

Honest, impolite, and wicked: an analysis of telenovela character fan pages

Sinceros, indelicados y venenosos: un análisis en fanpages de personajes de telenovelas

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Abstract

It is noticeable an increase in the number of *fanpages* creating their own identity based upon Brazilian *telenovelas'* characters. Even more, most of them posts image macro format. Such image macro format is a pattern widely associated to the phenomenon of memes on Internet. This article argues that content producers strategically operate and display the language of memes to encourage their followers commitment. To understand such process, we map and analyze the content of the five-page publications, trying to identify whether there is a strategy explicitly involved and whether the contents are linked to the *telenovela's plot*. The study found out that pages frequently change their structure and generally deploy a type of humor targeting people's daily lives. This practice points to the different ways in which the *telenovela*, a television product widely consumed in Latin America, is appropriated and used in the making of content circulated online.

Keywords: *telenovelas*; character pages; humor; memes; image macro.

Resumen

Es posible observar un aumento en el número de *fanpages* que crean personas a partir de personajes de telenovelas brasileñas. Es más, la mayoría de ellos publican *image macro*, patrón de imagen asociado al fenómeno de los memes de Internet. Este artículo argumenta que los productores de contenido operan y despliegan estratégicamente el lenguaje de los memes para movilizar el compromiso de sus seguidores. Por lo tanto, mapeamos y analizamos el contenido de las publicaciones de cinco páginas, tratamos de identificar si hay una estrategia explícita involucrada y si los contenidos están relacionados con la trama de la telenovela en los que se inspiran. El estudio constata que las páginas modifican su estructura frecuentemente y que sus contenidos usan generalmente un humor dirigido a la vida cotidiana. Esta práctica destaca las diferentes formas en que la telenovela, un producto ampliamente consumido en América Latina, es adecuada para crear contenido circulado *online*.

Palabras clave: telenovelas; páginas de personajes; humor; memes; *image macro*.

1. Introduction

In 2013, publications of *Felix Bicha Má*¹ went viral on Facebook. With over 3 million likes, the page was inspired by the character Félix (Matheus Solano), a villain on the soap opera *Amor à Vida* (TV Globo, 2013). The posts were memes with funny captions seeking to reproduce the character's brand of comedy: a gay man that won the love of audiences by always having a sarcastic comeback or comment. During that same period, the webpage *Carminha Perturbada*² regularly shared similar posts with its following, using character traits inherent to the villain from the soap opera, *Avenida Brasil* (TV Globo, 2012), played by Adriana Esteves.

Felix Bicha Má and *Carminha Perturbada* aren't alone. In fact, they are a part of a growing movement that has taken shape in recent years, where content creators appropriate fictional characters, or real people, and develop their own version of these well-known figures, usually for comedic purposes (Chagas, 2018). What captures one's attention, is that by observing an innumerable amount of characters taken from soap operas, one can identify a shared set of characteristics in these posts, using the following formula: (1) a photograph of the actor or actress interpreting the character (2) superimposed with a caption, generally in white font. The format, known as an *image macro*, is stylistically recognizable from other formats and became popular in the 2000s among online sub-cultural communities (Davison, 2012); however, in the following decade, they became popular and recognizable among mainstream consumers and audiences (Phillips, 2015).

The present article analyzes how, in this scenario, soap opera character pages are structured, and what strategies they use to publish content. What characters do they feature? What is the life-cycle for these pages? And how do image macros relate to soap operas? To answer these questions, we adopted a qualitative approach, combining observations of the pages in question and content analysis of the same pages (Krippendorff, 2004; Amaral & Santos, 2012). The process was divided into three stages, executed between October and December of 2018. First, we mapped the character pages created on Facebook.

From that map, we determined which were the five most relevant pages based on the number of likes, and the frequency of posting. Lastly, the posts made on these profiles during the research period were analyzed to identify the creators' esthetic and textual patterns.

It is of little relevance to discuss if the posts are in fact, memes. It is difficult to find a consensus on what parameters should be used to classify cultural phenomena as memes. In fact, researchers from varying fields have tried for years to define the concept. Many of them even distinguish different characteristics (Dawkins, 1976; Shifman, 2014). The previous notwithstanding, in general, memes are understood to be pieces speedily distributed on the internet that are almost always comedic in nature (Shifman, 2014; Knobel & Lankshear, 2007). In the last two decades they have been increasingly discussed to determine their relevance in mainstream spaces (Phillips, 2015).

The present study argues that pages centered on soap opera characters offer multiple analysis perspectives for contemporary media contexts. In a scenario marked by audience fragmentation (Lotz, 2007), the proliferation of these profiles denotes the influence television still exerts in Brazil, especially free broadcast television channels. Mass produced and broadcast in primetime television slots on several television stations around the country, the soap opera still has a privileged place in the day-to-day lives of Brazilian audiences.

