

PANTANAL

The telenovela *Pantanal* as a communicative resource for citizenship: a case study

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Foreword¹

Since it was established in 2007, **Obitel Brasil** — Brazilian Network of Television Fiction Researchers — conducts uninterrupted research on national television drama, publishing a book every two years. Despite the tradition and longevity of this Television Drama Collection, a series that disseminates the results of investigations carried out by groups of researchers linked to the network, the volume we are pleased to present here has a character of its own.

This is for a few reasons. The first is that, for the first time, all ten **Obitel Brasil** teams focused on the same object: **the remake of the telenovela *Pantanal* (Globo, 2022)**. The production rescued and updated the centrality that the telenovela still has in Brazilian society, even in a scenario of excessive supply of entertainment content. With an average of 30 rating points on linear TV (Padiglione, 2022), *Pantanal* was also a success on streaming and, during its broadcast, became the most watched telenovela on Globoplay since the creation of the platform in 2015.

Due to its ability to mobilize the audience and stimulate discussions, many of which are present on digital social media platforms, the remake of *Pantanal* can be considered a **media event**, in the terms of Neiger, Meyers and Zandberg (2011): a media phenomenon with the ability to generate social commotion and developments in the most diverse sectors of society. This telenovela achieved great repercussion by combining aesthetic ruptures and socially relevant themes, which dialogue directly with urgent issues of contemporary Brazil, such as national identity, environment, social conflicts, and family relations.

The second reason is that this book is the culmination of an ambitious project, funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). Based on the understanding that Brazilian television drama is a resource capable of mobilizing

1 N.T.: All citations consulted in Portuguese have been translated into English, and the original wording is presented in footnotes.

cultural representations, with the potential to promote social inclusion, environmental responsibility, respect for diversity, and strengthening citizenship, in 2022, **Obitel Brasil** was included in the Pro-Humanities public notice, through Call No. 40/2022 of CNPq, of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MCTI) and the National Fund for Scientific and Technological Development (FNDCT). The proposal was inserted in Line 3B – Network Projects – Public policies for human and social development. The approved project, titled **“Brazilian television fiction as a resource to promote citizenship”**, aims to explore the understanding of the telenovela as a communicative mechanism available for Brazilian multisectoral public policies.

For this purpose, *Pantanal* emerged as a more than timely object, with innovative aesthetic preferences and memorable characters, such as José Leôncio, Maria and Juma Marruá, Maria Bruaca, and Velho do Rio. The remake, signed by Bruno Luperi, an adaptation of Benedito Ruy Barbosa's original 1990 work, illustrates **the potential of the telenovela as a “communicative resource” for the promotion of citizenship**, according to the concept developed by Lopes (2009), which recognizes the Brazilian telenovela as an articulating narrative of pedagogical actions, both implicit and deliberate, which can be institutionalized in public policies in the country.

Despite the common direction and object, the methodological points of view and paths are diverse, which is already a hallmark of **Obitel Brasil**. Each of the ten teams that are currently a part of the network, led by professors linked to institutions from different parts of the country², analyzed the remake of *Pantanal* under various aspects. With the title *“The telenovela Pantanal as a communicative resource for citizenship: a case study”*, this book presents the research that was developed between 2023 and 2025, with the objective of analyzing how the television product in question dialogues with themes of public interest, promotes citizenship, and expands the representation of different social groups and environments in the media sphere.

Why *Pantanal*?

From time to time, a telenovela manages to attune its narrative to the spirit of its historical time, mobilizing national attention not

2 USP; UFRJ and FIOCRUZ; UFBA; UFJF; UFPR; UFPE; UFSM and UNILA; UFSCar; UFRGS.

only for its expressive audience indexes, but for its potential to generate a broad and diverse “social semiosis”, which reverberates in specialized criticism, social media, everyday conversations, and cultural and linguistic fads. The feeling is that, all around, everyone talks about that telenovela. This repercussion involves an in-person audience (in real time) and goes beyond: it also conquers an active audience on social media platforms, reaching trending topics, and being referenced in comments, memes, and satires.

Pantanal (Globo, 2022) has become a recent media event phenomenon. Like *Avenida Brasil* (Globo, 2012), a decade earlier, or *Vale Tudo*, in 1988, the telenovela captured the affection and attention of a broad audience by exploring narrative forms and socially relevant themes. It did so by approaching themes that explicitly or implicitly address crucial issues for the understanding of Brazil in its time. Although it addressed themes and issues that were not entirely new – such as gender-based violence, environmental sustainability, and corruption – it did so by incorporating the *esprit du temps* of the country.

In addition, the relevance of *Pantanal* as an object of study includes the ability to articulate a certain **notion of memory**. Not only the memory of television, but also the memory built by the media. The concept of *media memory* (Neiger; Meyers; Zandberg, 2011) refers to the role of collective memory agent exercised by television, which recovers, through narratives, the memory of events. The case of *Pantanal* includes the collective memory around the original version, aired by Rede Manchete in 1990, and the moment that was lived, as it demonstrated a very strong connection between fiction and reality. In other words, the remake of *Pantanal* brought back an emblematic telenovela and surprised the audience by connecting in a strong way with the moment the country was going through in its year of exhibition.

In the history of television drama, *Pantanal* is considered a renewal of the Brazilian telenovela, a fact that was repeated with the remake, now in the streaming era. Choosing this production as the object of study allowed **Obitel Brasil** to investigate how a widely circulated telenovela can act as a communicative resource for citizenship, creating specific symbolic spaces for the discussion of social and political problems that affect Brazilian society.

Organization of the book

This book is organized into four parts. The first, entitled **Cartography, Memory, and the Nation's Imaginary**, brings together three chapters that highlight the symbolic strength of *Pantanal* as a narrative of national identity. The authors show that, in addition to combining perspectives on media memory, social imaginary, and citizenship, this telenovela proposes a new approach to the products of contemporary Brazilian audiovisual.

The chapter “*Pantanal* and nostalgia: contemporaneity and updating of social issues in Brazilian serial fiction”, by the UFRJ and Fiocruz team – under the coordination of Ana Paula Goulart Ribeiro and Igor Pinto Sacramento (vice-coordinator) –, articulates memory and the stimulation of contemporary debates based on the remake of *Pantanal*. The text examines the telenovela's nostalgic appeal and its approach to current social themes, analyzing how the remake brought past and present into dialogue to engage with contemporary debates on race, gender, and the environment, drawing on its status as a landmark of national television drama. Opening the book with this chapter is also a way for **Obitel Brasil** to pay homage to the dear and late researcher Igor Sacramento, then vice-coordinator of the team, whose intellectual legacy remains present in the critical reflection proposed by the group.

