the country, warns that these ideals have been revived in recent years in some countries.

Audiovisual works

Most of the audiovisual works produced by the far-right in recent years are labeled “documentaries”, but they are more like propaganda films, which is nothing new, as we have already seen in the case of IPES in Brazil. Nazi propaganda films are

just as well known. Both these and the IPES films share the election of a well-defined main enemy – in the Brazilian case, the communist threat; in the German case, the Jewish people. These works are propaganda pieces. They serve an ideology, exalt the side that interests them, and defenestrate their enemies with lies and inaccuracies to influence public opinion without giving them room for other viewpoints. Of course, propaganda exists to convince and is, therefore, not necessarily evil. The problem is when propaganda is combined with the “creation” of realities and facts or distorts them. You should not expect them to be obvious and blatantly pamphleteering, although they often are. In order to disguise the intention of an ideological campaign, these works aim for effects that can give them credibility.

Labeling the work as a “documentary” is one way of legitimizing it. Using respondents who speak as authorities on the subject, even if their backgrounds are seldom compatible, is another. This strategy is also a way of combating intellectualism: it is implied that anyone can say anything on any subject, not valuing specialized knowledge. In this sense, the names of businessmen, lawyers, musicians, athletes, and priests are printed alongside journalists and professors, generally unimpressive in the real world or the academic community, so that they can make definitive statements on a variety of topics – e.g., history, politics, and feminism.

Nevertheless – and this is very important – the works keep some appearances that may give them respect at first glance, such as what I call effects: expert effect, authority effect, framing effect, and traditional documentary effect. In other words, the works disguise their propaganda by interviewing supposed experts who, regardless of what they say, give the appearance of authority under the “good photography” fit and other practices typical of disciplined documentaries. Besides these effects, we underscore other characteristics, as I will do below, primarily by looking at a *Brasil Paralelo* production.

The production company *Brasil Paralelo* was founded in 2016, and according to IstoÉ Dinheiro, its turnover was 70 million reais, and it had 280,000 subscribers (Cilo, 2022) in 2021. The company has created its streaming platform but extensively uses YouTube to reach audiences beyond subscribers. Furthermore, in a non-transparent way, it has gained a foothold in the Ministry of Education, having broadcast some of its content on TV Escola (Balestro & Pereira, 2020, pp. 332-3).

The company has dozens of titles, as seen on its website. It makes full use of digital platform technologies to promote its releases. Each release usually produces

many other works, such as lives, interviews, and sketches, to promote and attract new subscribers and floods social networks with advertisements.

The producers of these works assume that most of the public does not know the subjects being covered. As such, the effects with which the information is transmitted are more critical than the content itself. The work *The Hidden Face of Feminism* (2022, our free translation from Portuguese), a self-titled documentary by *Brasil Paralelo*, which is only available to subscribers, shows this.

With well-photographed respondents, appearing to be authorities on the subject, and with good sound treatment, the film says that Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), called the "proto-feminist", believed that "men were naturally superior to women". However, as we know, the exact opposite is true: Wollstonecraft said that women were not naturally inferior to men; they seemed to be because they lacked education. The film alternates between truths and untruths and, in the end, sketches out a confusing discourse constructed through narration and testimonies, which are taken in rapid succession in a frenetic editing process, with no time for assimilation or reflection. The film aims to reveal feminism's "hidden face" and is directed by a man. The testimonies are from men and women alike, although the arguments of the well-known antifeminist activist Ana Campagnolo, author of the book "*Feminism: Perversion and Subversion*" (Our free translation from Portuguese), a best-seller that freely distorts assumptions made by feminist theorists decades ago, predominate.

A relevant aspect of *The Hidden Face of Feminism* is the simplification of its conclusions. Leaving the discussion of Wollstonecraft's work in the background, the arguments that dismiss the author fall back on biographical elements. Thus, the author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) has allegedly had an "unstable family environment"; she explains that "her father drank a lot and ended up losing much money"; and that – now in the voice of Campagnolo

She [Wollstonecraft] had a love affair with a guy who did not believe in marriage. He got her pregnant and then abandoned her with a child for her to raise on her own – she experienced for herself the thesis that marriage was bad for women and oppressive. However, with no marriage and no husband, Mary had to endure hardship, cold, and hunger with this child.