At the same time, the profiles in question point to cases of how ordinary subjects appropriate, decontextualize, and remodel elements of mass culture to create their own products. Despite the previous, we contend that the resulting remixes are not random. Soap opera character page administrators are strategic in how they create their posts, presenting esthetic and colloquial discursive patterns generally recognizable as memes, especially image macros. Even if it is an intuitive process, they still fabricate characters and intentionally invert language to increase page engagement, fully aware that the success of a post can be enough to go viral.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Reception and Consumption of Soap Operas

Without doubt, the soap opera is the most significant of television formats in Latin America (Matterlart & Matterlart, 1990). In Brazil, soap opera productions have been produced and been successful since the 1950s, and their development has kept pace with the development of the TV industry (Mazzotti, 2006). These fictional series are currently broadcast on the main free Brazilian TV networks. On TV Globo, the broadcaster linked to the largest media conglomerate in Brazil³, soap operas are televised every day in primetime television timeslots, and still lead audience ratings. In 2018, of the ten most watched programs, seven were soap operas, and all of them TV Globo productions (Lopes & Lemos, 2019).

Over the years Brazilian soap operas have undergone several transformations, changing their main characteristics, especially where subject matter is concerned (Silva, 2012, p.168). According to Martín-Barbero and Rey (2011), unlike the traditional model used in Venezuelan and Mexican television productions —where tragedy and melodrama are prevalent—the Brazilian mold was built on the more modern structure of the late 1960s. In the latter, productions regularly insert realistic characteristics, present quotidian elements in the narrative, and hybridized products combining elements of cinema, publicity and videoclips are common.

There are also differences in how characters are built. Soap opera characters are built on archetypes and molded with a set stigma or sign, easily identifiable binary tropes where the protagonist is naturally a nice person, and the villain entirely evil (Meirelles). However, in the modern model, characters “are liberated, to some measure, from the weight of destiny and, distanced from major symbols, are closer to ordinary routines and the ambiguity of history” (Martín-Barbero and Rey, 2011, p. 121). According to Meirelles (2008, p. 10), one of the reasons for the great variety of characters on display, mainly feminine, is that young, middle-

class female audiences no longer identify with the typically portrayed protagonist.

However, to talk of identifying with characters is complicated. Watching television has never been a homogenous experience, much less passive (Lopes, 2009), which means that audiences are at all times negotiating how they interpret what they see based on their own subjectivity, their socio-economic background and historical-cultural context (Hall, 2003). Far from trying to approach reception solely from a perspective of resistance (Sandvoss, 2013), having the key to identification would help to observe how different people manage to see and build parallels between the narratives they watch and their own lives (And, 1991).

That is why it is no accident that the pages analyzed in this study use characters from this type of fiction for their posts. In an interview with the website *#MUSEUdeMEMES*, in particular the administrators for the webpage *Atena Irônica*⁴, they say they had two reasons to create the profile. Both were fans of Giovanna Antonelli, the actress playing to the role of *Atena* in *A Regra do Jogo* (TV Globo, 2015 – 2016). At the same time, they were also both aware the actress would be in a new soap opera, and that the character would provide some comic relief. Prior to that character, the page was dedicated to *Delegada Helô*, another character played by Giovanna in the soap opera *Salve Jorge* (TV Globo, 2012 – 2013). With everything they did, and despite the considerable success of the fan page, the profile lost ground in likes once the television production had ended.

After two years we had almost 50 thousand “dislikes”. (...) When we heard about her character in the new soap opera, her “devious villain”, we knew there would be a certain level of irony involved, so we went back to the web page, and changed the name to the new character. (#MUSEUdeMEMES, 2016.

Fan pages for soap opera characters like *Atena Irônica* serve to illustrate the type of production found among fan page content creators (Fiske, 1992; Jenkins, 2006), and still other more professional creators looking for an opportunity for success. As a result, new concepts also appeared as a means to define user-generated content, terms

such as prosumer and producer. According to Fuchs (2017) in the end, these productions are only useful in the sense that the people creating them work for free and generate content and data for large companies. However, although there isn't necessarily any financial return on investment, these practices are not naive individual ventures given that other forms of capital come together in the process.

2.2 The Language of Memes

The global [actress] told us (...) some of the funny moments she experienced. "The other day I walked past some kids playing football and they said: "Look, that's the woman from the memes". I've had a career spanning over fifty years, I worked my entire life to become "the woman from the memes". But I still love it" (Almeida, 2017).