“Citizen themes in an enchanted *Pantanal*”, a chapter signed by the UAM team, coordinated by researchers Maria Ignês Carlos Magno (coordinator) and Rogério Ferraraz (vice-coordinator), presents a look at the enchantments of the narrative, focusing on the emerging citizen themes throughout the plot. The text examines the construction of the characters Velho do Rio, Maria Marruá, and Cramulhão, in order to understand the strategies and the process of absorption by television fiction of some of the countless tales of enchantment that are part of our culture. The analysis emphasizes the intersections between aesthetics, emotion and social criticism as ways to stimulate citizenship in the audiovisual field.

The chapter by the USP team, coordinated by researchers Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes (coordinator) and Cláudia Peixoto de Moura (vice-coordinator), entitled “*Pantanal*: an intersectional cartography for citizenship”, shows an effort to introduce a new visual methodology, called “intersectional cartography”, based on the social markers of difference – regionality, class, gender/sexuality, and race. Through a set of maps on the plots of *Pantanal*, it is possible to visually demonstrate the different symbolic disputes

around the telenovela and how it builds meanings about Brazil and its diversity by elaborating the forms of representation that promote or limit symbolic disputes associated with national identity and the struggles for recognition of multiple citizenships. The text also marks an interesting exercise in “audiovisual writing”, establishing the chapter as a proposal for a new methodological strategy for the analysis of telenovelas.

The second part of the book — **Gender, Representations, and Technologies of Citizenship** — investigates how *Pantanal* mobilizes representations of gender, subjectivations, and rights within a changing media ecosystem. The three chapters in this section analyze different dimensions of citizenship articulated to the dramaturgical construction of this telenovela and the forms of circulation and resonance of its themes in public spaces.

The chapter “The media pedagogical apparatus and processes of subjectivation in *Pantanal*: gender and citizenship in discourses of femininities and masculinities through Jove and Juma”, by the UFPE team, coordinated by researchers Cecilia Almeida Rodrigues Lima (coordinator) and Diego Gouveia Moreira (vice-coordinator), proposes to understand *Pantanal* as a media pedagogical apparatus that operates subjectivations through the femininities and masculinities represented in the trajectories of Juma and Jove. Through the analysis of melodramatic discourses, the text illustrates how the narrative mobilizes social learning about gender and citizenship.

The chapter “Agency of citizenship in the *Pantanal* telenovela: the construction of the feminine from the perspective of gender and territoriality”, written by the UFPR team, under the coordination of researchers Valquíria Michela John (coordinator) and Lourdes Ana Pereira Silva (vice-coordinator), in turn, investigates the construction of the feminine in this telenovela from the intersection between gender and territoriality. The authors examine how gender representations, intersected with the issue of territoriality, enable movements of melodramatic innovation in the agency of citizenship regarding gender equity in the telenovela.

Closing part two, the chapter “Rights and citizenship in *Pantanal* (Globo, 2022): repercussion on journalism of the public discussion on sustainability, homophobia, and female freedom”, by the UFBA team, coordinated by researchers Maria Carmen Jacob de Souza (coordinator) and Hanna Nolasco Farias Lima (vice-coordinator), focuses on the journalistic repercussion of some of *Pantanal*’s

expressive themes — environmental sustainability, homophobia, and female freedom —, with emphasis on the circulation of the respective debates in press outlets in the digital ecosystem. The group of authors understands *Pantanal* as a media event capable of generating public visibility for issues related to fundamental rights and of expanding citizen imagination amidst the platformization of communication.

The third part of the book — **Sustainability and Socio-environmental Citizenship** — brings together analyses that explore how the telenovela *Pantanal* updates and enhances discourses on the environment, sustainability, and socio-environmental citizenship from its fictional narrative and transmedia circulation strategies. In a complementary fashion, it also examines the ways in which Brazilian television drama articulates with environmental issues and the impacts of this articulation on citizen education. Together, the two chapters of the section demonstrate the power of the telenovela as a communicative resource that sensitizes the public to urgent themes of the Brazilian environmental agenda, contributing to the promotion of a critical and active socio-environmental citizenship.

The chapter “Socio-environmental sustainability in the remake of the telenovela *Pantanal* (2022)”, produced by the UFSCar team, under the coordination of researchers João Carlos Massarolo (coordinator) and Dario de Souza Mesquita Júnior (vice-coordinator), investigates how the remake of *Pantanal* resignifies the concept of socio-environmental sustainability by combining cultural memory, ecology and symbolic resistance. The analysis highlights the centrality of the Pantanal biome as a space for representation and tensions between traditional ways of life and the impacts of agribusiness, fires, and state negligence. From a critical approach, the study reveals how the telenovela promotes an aestheticization of the environment that both visually enchants and provokes the public to reflect on contemporary socio-environmental risks.

The chapter “Audiovisual quality and citizenship: creation, circulation, and aesthetic experience in the analysis of the character Velho do Rio in the telenovela *Pantanal*”, by the UFJF team, coordinated by researchers Gabriela Borges Martins Caravela (coordinator) and Daiana Maria Veiga Sigiliano (vice-coordinator), focuses on audiovisual quality and the potential for citizenship promoted by the image of Velho do Rio, a central character in the mediation between nature and humanity. The research analyzes both the narrative and aesthetic elements of the telenovela and

the transmedia strategies employed by TV Globo to expand the circulation of this production on social media. The study shows how the aesthetic experience of viewers, articulated with transmedia communication actions, can favor the development of media literacy and a critical awareness of environmental issues, which reinforces the pedagogical role of fiction.

The fourth and last part of the book — **Audiences, Reception, and Citizen Engagement** — is dedicated to the analysis of the forms of reception, appropriation, and engagement of audiences in relation to the telenovela *Pantanal*, exploring the citizenship dimension that emerges from the interaction between fiction and the public. Both texts on the subject contribute to an expanded understanding of citizenship mediated by television fiction and highlight the active role of audiences in the reinterpretation and resignification of melodramatic narratives.