Thus, it is candidly taught that Wollstonecraft was punished for not valuing marriage, without mentioning the absence of any rights, especially economic ones, that women in that society had. Then, the film informs us that the writer died giving birth to

her daughter, Mary Shelley, and then makes a burlesque psychologizing deduction, which would explain Shelley's supposedly sick mind, which would become the author of "Frankenstein". Says one respondent: "Your mother dies giving birth to you; your mother is known for her writings; you read that your mother hated motherhood: imagine the burden you are bearing". That is all! It is as if everything is now clear: with such a maternal heritage, the daughter could not be healthy.

Through an animation, "Frankenstein" permeates the work from the beginning and would be a metaphor for the argument of *The Hidden Face of Feminism*, which, with confusing twists and turns, tells the story of the monster created in a laboratory in order to associate it with feminism itself. According to the film's argument, the rights demanded by the movement are contrary to the "feminine nature" itself. The narration says, when linking Frankenstein to feminism, "The insistence on overcoming nature, projected onto a misunderstood being, created by a patriarch who does not get his place in society, would be taken up throughout the history of the feminist movement".

As we have seen, the antifeminist propaganda in this film is evident in the criticism of the pioneer of feminism, which is always moral, linking feminists to depravity, unhappiness, tragedy, and perversion. By associating women who demand rights "against their nature" with a misunderstood monster, the film leads the audience, who are receiving dozens of entirely new pieces of information since they have indeed never studied women's history, to be convinced that feminism is an aberration and belongs to disturbed women. The film proposes revisions to current theories without presenting any methodological path that would authorize it, starting purely from the opinion – or desire – of the subject making the claim. Right at the start of *The Hidden Face of Feminism*, the narration casts doubt on the real intentions of feminism in a conspiratorial tone:

There is no space in a culture that escapes feminism. Its ideas influence films, books, and music and shape public debates. This strong presence in the direction of society divides opinion. It puts the truth about the movement in dispute: is it a struggle for equality between men and women or a political articulation with hidden intentions?

This tone of suspicion seeks to discredit knowledge built up over many decades by social movements and academic research, inviting the target audience to now join in revealing the absolute "truth". As suggested by the film's assumption, the audience will likely come to see themselves as victims of organized persecution and now have

the opportunity to confront these ideas, even if the arguments presented are simplistic or incoherent. What matters, after all, is that their fears and prejudices are comforted, and they begin to feel integrated into that group.

Sometimes, works of this type refer to authors of various stripes, as different as, for example, Olavo de Carvalho and George Orwell, placing them side by side. In doing so, they seek to distance themselves from the radical and unhinged tones represented by the first author while appearing erudite and in tune with the second. Another strategy is to use criticism they commonly receive and transfer it to the enemy. A good example that combines these two strategies is in an excerpt from the live launch of *The Hidden Face of Feminism*, in which a “judge and professor”, Ludmila Lins, mentions a so-called “contradictory stimulation technique”, which she says she learned from Olavo de Carvalho and translates it into the feminist context, saying that feminism is used as “a form of manipulation to control the masses, more specifically women”, causing “their intelligence to be totally degenerated” since “they are forced to defend contradictory things”. Furthermore, paying tribute to her mentor, she continues: “Professor Olavo explains the consequence of this: when intelligence is destroyed at this level, you are ready to obey any command”. The live presenter then says that George Orwell named this doublethink and emphatically recommends reading “1984” for the dystopia it brings, naturally implying that dystopia comes from the feminist movement and not from her interpretation of it.⁶

Final considerations

This article aimed to highlight the need to confront audiovisual works aligned with the far-right discourse, primarily considering the results they can achieve by spreading dangerously in a society like Brazil’s – so unequal, economically and culturally, with huge territory and population. One must also consider the still insufficiently known effect of the speed and high dissemination of messages conveyed by social networks on people’s behavior, specifically when they have the peculiarity of segregating groups, which isolate themselves, believing only in the truths circulating there.