In 2016, a scene with the villain from the soap opera *Senhora do Destino* (TV Globo, 2004), Nazaré Tedesco (Renata Sorrah), began circulating all over the world. Called "*Confused Math Lady*"⁵, the meme consists of a GIF or frames that present the character with a look of complete perplexity with a set of superimposed math formulas. In Brazil it was translated to "*Nazaré Confusa*" and is a perfect example on how to present a hyperbole of confused reactions. Beyond simply converting the actress Renata Sorrah into an international meme, the fact that the Brazilians themselves recognize it as a "meme" points to the popularity the concept has gained in recent years.

The previous notwithstanding, despite memes currently enjoying a surge in popularity in the last few years (or maybe, because of the same), the definition of the concept continues to be somewhat vague. When Dawkins (1976) first created the concept, he described them as units of reproduction responsible for transmitting cultural elements within a society. In the following decades, the concept was the subject of debate in several areas of academia (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007; Recuero, 2007), which resulted in multiple perspectives on how to define the phenomena.

For Chagas (2020), the current differences in the field of meme studies and memetics is essential to reflecting on the concept itself, which is what is intended with this article. Memetics is defined as a discipline that studies memes and their connection to the hosts of said memes, in other words, the replication, distribution and evolution of memes as a cultural repertoire. Shifman (2014) and Chagas (2016, 2018, 2020) focus their research efforts on studies that define memes as a category of creative endeavor and exchange in digital media.

Shifman (2014) states that it is more productive to view memes not as isolated pieces but as a material collection that shares esthetic and/or discursive traits, a collection that gradually transforms into a "shared social phenomenon" (p.18). In the same manner Chagas (2016) argues that every meme is an expression of cultural heritage that can only be analyzed within an entire set of memes. In isolation, the scene depicting the infamous villain from *Senhora do Destino* is only one archival entry, but when comparing this piece with the several different media formats circulating online, it can be defined as the meme *Confused Math Lady*.

In this context, the image macro is currently one of the best-known formats. In *The Language of Internet Memes* (2012), Davison describes image macros as "a set of stylistic rules for adding text to images" (p.127). Among the many diverse types of memes, the author presents the *Advice Dog*, developed within the *4chan* community. More than just a simple pattern of images, they are structured based on codes shared by members of the same community: the image of a dog next to two lines of text that express advice in an ironic, aggressive or offensive tone.

In this process, developing templates becomes a central tool that can be separated into content and structure (Rintel, 2013, p. 256) where said templates change over time in response to the users' many combinations of material during the creative phase of the process. It therefore is the result of a double process: whilst bringing to light personal problems, they also represent collective voices or opinions (Milher, 2016). The templates are part of a repertoire of socially constructed shared expression: "They create a binding structure for ex-

pression, while directing its range of possibilities” (Nissenbaum & Shifman, 2018, p.3).

If in academia the definition of meme was in dispute, common sense made the discussion even more deliberate and it is notable how this line of research is largely affected by the superimposed text. Colloquially seen as a frivolous internet phenomenon (Milner, 2016), the concept gained traction and popularity in the last few years. However, the definition is often simply associated with funny images⁶ created via some form of digital manipulation (Davison, 2012).

The inflection point came about at the start of the following decade, when the discourse around memes left rigid/strict communities and crossed over to networks configured under the prevalent logic. One must mention the contribution of web portals dedicated to cataloguing the innumerable memes that appear on a daily basis such as *Meme Generator*, which provides practical assistance in “creating” memes (Milner, 2016). However, Phillips (2015, p. 140) points out that one of the main reasons for the transfer was the proliferation of university pages on Facebook that appropriated consolidated memes and modified them to identify with the institution’s local context, not always honoring the original meaning of the chosen elements of the meme.

As a result, what we see today is that some of the formats are more easily understood as memes, as is the case with image macros. In Brazil, the movement also feeds off of profiles like *Chapolin Sincero* which garnered a large number of followers. The page was based on the protagonist of the Mexican comedy Chapolin (Televisa, 1973-1979), which was broadcast in Brazil for decades. In the same vein as soap opera character fan pages, they create characters with their personality and dedicate their time to sharing content, especially image macros (Davison, 2012; Chagas, 2018).

In this sense memes are present both in everyday conversation and media interactions (Martino & Grohmann, 2017, p, 26). This is evident when faced with fabricated material media companies call memes. For example, the segment *Iso a Globo Não Mostra* on the entertainment program *Fantástico* (TV Globo, 1973 – to date) is intense in

its use of image macro esthetics. It is an example of the prominent corporate investment in creating material that is closely associated with the language of memes. At the same time one can also observe the continuing existence of non-celebrity, non-media or communications related creators that also put into practice the codes associated with memes, which is the case of the administrators for soap opera character fan pages.