The chapter developed by the UFSM and UNILA team, and coordinated by researchers Sandra Dalcup Depexe (coordinator), Camila da Silva Marques (coordinator) and Veneza Mayora Ronsini (vice-coordinator), entitled “*Pantanal*, over: social uses of the telenovela as a resource for the promotion of citizenship”, proposes an approach centered on the communicative uses of the telenovela by different social actors. Based on an exploratory methodology, the authors identify, among young university students, reception practices that involve the telenovela as a pedagogical resource, a public mediation apparatus, and an expression of socio-territorial belonging.

The UFRGS team’s chapter, “Between fiction and public debate: citizenship in *Pantanal*”, produced under the coordination of researchers Lirian Sifuentes dos Santos (coordinator) and Sara Alves Feitosa (vice-coordinator), analyzes the critical reception of the telenovela through interviews with viewers and audience comments on gender issues on social media. Through the observation of the spontaneous public debate on these platforms, this chapter highlights the way in which themes such as homophobia and violence against women are triggered by spectators, revealing tensions, disputes of meanings, and the politicization of the fictional work in the digital public space.

Finally, we deeply appreciate the effort, rigor, and commitment of the researchers from all the teams involved in carrying out this collective work. Each chapter gathered here is the result of a collaborative effort of research, analysis and academic writing,

with the purpose of understanding the role of television fiction in promoting citizenship. We also thank CNPq for the decisive support through the Pro-Humanities public notice, which made it possible to carry out this network research, reaffirming the importance of fostering science committed to the culture, memory, and social rights of the nation.

And to our readers, beyond expressing our gratitude, we wish for a rich and enjoyable journey.

The editors.

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PART ONE

Cartography, Memory, and the Imaginary of the Nation

***Pantanal* and nostalgia: contemporaneity and updating of social issues in Brazilian serial fiction**

Ana Paula Goulart Ribeiro (coordinator)
Igor Sacramento (vice-coordinator)

Patricia D'Abreu
Juliana Tillmann
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Rhayller Peixoto
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1 Introduction

Telenovela remakes — re-adaptations of productions that have had successes in the past — have been on the rise for more than three decades. And the phenomenon, as well as that of reruns, prequels, sequels, period productions, and historical biographies, is part of a complex dynamic that involves contemporary audiovisual production. They are associated with the nostalgia market, whose objects and narratives emotionally and affectively appeal to the past as a historical and cultural reference, as a space of experience or as an aesthetic model (Ribeiro, 2018).

Pantanal (TV Globo, 2022) was such a production. The work used the affective memories of viewers not only for reissuing one of the most successful telenovelas in the history of Brazilian television, but also for the way in which elements of the first version were explored in its production and dissemination. Therefore, we propose to analyze the telenovela from the perspective of nostalgia.

We believe that this reading key allows us to understand important questions about the role of television drama in the construction of collective memories. It also allows us to understand how characters and plots are updated in a context of major changes in the public debate on climate, racial, and gender issues.

Lopes' (2003, p. 32) perspective on the telenovela, as a "narrative in which both implicit and deliberate pedagogical actions are combined and become institutionalized in communication and culture policies in the country,"¹ points to the fact that Brazilian serial fiction articulates representations capable of triggering social, environmental, civic, and alterity-related issues. The influence of national television drama, in particular with regard to the shared universe from which it emerges, can show us a unique way of activating symbols and values that circulate questions and discussions about citizenship.

In the current context, understanding the actions of an audiovisual product that has a space to be preserved (the Pantanal and its biodiversity) and in which multiple identities interact (race, gender, social class, territoriality) can contribute to facing a great social challenge, which is the construction of a more comprehensive notion of citizenship. In addition, studies that have memory and nostalgia as theoretical objects enriches the knowledge about the tension between two dynamics present in the telenovela: that of repetition (proper to a remake) and that of innovation (characteristic of the genre, which, in this way, maintains its longevity). Remakes articulate new and old rituals, which instigate us to reflect on the crises established in our own time.

The remake of *Pantanal* (TV Globo, 2022) takes part in the phenomenon of television remakes and the market of nostalgia by resuming one of the most emblematic narratives of Brazilian television drama, originally shown in 1990. This new version not only revisits the story that became a milestone of its time, but also incorporates important updates, in tune with central themes of contemporary public debate, such as the environment, ethnic-racial relations, and gender issues. The telenovela mobilizes the affective memory of viewers, while repositioning serial fiction as a space for symbolic and discursive negotiation, revealing television as a media pedagogical apparatus that produces meanings about citizenship, identity, and culture (Lopes, 2003).

1 Original text: "narrativa na qual se conjugam ações pedagógicas tanto implícitas quanto deliberadas que passam a institucionalizar-se em políticas de comunicação e cultura no país."

From this context, this research aims to investigate how the remake of *Pantanal* updates themes and characters in order to trigger contemporary debates, articulating memory, nostalgia, and citizenship. The central question that guides this investigation is: how does the remake of *Pantanal* reconfigure its plots and characters to critically address the thematic axes of the environment, race, and gender in today's Brazil?

The main objective of this research was to understand the ways in which *Pantanal* (2022) repositions itself in the face of contemporary demands, mediating tradition and innovation. Among the specific objectives, the following stand out: to identify the narrative and aesthetic strategies used to address the proposed thematic axes; to analyze the construction and reformulation of central characters in the light of these themes; and to reflect on the role of nostalgia as a mechanism of mediation between the television past and the cultural transformations of the present.

As we will detail throughout the text, nostalgia is not a mere attachment to the past, but it is also linked to the demands and disputes of the present around the memory of that past. In our previous investigations, nostalgia has been observed not only as an aesthetic or market strategy, but as a cultural practice that articulates affections, memories, and symbolic disputes about the present (Ribeiro et al., 2021).

Based on this understanding, we seek in this chapter to understand how the memory activated by the *Pantanal* remake operates as a mediation for the incorporation of socially urgent themes, projecting on the updated narrative the contemporary debates on representation, social justice, and sustainability. Thus, it is not just a matter of investigating the return of an iconic work, but of observing how this return reshapes meanings and produces discursive displacements — especially in the treatment of racial diversity, gender dynamics, and ecological urgencies affecting today's Brazil. Nostalgia, therefore, is thought of here as a symbolic operator that allows the reconciliation between tradition and change, affection and criticism, reinforcing the role of television drama as a privileged space for the circulation of discourses on citizenship. By articulating memory and updating, the remake of *Pantanal* is exemplary in using nostalgia not only to reconnect with the past, but to tension and broaden the representational horizons of the present.