Knowing the method of these films, their characteristics, language, where they circulate, and understanding which discourses they serve, as I have tried to do,

⁶ This excerpt can be seen at approximately 1:13:03 of the live “What do feminists want? Day 1 – Special Live”. Available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fctbkUtNvkE&t=2031s>. Access on Oct. 20, 2022.

especially by highlighting one of these works, is fundamental if fascist projects that echo from time to time are to be recognized and smashed right in the bud. The Brazilian 2019-2022 period should never be treated as the past but as a constantly latent threat in our surroundings. It seems imperative to keep this subject alive in communication at all times. This is what so many events that have erupted in the contemporary world are telling us as they rekindle their authoritarian flames.

Fake news has piqued the interest of scholars for decades. As early as 1921, historian Marc Bloch wrote *"Reflections of a Historian on the False News of War"*, referring to his experience as a combatant in the French army during World War I. It is worth noting what he says about fake news:

The error propagates itself, grows, and ultimately survives only on one condition – that it finds a favorable cultural broth in the society where it is spreading. Through it, people unconsciously express all their prejudices, hatreds, fears, all their strong emotions' (Bloch, 1995, p. 180).

This "favorable cultural broth" is exemplified by the historian recounting a fact in the infantry regiment he belonged to during the war. He says that false news is always born out of collective representations that preexist its birth; the only fortuitous thing about it is the initial incident, which will trigger the work of imaginations already fermenting. He recalls that in the final days of the retreat, a superior liar announced that the Russian Allies were bombing the enemy Germany. Faced with this "seductive image", even though he felt it was absurd, Bloch did not dare to reject it: "It was too pleasant for a depressed spirit in a tired body to have the strength not to accept it. Methodical doubt is usually a sign of good mental health, so harried soldiers with troubled hearts could not practice it" (Bloch, 1995, p. 192).

In other words, a society in which many people cannot apply the "methodical doubt" referred to by Bloch and which uncritically subscribes to the most absurd untruths is mentally disoriented. One of the ways that some countries have chosen to address the threat of similar situations is to keep talking about it, remembering that lies and nonsense should not be treated as normal.

Post-World War II Germany is a well-known example of how to address the history of Nazism with the new generations, affirming that history is still alive and harshly disapproving of demonstrations in its favor. Another strong, very current example that attests to the urgency of addressing the consequences of radical ideologies and their conspiracy theories is the case of Norway, which, in 2022,

published a textbook for students around 15 years old dealing with contemporary historical examples. Bolsonaro's place in the book is guaranteed. He is portrayed as "one of the biggest deniers of the COVID-19 pandemic in the world", with the right to highlight phrases he has uttered, as if warning Norwegian students that such attitudes are unacceptable and should be treated as scandalous. The book's publisher says that the Brazilian President "is an example of a leader who went against his health authorities, and we want students to reflect on the effects of this" (as quoted in Augusto, 2022).

Knowing, pointing out, discerning, unmasking, and denouncing the characteristics of the actions of the extreme right, especially in audiovisual media, will be decisive for our future.

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RESUMO:

O Brasil dos últimos anos tem revelado ideias extravagantes, desde contestação de saberes científicos consagrados a pedidos de volta da ditadura e revisões históricas. Nessa “política da destruição”, o audiovisual tem se tornado importante difusor desses propósitos. Surgem, por exemplo, obras audiovisuais que buscam deslegitimar saberes constituídos ao longo de décadas. Este artigo discute antecedentes desse discurso no país, sintetiza algumas recorrências dele e observa com mais detalhe uma dessas obras, defendendo que conhecer estratégias e método da política fascista é urgente e será determinante para nosso futuro.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Audiovisual; Extrema direita; Fascismo; Filme de propaganda.

RESUMEN:

Brasil en los últimos años ha revelado ideas extravagantes, que van desde la impugnación del conocimiento científico hasta los pedidos de retorno de la dictadura y las revisiones históricas. En esta “política de destrucción”, el audiovisual se ha convertido en un importante difusor de estos fines. Aparecen obras audiovisuales, por ejemplo, que buscan deslegitimar conocimientos constituidos a lo largo de décadas. Este artículo discute los antecedentes de este discurso en el país, sintetiza algunas de sus recurrencias y observa con más detalle una de estas obras, argumentando que conocer las estrategias y métodos de la política fascista es urgente y será decisivo para nuestro futuro.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Audiovisual, Extrema derecha, Fascismo, Cine propagandístico.