3. Methodological Framework

The present article delves into the strategies developed in soap opera character fan pages. Although there are similar profiles on other social networks such as Twitter, we chose to center our search and analysis on Facebook pages. Using Amaral and Santos (2012) analysis of fake profiles as reference, this study uses a qualitative approach consisting in the observation of profiles and content produced by said profiles. Starting with the aforementioned decision, our methodology for analysis was developed over three different stages

Between October and December of 2018, we chose, reviewed, and coded Facebook pages. Mapping criteria centered on pages dedicated to characters or groups of characters originally appearing in soap operas. In this stage we applied a snowball sampling strategy: for every new object we found, we identified and analyzed all their followers to find similar pages to add to our map. We used this method until the sample reached saturation point. In the beginning we searched Facebook for the central characters in each soap opera. In this same sequence we then expanded our mapping to include all mentions of the characters featured in our research, with all the additional information collected in “Related pages”.

The results included characters considered central to soap operas shown on Brazilian free broadcast television in 2017 and 2018, but also took into consideration older pages dedicated to soap operas as they appeared in the search and mapping stage. We ultimately identified 99 pages, dedicated to 22 different characters.

We then classified the profiles according to number of followers and level of activity during the research period. Pages that registered no activity in the six months prior to our data collection were excluded. This meant the exclusion of profiles

such as *Félix Bicha Má* that had a considerable number of followers but was inactive. In this phase the results came down to 10 soap opera character pages with the greatest number of followers (Table 1), constituting the corpus for this study.

Table 1: Analyzed Character Pages

Page	Soap Opera	Likes
<i>Laureta Venenosa</i>	<i>Segundo Sol</i> (TV Globo, 2018)	1.812.525
<i>Sabiá Indelicado</i>	<i>A Força do Querer</i> (TV Globo, 2017)	1.801.808
<i>Bibi Perigosa</i>	<i>A Força do Querer</i> (TV Globo, 2017)	1.070.200
<i>Jeiza Sincera</i>	<i>A Força do Querer</i> (TV Globo, 2017)	763.058
<i>Sabiá Sincero</i>	<i>A Força do Querer</i> (TV Globo, 2017)	654.941
<i>Luz Autêntica</i>	<i>O Sétimo Guardião</i> (TV Globo, 2018)	601.861
<i>Jeiza Indelicada</i>	<i>A Força do Querer</i> (TV Globo, 2017)	524.518
<i>Laureta Perigosa</i>	<i>Segundo Sol</i> (TV Globo, 2018)	468.673
<i>Sabiá do Gueto</i>	<i>A Força do Querer</i> (TV Globo, 2017)	489.327
<i>Laureta Venenosa Oficial</i>	<i>Segundo Sol</i> (TV Globo, 2018)	168.867

Source: Own Elaboration

After defining what pages would be included in the analysis, we tabulated all the data related to the organization of the profile and posted content. The analysis, as proposed earlier, follows Krippendorff's (2004) widely used perspective for content analysis. The author would research different areas and identify—from the classification tabulation and validation of themes, keys and symbols—the probable effect of a certain issue. In contemporary society content analysis is performed on text, context, images, interface and information based on a pattern that allows the study to be replicated. At the same time, we were also inspired by Chagas's (2016) methodology, where the author looks to categorize memes according to function.

In the preliminary qualitative phase, we identified the most frequent meme content. During our research we found three main categories for meme themes in the analyzed pages. They are not mutually exclusive, meaning one image can have more than one characteristic:

1. Shared behavior or situation: images that speak to users' shared behaviors and on everyday situations;
2. Invitation to engage: images that involve public engagement, asking the user to share, like and/or comment;
3. A book of etiquette: images that express how followers should behave.

With regards to the format of the people/characters, each page was analyzed according to date of creation, as well as how many times the page name was changed, and what names were chosen. In regards to posts, we attempted to observe patterns to the images shared on these pages. Parallel to the previous all the data for each page was organized and compared to information on the soap opera the pages are based on in terms of narrative, the characters, and the period in which the program was produced.