The corpus of the analysis consists of the telenovela *Pantanal* itself (2022), focusing on the groups of characters that are

representative of the three thematic axes. Regarding the gender issue, the characters Maria Bruaca and Zuleica stand out; in the racial discussion, the unit of Tenório's second family; and, in the environmental axis, the speeches of José Leôncio and Velho do Rio. The choice of these characters and plots stems from the centrality that such themes commit to in the adaptation, as recognized by their creators, critics, and the reception of the public.

The research methodology is qualitative, with an interpretative approach. The analysis is based on systematic observation of the audiovisual narrative, including scenes, dialogues, soundtrack, and aesthetic construction during the telenovela exhibition, later complemented by new viewings. In addition, journalistic articles, interviews with authors and cast, comments on social networks, and media repercussions on the telenovela were raised. This complementary empirical material contributed to map how the discourses of the work were received and socially re-signified.

2 Television nostalgia

There are, in telenovela remakes, multiple accesses to nostalgia, which go through both the dialogue with the audience that originally watched the works and the new viewers who, nourished by the broad projects of celebration of these productions, also mobilize their imagination about them. This creates an interest in their consumption, based on the “familiarity” with the history of these works. Everyone who watches a remake knows that they are seeing re-recordings of cultural products from the past, a fact that is even widely advertised by producers in the launch campaigns. It is also necessary to consider that viewers seek to inform themselves in advance about the unfolding of the plot and compare the work with its previous version (Ribeiro, 2018).

We can think of the viewer's relationship with the remake from Amy Holdsworth's (2021) notion of “safe return”. The author uses the expression to refer to television programming that seeks, in the familiar formats of the past, a comfort idealized by longing and distance (Holdsworth, 2021). This return would guarantee the safety of a captive audience, who previously consumed these works and wishes to relive, in some way, the past. Furthermore, it also attracts a portion of the public for whom the forms of the past are somehow recognizable. This kind of security resides in nostalgia activated by the comfort of a shared imagination (Pickering; Keightley, 2012),

which allows interactive access to the past and an experimentation with the customs and signs of other times.

There are different forms of nostalgia, and their meanings are plural in audiovisual products.² We were interested in investigating the meanings triggered by the remake of *Pantanal* and wanted to understand how new commercial and cultural meanings were produced for this work. Understanding that the past is always reframed from the present, we realized that one of the important dynamics of this process was the updating of certain themes of the work based on contemporary interests.

Our proposal is to try to understand not only the role of television drama in the dynamization of collective memories, but also the reverse: the role of memories and nostalgia in the dynamics of contemporary television fiction. To this end, we analyzed the narrative of the telenovela itself, taking into account the complexity of the television apparatus and seeking to describe multiple elements, aesthetic and diegetic, that composed the televisuality and, through it, built the nostalgic ambience of the work. We consider elements related to the adaptation of the plot, the construction of the characters and their narrative arcs, the dialogues, and the soundtrack. Our interest is to understand how the references (“citations”) and displacements in relation to the original work took place. Our idea is to identify how the elements of the first version were explored in order to awaken familiarity, emotion, and nostalgic identification in the viewer. In this same sense, we also analyzed the repercussion of the remake in the media and the references to the culture of nostalgia in social networks and in widely circulated newspapers.

3 The nostalgic appeal

The nostalgic appeal can be understood as a symbolic and affective strategy that mobilizes memories of the past – individual and collective – through cultural signs capable of reactivating experiences, sensations, and identities associated with other times. More than a simple longing, nostalgia is a form of temporal mediation that, according to Svetlana Boym (2001), can manifest itself in a restorative way, seeking to recover a lost or reflexive order, focused

2 In our reflection on nostalgia, our starting point was the work of authors such as Niemeyer (2014), Christine Sprengler (2011), Gary Cross (2015), and Kay, Mahoney and Shaw (2017), in addition to the previously cited Pickering and Keightley (2012) and Holdsworth (2011).

on the critical contemplation of the passage of time. In the field of media, Niemeyer (2014) understands nostalgia as a cultural practice that is part of both production strategies and modes of reception, operating as a narrative, aesthetic, and emotional tool.

Thus, the nostalgic appeal, when mobilized in media products such as remakes, acts as a link between past and present, creating symbolic bridges that activate cultural memory and affective recognition. As we have seen, Holdsworth (2011) argues that television nostalgia works as a “safe return,” an emotional place where viewers find comfort in familiar, even if reshaped, narratives.

The remake of *Pantanal* (TV Globo, 2022) uses nostalgic appeal as a narrative and affective strategy, going beyond the simple repetition of the original story. This appeal manifests itself through multiple layers: the transition of authorship between Benedito Ruy Barbosa and his grandson, Bruno Luperi; the presence of actors from the 1990 version in new roles; the reinterpretation of classical songs; and visual and narrative references that directly evoke the first version.

Pantanal activates affective memories of the public by valuing real family ties outside fiction, such as the participation of Almir Sater and Gabriel Sater, Isabel Teixeira and Renato Teixeira. The soundtrack, a central element of the telenovela’s identity, was carefully preserved and adapted, with great repercussion on digital platforms and social networks. Striking scenes, such as the posthumous insertion of Cláudio Marzo and the reunions between actors of the two versions, reinforced this emotional connection.

Returning to the issue of authorship, Benedito Ruy Barbosa’s original text is treated as a classic during the publicity of the novel, both by the media and by creative agents involved in the production. Bruno Luperi puts himself in a position of respect for his grandfather’s work, even mentioning that he received a “blessing” and a “vote of confidence” to work on the story. He affirms his desire to maintain the characteristics of the original text, which he considers exquisite and timeless, reinforcing his position, even in his social networks, whenever asked about the possibility of making changes in the plot. The departure of characters that pleased the audience, such as Madeleine (Karine Teles) and Trindade (Gabriel Sater), demonstrates fidelity to the original text. In the first version, both characters had to leave the telenovela for personal reasons and, since the same impediments did not exist in the production of the remake, there was talk about the possibility of them having a different fate.