4. Results

The elements taken from television programming are presented as clear indication for where to start with the research. First, the characters they choose do not seem to be chosen at random. In fact, there is a preference for characters in TV Globo soap operas. It is worth noting that the ten pages with most likes and engagement for productions aired during primetime for the network are: *A Força do Querer*, *Segundo Sol* and *O Sétimo Guardião*. The first two were the most watched soaps in Brazil in their respective television broadcast timeslot (Burney *et al.*, 2018; Lopes & Lemos, 2019). *O Sétimo Guardião* on the other hand had just started broadcasts at the time of our Facebook search and as a result, the fan pages were only just being created. The most explored characters are the protagonists, villains and other secondary characters that gain momentum during the course of the narrative, such as the character *Sabiá* (Jonathan Azevedo) in *A Força do Querer*. Although not the protagonist, *Sabiá* stood out story wise for being the right-hand man for the drug dealer Bibi Perigosa (Juliana

Paes). The strategies used to organize the pages are immediately apparent in the name. Almost all the profiles analyzed herein take their name from the character and combine it with an adjective, for example, *Laureta Venenosa* (Venemous Laureta) and *Luz Autêntica* (Authentic Luz).

In a certain fashion, the adjectives attached to the name seem to be chosen based on the role of the character: villains are venomous, vengeful and dangerous; while protagonists are sincere, authentic and ironic. However, one must clarify that the pages don't necessarily share the same psychological profile as the character on which they are based. As Chagas argues (2018), this type of cultural production in truth walks a fine line between a model of content creation with an attributed author, and one based on the appropriation of consolidated media objects.

Another aspect of interest was the historical changes made to the profiles of each page. Among the pages mapped for this study, only two have not been changed since their creation, as noted in **Table 2**. In contrast, the other eight were modified in different

Table 2: Brazilian Soap Opera Fan Page History on Facebook

Page	Date Created	History
<i>Laureta Venenosa</i>	17/05/2018	Name change – <i>Laureta Venenosa</i>
	29/11/2017	Page created – <i>Clara Venenosa</i>
<i>Sabiá Indelicado</i>	07/09/2017	Page created – <i>Sabiá Indelicado</i>
<i>Bibi Perigosa</i>	25/12/2017	Name change – <i>Bibi Perigosa</i>
	03/08/2017	Name change – <i>Clube da Perigosa</i>
	29/03/2017	Page created – <i>Bibi Perigosa</i>
<i>Jeiza Sincera</i>	17/07/2017	Page created – <i>Jeiza Sincera</i>
<i>Sabiá Sincero</i>	17/11/2017	Name change – <i>Sabiá Sincero</i>
	11/11/2017	Name change – <i>Sabiá Vida Sincero</i>
	10/09/2017	Name change – <i>Sabiá Vida Loka</i>
	14/03/2017	Page created – <i>Funkeiro Vida Loka</i>
<i>Luz Autêntica</i>	12/11/2018	Name change – <i>Luz Autêntica</i>
	24/05/2018	Name change – <i>Luzia Autêntica</i>
	17/10/2017	Page created – <i>Livia Autêntica</i>

[Continue...]

[...continuation]

Page	Data	Likes
<i>Jeiza Indelicada</i>	02/01/2018	Name change – <i>Jeiza Indelicada</i>
	25/12/2017	Name change – <i>Jeiza Indelicada</i>
	17/12/2017	Name change – <i>Jeiza Indelicada</i>
	21/11/2017	Name change – <i>Jeiza Indelicada Sincera</i>
	16/06/2017	Page created – <i>Jeiza Indelicada</i>
<i>Laureta Perigosa</i>	14/05/2018	Name change – <i>Laureta Perigosa</i>
	15/12/2017	Name change – <i>Clara Perigosa</i>
	20/11/2017	Name change – <i>Amiga Perigosa</i>
	31/10/2017	Name change – <i>Amiga otha isso</i>
	31/10/2017	Page created – <i>Poxa, Amiga</i>
<i>Sabiá do Gueto</i>	26/09/2017	Name change – <i>Sabia do Gueto</i>
	18/09/2017	Name change – <i>Sabiá da Favela</i>
	20/03/2017	Name change – <i>Baile de Favela</i>
	04/11/2014	Page created – <i>Baile do Final Feliz</i>
<i>Laureta Venenosa Oficial</i>	26/04/2018	Name change – <i>Laureta Venenosa Oficial</i>
	04/01/2018	Name change – <i>Laureta Venenosa</i>
	04/01/2018	Name change – <i>Catarina Venenosa</i>
	09/07/2017	Page created – <i>Mulher Maravilha Venenosa</i>

Source: Own Elaboration

ways. Pages like *Bibi Perigosa* and *Jeiza Indelicada*, despite changing names, basically maintained the same character over time. One must also call attention to movement in pages like *Laureta Venenosa* and *Luz Autêntica*, which changed names at the same time as another soap opera was about to start. The movement confirms the statements of the administrators of *Atena Irônica* mentioned earlier, about how change is in efforts to keep pace with television broadcasting and avoid losing followers.