It is interesting to observe the construction of a kind of “shared universe” around Benedito Ruy Barbosa’s works. José Leôncio (Marcos Palmeira) is referred to by the nickname “king of the cattle”, while Tadeu (José Loreto) wears shirts with the Mezenga brand, references to the epithet and surname of the protagonist of *O Rei do Gado* (TV Globo, 1996). The reference to other telenovelas by the author and the success of the remake were a green light for new adaptations. In fact, in 2024, Globo exhibited a new version of *Renascer*, also written by Bruno Luperi, based on his grandfather’s work. *Pantanal* (1990), *Renascer* (TV Globo, 1993), and *O Rei do Gado* (TV Globo, 1996) form Barbosa’s rural trilogy in the prime time of Brazilian television.

4 The racial issue

We seek to understand how the remake of *Pantanal* reformulates central themes of the work based on contemporary interests around three central axes: environmental, racial, and gender issues. We sought to evaluate, in its political and social context of exhibition, how the remake positioned itself in relation to these themes, investigating the role of telenovelas in the circulation of civic issues. Let’s start with the racial issue.

Farmer Tenório (Murilo Benício) lives in the Pantanal. He is married to Maria (Isabel Teixeira) and father of Guta (Julia Dalavia), but maintains a second family in São Paulo, formed from his relationship with Zuleica (Aline Borges). From this relationship, three children would have been born: Marcelo (Lucas Leto) – later revealed not to be Tenório’s biological son –, Renato (Gabriel Santana), and Roberto (Cauê Campos). This family’s storyline, which in the first version was formed by white people, is now lived by black actors, which highlights the search to demarcate the place of representation as a value to be disseminated in this new moment of exhibition.

The fact did not go unnoticed by the press, which covered the reactions of the actors in the remake to the new developments. The interpreter of Zuleica stated: “Today I am giving life to a character that was once a white woman, which this author [Bruno Luperi] decided to change to a black woman, to give her a voice. This is representation, and it gives meaning to our craft”³ (Castro,

3 Original text: “Hoje estou dando vida a uma personagem que um dia foi de uma mulher branca, que esse autor [Bruno Luperi] decidiu mudar para uma mulher preta, para dar voz a ela. Isso é representatividade e dá sentido ao nosso ofício.”

2022). This updating of the character, however, was also seen as an element of reinforcement of the imaginary of subalternization of the black woman, intensified by Zuleica's place as the mistress (Borges; Borges, 2012).

However, Zuleica and her family seem to disagree with this stereotype by offering a double complexification. Off screen, as already mentioned, Aline Borges celebrates her inclusion in the telenovela. She says that her first television role was in *Celebridade* (TV Globo, 2003), in which she played the maid Regina, who worked in the house of Fernando Amorim, played by Marcos Palmeira. Nineteen years later, the two actors meet in *Pantanal* in very different positions. Another point to consider is that Tenório's second wife has compassion for Maria Bruaca, the "official woman". The choice not to make the mistress a mere antagonist of the wife also dialogues with contemporary values of female representation. Barros and John (2021), in a work that investigated the profile of heroines and villains of Globo telenovelas in the 2010s, reinforce that there is a constant tension between tradition and innovation regarding female representations in telenovelas, given their importance and dialogue with society in Latin America. If the ethnic-racial identity of Tenório's second family is the result of a search for representation on the screens, the space that these characters will occupy in the imagination is also tensioned, both by the plots that now have new faces and by the punctual changes imposed by the contemporary agenda.

In addition, race is not isolated as a symbolic element and enters the diegetic environment through the interactions between the characters. Unlike Zuleica, Tenório's children believe that their father does not publicly acknowledge them because of his racism and confront him directly in this regard. Thus, we have different positions within the very configurations of ethnic-racial relations: if, on the one hand, Zuleica proves to be an appeaser, her children, on the other, do not. On Patrícia Kogut's blog, Gabriel Santana comments on the fact that Bruno Luperi created a storyline with black actors to deal with racism and says that the author made changes to the plot based on suggestions from the cast (Santiago, 2022). He cites an example:

There was a scene where my character talked to one of his brothers. And it was clear that they have doubts whether their father does not publicly acknowledge them for convenience, because they are the second

family, or because they are a black family. And the words about racism were very bland. Someone said: “This situation was very inconvenient”. The word was eventually changed to “humiliating” because it says more about their experience. We understood Bruno’s intention with the scene. The intention is the same, but the change helps actors and viewers better understand what it feels like – he explains, praising the dialogue. I had never seen an author put himself in this place of such open listening, being so generous. Especially to deal with such an important subject that is black activism⁴ (Santiago, 2022).

The nostalgic appeal in *Pantanal* is not reduced to aesthetic reenactment or the rescue of familiar characters and plots. It also operates as a symbolic mediation apparatus between memory and the social demands of the present, allowing contemporary themes to be affectively articulated in a narrative anchored in tradition. By reinscribing elements of the past, the remake creates a field of discursive negotiation, in which the cultural values of the original work are revisited from the perspective of the social and political transformations of the 21st century.

In this sense, nostalgia works as a gateway to the thematic updating of the plot, opening space for the inclusion and problematization of themes such as race, gender, and the environment. By evoking the collective memory of the 1990 telenovela, the remake creates a type of “safe environment” to propose significant discursive changes – without abruptly breaking with the emotional legacy of the work. As Pickering and Keightley (2012) observe, media nostalgia can activate a “mnemonic imagination”, that is, a creative practice of reinterpreting the past that allows projecting new meanings to the present and the future.

From this perspective, the remake uses its nostalgic appeal to introduce black characters in central narrative positions, such as Zuleica and her children – who were portrayed as white in the

4 Original text: “Tinha uma cena em que meu personagem conversava com um dos irmãos. E ficava claro que eles têm uma dúvida se o pai não os assume por uma comodidade, porque é a segunda família, ou porque é a família preta. E as palavras sobre racismo estavam muito brandas. Alguém falava: “Essa situação foi muito inconveniente”. A palavra acabou sendo trocada por “humilhante”, porque diz mais sobre a vivência deles. A gente entendeu a intenção do Bruno com a cena. A intenção é a mesma, mas a mudança ajuda os atores e os telespectadores a compreenderem melhor qual é a sensação – explica ele, que elogia esse diálogo –. Nunca tinha visto um autor se colocar nesse lugar de escuta tão aberta, sendo tão generoso. Ainda mais para tratar de um assunto tão importante que é a militância preta.”

original production —, expanding the debate on racial representation and family tensions mediated by racism. On the gender axis, the character Maria Bruaca, previously treated in a comical and subaltern way, is repositioned as a symbol of resistance to domestic violence, operating a critical reformulation of the masculinities and traditional roles attributed to women in serial fiction. In the environmental field, the presence of Velho do Rio as a guardian entity of the Pantanal biome and the insertion of real images of the fires connect television memory, ecological affection, and symbolic activism — elements that project the rural past of the telenovela as a platform for contemporary environmental awareness.