In the same vein the existence of profiles created with another goal in mind, now dedicated to soap opera characters, is evident. The page *Laureta Perigosa*, for example started out as *Poxa, Amiga*, but two months later was already reorganized to become the character Clara (Bianca Gin), protagonist in the soap opera *O Outro Lado do Paraíso* (TV Globo 2017 – 2018). The page *Laureta Venenosa Oficial*, which from January 2018 began transi-

tioning to the villain played by Adriana Esteves in *Segundo Sol*, was created in July 2017 under the name *Mulher Maravilha Venenosa*, dedicated to the DC Comic superhero. Despite the intense switching between characters, they all seem to have the same tone. Of the ten pages analyzed herein, seven have kept the same adjective since their creation, which could indicate a certain identity to the profiles: Clara and Laureta are “venomous”; Lívia, Luzia and Luz are “authentic”.

For content, all the profiles post images inspired by the image macro format. The posts are made with photos of the actors that play the characters in each page, pictures taken from scenes in the soap operas, photo essays or other productions. Most use the same text style as the *Advice Animals*: Impactful font, with white fill and black outlines. However, although they may look esthetically similar, posts on soap opera fan pages have no established text structure. First, the classic ima-

ge macros had just a few lines and the comedy was generally based on contradictory statements (Davison, 2012, Milner, 2016). Therefore, the heading at the top of the image provides context for the joke, while the text at the bottom is the punchline. The previous notwithstanding, in the content posted on the analyzed profiles the captions differ dramatically in size and do not always have the same text formula, see **Figures 1 and 2**.

In fact, the evidence points to prioritizing text over image. This leads to question whether the content analyzed in this study really uses the language of memes, as they do not fully incorporate the characteristics of the classic macros. As Phillip argues (2015, p. 140), one of the consequences of the mass popularity of memes was the loss of stylistic rules shared by subcultural communities that first developed the format. However, memes are social pieces built by subjects through processes of both imitation and variation (Shifman, 2014). In other words, memes are “modifiable” over time and the stylistic rules that govern them are subject to change. In this manner, what one can see in these fan pages is a gratuitous appropriation of a widely recognized image format in digital media.

In any case, it is interesting to observe that the posts rarely refer to the narrative of the soap opera itself. Content creators use the characters’ voices to appropriate their main character traits and generate their own characters. This does not mean the soap opera has a minor role in the relationship. For those managing the pages, the name change is far more closely associated with the logic of maintaining traffic and not losing followers than remaining true to the character. Although the storyline in the soap opera is not central to our analysis, the characters the pages are built on are essential to creating the profiles and consequently, the posts they create.

In addition to the above, Knobel and Lankshear (2007) also credit memes as important pieces for media literacy. This implies having the necessary skills to create them, as well as a command over knowing what elements are necessary to build a network of meaning. As one might suppose, the posted images are intended to be funny, and are apparently directed at a female meta-audience. Of course, the mood is subjective both for those who produce the content as well as those that consume it (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007, p. 209).

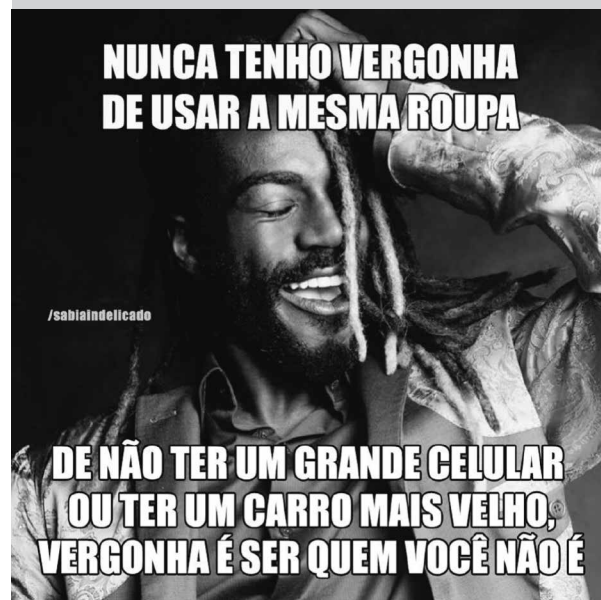
Figure 1: Image Macro for Bibi Perigosa



Translation: Funny how a man loves looking at a woman’s cleavage and short shorts, she just can’t be their woman.

Source: *Bibi Perigosa*

Figure 2: Image Macro for Sabiá Indelicado



Translation: I’ve never been embarrassed wearing the same clothes, not having a large phone or driving an older vehicle. The embarrassment is being someone you are not.

Source: *Sabiá Indelicado*

However, they are built from different elements. In this manner the following is a discussion based on the three central functions used by the analyzed fan pages.

4.1. Shared Behavior

Many of the images explore everyday elements. For example, some explore the relationship between the subject and certain media products, as appreciated in **Figure 3**. Others make jokes with images that broach the relationships between individuals and certain specific dates, as one could expect from the holidays or the boredom of a weekend (**Figure 4**).

Humor about everyday life is a conduit for the administrators to create pieces that depict situations with distinctive narratives shared by many. In this way they act as a form of collective identity (Milner, 2016) which the follower hopefully resonates with and begins interacting with the posts (Shifman, 2014, p. 19).

4.2. Invitation to engage

In other cases, the posts look to persuade subjects to become followers. As a result, it is common to find pieces with questions in the captions, indicating a hook to engage audiences, or a direct request to mention a friend and comment on what they share (**Figure 5**).

The narratives in these cases can therefore involve jokes on romantic relationships, a user's children and/or friends; inviting the user to tag and interact with the person involved in the macro joke. Another common artifice is the request to share if there is anything the user consuming the meme identifies with in the post.

4.3 Book of Etiquette

Lastly, some of the images function as a form of book of etiquette. *Sabiá Indelicado*, for example posts images advising on what is "good behavior" for a happy life (**Figure 6**). *Laureta Venenosa*, on

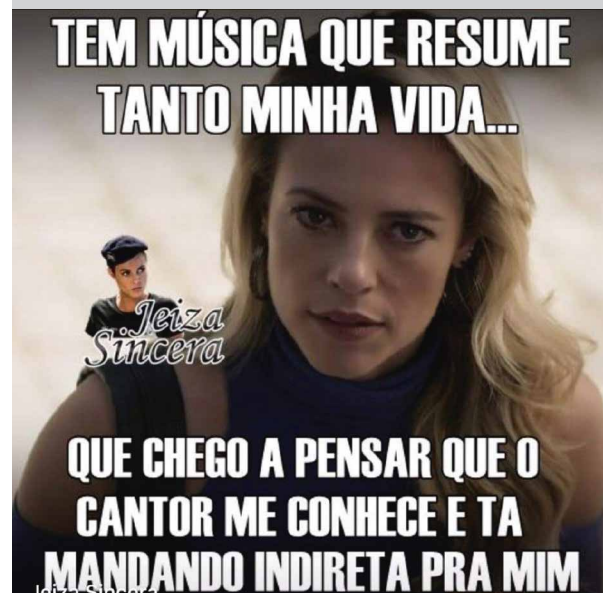
Figure 3: Image Macro for *Jeiza Sincera*



Translation: There's music that sums up my life so well, I think the singer knows me and is indirectly jealous of me.

Source: *Jeiza Sincera*.

Figure 4: Image Macro for *Luz Autêntica*



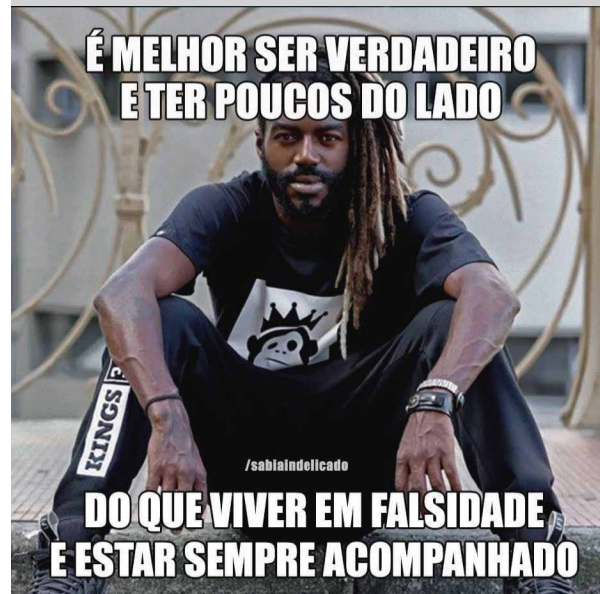
Translation: My Sunday's going really well, I've been to several places, the living room, bedroom, kitchen and bed.

Source: *Luz Autêntica*.

the other hand talks a lot about heterosexual relationships. This line of comedy involves not only the spouse, it also refers to sharing posts about

Figure 5: Image Macro for *Luz Autêntica*

Translation: ¡Tag a friend that only gets it an hour later!
Source: *Luz Autêntica*.