These displacements reveal how memory, activated by nostalgia, is not limited to celebrating the past, but also acts as a tool for reinterpretation and critical updating, allowing the remake of *Pantanal* to broaden its representational scope and contribute to the circulation of more plural discourses about citizenship, identity, and belonging. Nostalgia, therefore, is not only aesthetic or affective — it is also political and social.

5 The gender issue

Maria is married to Tenório and lives on a farm in the Pantanal region. Isolated from the world, she suffers daily from the moral and psychological violence committed by her husband, who has the habit of calling her “Bruaca” (a pejorative term for a woman considered unpleasant, unattractive, or old-fashioned, roughly equivalent to “old bag” or “hag” in English). She accepts, despite feeling humiliated, telling others it’s just a nickname. The return of her daughter, Guta (Julia Dalavia), spurs her to try to be attractive to her husband, who treats her advances as something laughable, ridiculing her.

Maria’s situation worsens when she discovers that Tenório has another family in São Paulo. Unable to forgive him, Maria continues to live with her husband, but demands that he hire the maid Zefa (Paula Barbosa) to help her with the housework and starts flirting with workers on the farm. She ends up having a romantic relationship with Alcides (Juliano Cazarré). When Tenório discovers her betrayal, he kicks her out of the house. Later, in revenge, he kidnaps Alcides and subjects him to a corrective rape.

There are two important changes in the outcome of Maria Bruaca’s story. In the 1990 version, Tenório castrates Alcides, whereas in the 2022 version he rapes him. In the first version, Maria and Alcides left

the Pantanal humiliated, without saying goodbye to anyone; in the remake, the two go to Paraná to take back their lands and reappear happy in the last chapter. As for the reception, the 2022 Maria had great popularity; she was seen as a national heroine. In an interview with *Marie Claire* magazine, Isabel Teixeira commented: “In the 1990 version, Angela [Leal], who played Bruaca, was attacked in the streets. I, in 2022, hear only praise. I am told that Bruaca serves as a source of redemption to women”⁵ (Tozze; Cortêz, 2022). Public empathy in 2022 points to greater social awareness of violence against women.

Maria is, in both versions, a rich object of investigation on the still current theme of misogyny: the constant moral and psychological humiliations uttered by Tenório mark the continuity of the practice of hate speech against women. In analyzing the historical and cultural path of our Western notion of the feminine, Howard Bloch (1995) argues that the idea that women are inferior and subordinate to men is not, in itself, the essence of misogyny: for him, the repetitiveness and continuity of the use of foul words toward women place language as central to research and reflection on the subject. The definition of misogyny as an act of speech in which women are the subject of a sentence that predicates them (positively or negatively) and places them in an act of essentialization, whose effect is their elimination from the historical stage of the world, is the alienation of their individualities from the sphere of events. In Maria’s case, this essentialization takes place in her *being-for-men*: as the daughter of a landowner, she is the means through which Tenório seeks his power; as a wife and lover, she is the vector of the clash of masculinities that takes place between cruel Tenório and passionate Alcides.

Hostage to an abusive relationship, Maria walks a tortuous and difficult path to liberation. She begins by assuming herself as a desiring and desirable being, capable of breaking conventions and moral barriers, through her affair with Levi (Leandro Lima) and, later, with her romance with Alcides. However, her process is not limited to sexual issues. The most symbolic moment of her emancipation occurs when, after being expelled from home, she crosses the territorial limits of the farm and becomes “Maria Chalaneira” (in reference to her going to live in the *chalana*, a flat-bottomed riverboat). She befriends Eugênio and starts to work and live with him, without destination, up and down the river, in an environment where everything is pure flow. In this context, several

5 Original text: “na versão de 1990, a Angela [Leal], que fez a Bruaca, era atacada nas ruas. Eu, em 2022, ouço só elogios. Me dizem que a Bruaca presta um serviço de redenção às mulheres.”

moving scenes were shown, in which Isabel Teixeira sings, alongside Almir Sater, classics of Brazilian viola music, such as “Meu Primeiro Amor” and “Chalana”. There is an especially nostalgic moment laden with intertextuality, when the actress hums “Romaria”, one of her father’s, Renato Teixeira, most famous compositions.

It is interesting to see how Maria opposes and, at the same time, finds herself in the place of oppression with the character Zuleica. At the beginning of the plot, even if she takes the place of the mistress, Zuleica seems to be in a privileged situation in relation to the simple-minded Maria. She lives in São Paulo, a metropolis, has a profession as a nurse, and is emotionally and economically independent. Tenório treats her with respect and consideration. Throughout the story, however, the situation changes. When she leaves everything to live in the Pantanal, Zuleica loses her identity and gradually takes the place of the “bruaca.” After Maria leaves the farm, she takes on the heavy housework and endures difficult moments when experiencing closely the cruelties of Tenório.

In addition, Zuleica is a woman who hides a past of great suffering. We learn her story in the scene in which she tells Marcelo that he is not Tenório’s son, but the result of a rape. Here, the issue of intersectionality presents itself clearly. The violence suffered is attributed to a sum of intersecting oppressions. This is a black woman in a situation of subalternity. Zuleica says that she started working in a large hospital as soon as she completed the nursing course:

I was the first in my family to walk into a place like that without a broom in my hand. [...] I always had to be very good at everything I set out to do in life. Therefore, I soon fell in the surgeon’s good graces, a renowned surgeon, head of the hospital’s surgical department. He started taking me to all the surgeries he did. [...] Then, all that false admiration turned into a succession of harassment. Unkind jokes, malicious comments, indiscreet and increasingly insistent invitations. I became an obsession for him. He wanted me at all costs. He didn’t take “no” for an answer. Imagine a rookie nurse rejecting the boss, the hospital’s big shot. Later, I discovered his fame. He didn’t do anything out in the open, but the entire hospital knew what he did to the women who worked with him. [...] Back then – it seems absurd to say that today – but it was very common behavior. In fact, to this day there are women who are harassed and raped every day in hospitals, everywhere, and do not have the courage to report it. Imagine at that time. It was as if a

man in a position of power had the autonomy to commit any type of abuse, being sure that he would never be punished⁶ (Pantanal, 2022).