Figure 6: Image Macro for *Sabiá Indelicado*

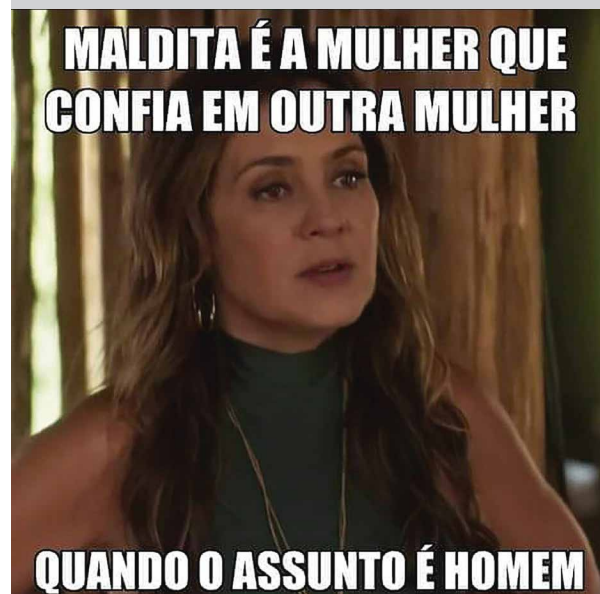
Translation: It's best to be honest and have few friends than live a lie and always have company.
Source: *Sabiá Indelicado*.

the “mother-in-law”, the “lover” or the “jealous woman”. This context often suggests other related conduct, for example betrayal, awkwardness and even social stereotypes (Figure 7).

The three suggested categories classifying image macros posted on soap opera fan pages in this article, are meant as a means to qualitatively observe the most commonly used themes and guidelines for engagement in the medium. What is clear is that, in addition to the distancing from characters introduced in the original soap opera, these pages use easily reproduced formulas and jokes adaptable to different dates of the year, social context and behavior.

5. Conclusions

The article analyzed Brazilian soap opera fan pages to identify how they were organized, and their relationship with the sourced television program. Memes are generally understood as pieces that are increasingly discussed in digital spaces, and number so many that discourse has become

Figure 7: Image Macro for *Laureta Venenosa*

Translation: Damned is the woman that trusts another woman when men are involved.
Source: *Laureta Venenosa*.

highly diverse. The study has its limits. Although historical analysis of the pages and their content is presented herein as a symptom of page admin

strategy, it is not possible to come to any sure conclusion using only this data. Therefore, we encourage other researchers to expand on our study on fan pages, to find answers to new questions and propose new methodologies. However, the methods used herein do allow us to make headway in the research questions posed for this study.

The study identifies that character fan pages are primarily focused on soap operas aired in prime-time programming slots on the Rede Globo. The pages get their names from characters considered central to the storyline, in particular the protagonists and villains, with an additional adjective setting the tone for the chosen profile, for example, *Laureta Venenosa* (Venemous Laureta) and *Jeiza Sincera* (Sincere Jeiza). The previous notwithstanding, several pages change over time, some following television programming and changing from central character to central character alongside the release of new soap operas. Therefore, although they are managed by non-celebrities and regular people, there is certain strategic logic to their production.

The use of image macros as the main image resource for these pages, associated with jokes unrelated to soap opera content, suggest that these content producers are far more concerned with their posts going viral. The strategy separates the character, for example Laureta Venenosa, from the actual character Laureta in the soap opera played by the actress Adriana Esteves, while addressing broader issues. Soap operas have significant relevance and a big place in Brazilian culture, and the fact that content producers use memes with their characters to popularize their content is in itself proof of the cultural significance of the narrative model.

Regardless, the fan pages analyzed in this study indicate intersections between television programs and the many diverse public appropriations of content. Soap operas, as a widely used format in Brazil and in the rest of Latin American, continue to be an important base element for content creators. By combining soap opera characters with the esthetic of an image macro, these individuals appropriate the cultural impact of the soap opera, and attract people to their fan pages.

Notes

1. The page is currently called Felix. <https://www.facebook.com/FelixBichaMa>. Accessed February 29th, 2020.
2. The page is currently called Uma Perturbada. <https://www.facebook.com/UmaPerturbada>. Accessed February 29th, 2020.
3. Similarly to other Latin American countries such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Mexico, the Brazilian context consists of a large conglomerate concentrating different media segments, the Globo Group (Becerra & Mastrini 2009).
4. The page is currently unavailable.
5. <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/math-lady-confused-lady>. Accessed January 10th, 2020.
6. Although it is not a rule, the association between memes and humor is often highlighted in recent studies on the phenomena (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007; Chagas, 2016).
7. It is worth noting that it wasn't the only format commonly recognized as a meme. *Rage Comics*, *exploitables* and other similar formats are other examples that have become popular.
8. <https://www.facebook.com/ChapolinSincero/>. Accessed February 29th, 2020.
9. At the time of the survey, Facebook made a "Page transparency" field for every fan page, providing information on the history of name changes for each profile.

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