When asked if she was unable to report, Zuleica's answer is emphatic and significant in relation to the message she wanted to convey: "Me? A black woman at the beginning of her career, a nurse, making a complaint against a white man, the hospital's chief of surgery? Who would believe me?"⁷ (Pantanal, 2022).

Regarding the gender issue, it is also worth highlighting another scene, very pedagogical, in which Zuleica criticizes Renato for harassing Zefa. The boy tries to defend himself, saying that he had just caressed the girl, to which the mother responds:

Just a caress? It was just a compliment, an indiscreet glance, a comment about the ass... Come on, Renato?! [...] Did you know that what you did is sexual harassment? Do you realize that this is a crime? That is grounds for jail. [...] My God, you have no idea how it breaks my heart to think that a son of mine put a woman through the same horrors that I once suffered. [...] listen to me, so I never have to repeat what I'm going to tell you again: it doesn't matter that it looked like she was coming on to you, it doesn't matter what clothes she was wearing. It doesn't matter. If a woman, or anyone, tells you no, it's no. Do you understand me, Renato? No means no!⁸ (Pantanal, 2022).

6 Original text: "Eu era a primeira da minha família a entrar num lugar como aquele sem uma vassoura na mão. [...] Eu sempre tive que ser muito boa em tudo o que me propus a fazer na vida. Por isso, logo caí nas graças do cirurgião, um cirurgião renomado, chefe da cirurgia do hospital. Ele passou a me levar para todas as cirurgias que ele fazia. [...] Então, toda aquela falsa admiração virou uma sucessão de assédios. Piadinhas indelicadas, comentários maliciosos, convites indiscretos e cada vez mais insistentes. Eu me tornei uma obsessão para ele. Ele me queria porque queria. Não aceitava "não" como resposta. Imagina uma enfermeira novata rejeitar o chefe, o bambambã do hospital. Depois, eu descobri a fama dele. Ele não fazia nada às claras, mas o hospital inteiro sabia o que ele fazia com as mulheres que trabalhavam com ele. [...] Naquela época – parece um absurdo dizer isso hoje –, mas era um comportamento muito comum. Aliás, até hoje existem mulheres que são assediadas e violentadas todos os dias nos hospitais, em todos os lugares, e não têm coragem de denunciar. Imagina naquela época. Era como se um homem num cargo de poder tivesse autonomia para cometer qualquer tipo de abuso, tendo a certeza de que jamais seria punido."

7 Original text: "Eu? Uma mulher preta em início de carreira, enfermeira, fazer uma denúncia contra um homem branco, chefe de cirurgia do hospital? Quem ia acreditar em mim?"

8 Original text: "Só um carinho? Foi só um elogio, uma olhada indiscreta, um comentário sobre a bunda... Que isso, Renato?! [...] Você sabia que isso que você fez é assédio sexual? Você tem noção de que isso é crime? Isso dá cadeia. [...] Meu Deus, você não tem ideia do desgosto que eu tenho de pensar que um filho meu fez uma mulher passar pelos mesmos horrores que, um dia, eu passei. [...] me escuta para eu não ter que repetir nunca mais o que eu vou te dizer: não interessa que parecia que ela estava te dando mole, não interessa a roupa que ela estava usando. Não interessa. Se uma mulher, ou qualquer pessoa, te disser não, é não. Você está me entendendo, Renato? Não é não!"

The representations of gender in the remake of *Pantanal* constitute one of the main axes of transformation in relation to the original version of the telenovela, highlighting a deliberate effort to update the changes in the public debate about the place of women, the regimes of masculinity, and the criticism of symbolic and physical gender violence. Although several characters in the work allow us to observe these reconfigurations – such as Zuleica, Guta, Juma, Tenório, José Leôncio, and Jove –, in this section we prioritize the analysis of the character Maria Bruaca, because her trajectory concentrates, in an exemplary way, a process of rupture with female silencing and subalternity, widely mobilizing the empathy of the public and becoming one of the main symbols of contemporary sensitivity in relation to the theme.

The choice of this focus is justified, therefore, both by the centrality of the character in the unfolding of the story and by the strong public repercussion that her narrative transformation brought up – which made her not only a dramatic character, but also a cultural phenomenon. Her journey of emancipation, from submission to desire and autonomy, is crossed by discourses on motherhood, sexuality, violence, work, and belonging, resonating with urgent debates on structural misogyny, domestic violence and sorority.

However, it is worth noting that other characters also mobilize significant constructions of gender. Zuleica, for example, strains the figure of the “second wife”, traditionally associated with female rivalry, by assuming a posture of solidarity and listening to Maria’s suffering. In addition, the character reveals a history of sexual violence in her professional career, which expands the discussion to the field of intersectionality, by problematizing the inequalities faced by black women in the workplace.

Guta, in turn, takes a challenging stance towards the authoritarian father and the patriarchal structure of the farm, symbolizing a more critical youth, who refuses traditional hierarchies. Juma (Alanis Guillen), meanwhile, iconic character since the original version, represents an untamable femininity, linked to nature and mystery, and whose recent adaptation has further accentuated her autonomy and resistance to domestication, even symbolically.

Lastly, it is necessary to consider that the masculinities in dispute are also an essential part of the gender debate in the telenovela. Tenório embodies a violent and authoritarian masculinity, while Jove (Jesuíta Barbosa) represents an alternative, more sensitive and nonhegemonic model, often placed in contrast to the worldview of his father, José Leôncio.

These multiple and sometimes contradictory constructions reveal how *Pantanal* operates as a discursive territory of negotiation between traditional values and new forms of subjectivation, composing a complex and dynamic picture of gender issues in contemporary television drama.

6 Environment

The announcement of the new version of *Pantanal* has already piqued the curiosity of critics and the general public. Scheduled to premiere in 2021, the telenovela was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to the expectation that the remake would boost prime-time ratings, it was also expected that the telenovela would create opportunities for the biome, both in terms of stimulating nature-based tourism and, above all, by bringing society closer to environmental debates on the urgency of implementing public policies to ensure greater conservation of what is one of the most important wetlands and freshwater areas on the planet.

Unlike the first version, which aimed to show the beauties of the Pantanal to Brazil and the world, the remake comes to contrast the magnitude of the biome with environmental issues. Bruno Luperi commented on his social media about the major fires that hit the region in 2020:

This adaptation aims to shed light on sensitive issues and debates for society throughout the plot, seeking, in addition to mere entertainment, to propose, perhaps, an important reflection for Brazil. I have faith that actors, actresses, and musicians will not be extinct when that day comes, but there will be no point in so much talent gathered if there is no Pantanal⁹ (Luperi, 2020).

It was hoped, then, that the new version of the telenovela would not romanticize human action. Thus, Globo's research team analyzed data on wildfires, deforestation, and water scarcity and concluded that the biome lost 12% of its native vegetation cover in the last three decades, an area equivalent to 12 times the size of the city of São Paulo (Filippe, 2022). In 2020 alone, the fire consumed about 26% of the wetlands. A drier Pantanal is therefore more conducive to

9 Original text: "Essa adaptação visa lançar luz sobre questões e debates sensíveis para a sociedade ao longo da trama, buscando, além do mero entretenimento, propor, quem sabe, uma reflexão importante para o Brasil. Tenho fé que atores, atrizes e músicos não estarão em extinção quando esse dia chegar, mas de nada adiantará tanto talento reunido se não houver Pantanal."

the expansion of agriculture, which is also present in the plot. One of the points that deserves to be highlighted and that exemplifies very well the contextual differences between the two versions is the opening. In 1990, the focus was mainly on exotic animals in the biome, with little attention on landscapes, and attention drawn to female nudity. The woman appears as an animal, also exotic and seductive. In the 2022 version there is no nudity. The focus is one hundred percent on the biome's landscapes, with the addition of a new element to the scenery: cattle.

The cattle and the decrease in water levels in the Pantanal are issues constantly addressed by José Leôncio, who, despite being a major agribusiness entrepreneur, is environmentally conscious. Tenório, who has an obscure past involving land grabbing in the south of the country, is looking for a way to develop a profitable activity in the region and tries to convince Leôncio to get involved in mining and logging. The answer is categorical:

I never did and I never want to mess with mining, Tenório. I couldn't bear the shame of polluting the river with mercury, digging up everything. Men have to stop exploring what is under the earth to take better care of what is on top. Don't you know that it is forbidden by law to exploit illegal timber and mining? Because of the way things are going, these wealth producers will put Brazil in a hole¹⁰ (Pantanal, 2022).

José Leôncio's children also follow their father's lead. As soon as he arrives in the Pantanal, Jove (Jesuíta Barbosa) goes for a walk with Tadeu to get to know the region. Looking at all the beauty of the place, he comments that it was a paradise with its days numbered: "I'm not the one saying, no. The river waters are becoming increasingly murky. Because of what they're doing upstream. Bringing everything down, putting crops in every corner, setting fire to the wetlands"¹¹ (Pantanal, 2022). Tadeu then responds, "That's why godfather doesn't allow fire here at all. Fire here is only as a last resort, and barely. Always with the firebreaks reinforced, keeping an

10 Original text: "Eu nunca mexi e nem quero saber de mexer com garimpo, Tenório. Não ia aguentar a vergonha de tá poluindo o rio com mercúrio, esburacando tudo. O homem tem que parar de explorar o que está debaixo da terra para cuidar melhor do que tem por cima. O amigo não sabe que é proibido por lei explorar madeira ilegal e garimpo? Por causa do jeito que as coisas vão, esses produtores de riqueza vão botar o Brasil é dentro do buraco."

11 Original text: "Não sou eu que estou dizendo, não. São as águas dos rios cada dia mais turvas. Pelo que estão fazendo rio acima. Derrubando tudo, botando lavoura em tudo que é canto, tacando fogo nas matas."

eye on the winds, at the right time, never in drought, never! I don't even remember the last time we had a fire here"¹² (Pantanal, 2022).

Velho do Rio (played by Osmar Prado) is a type of entity, a mystical figure who presents himself sometimes in the form of a person, sometimes in the form of an anaconda. He is the guardian of the Pantanal. Precisely for this reason, the character takes a combative stance when it comes to threats to the region. In one of his emblematic scenes, he talks on the poisons of rivers and the wickedness of man:

These waters that arrive here, when they arrive, are no longer as they were before. They're not so clean anymore. They bring poison, mercury. They bring the smell of death. Where does this poison that no one talks about come from? That these people pretend they don't see? Worse than the one that kills an animal, is the one that poisons the waters of a river, because it kills everything. Kills without leaving a trace. Sometimes it kills without even knowing that it did. Everything that lives in the river dies with it. The fish that does not die poisoned poisons the birds that will eat it. It poisons the capybaras, the otters, the jaguars. It poisons even the men. And I wonder: how many fish will have to die, how many birds, how many animals of how many different species will have to go until someone does something? How far does this killing go? How long will this go unpunished? Of all the evil that men do?¹³ (Pantanal, 2022).

In addition to the modulations in the speeches of characters, as we have seen in the cases of Velho do Rio, protector of the environment, and José Leôncio, who negotiates the place of agribusiness in the environmental dynamics of the biome, the new version of *Pantanal* also directly addresses the increase in wildfires. In the 80th chapter, fires begin to occur near Leôncio's

12 Original text: "Por isso que o padrinho não permite fogo aqui de jeito nenhum. Fogo aqui é só em caso de última 'precisão' e olhe lá. Sempre com o aceiro dobrado, de olho nos ventos, na época certa, nunca na seca, nunca! Eu mesmo nem lembro a última vez que tivemos fogo aqui."

13 Original text: "Essas águas que chegam aqui, quando chegam, não são mais como eram antes. Não são mais tão limpas. Trazem nelas veneno, mercúrio. Trazem o cheiro da morte. De onde vem esse veneno que ninguém fala? Que essa gente finge que não vê? Pior do que aquele que mata um bicho, é aquele que envenena as águas de um rio porque esse mata tudo. Mata sem deixar rastro. Mata às vezes "inté" sem nem saber que matou. Tudo que vive no rio morre junto dele. O peixe que não morrer envenenado envenena as aves que vão comer ele. Envenena as capivaras, as ararinhas, as onças. Envenena até o bicho homem. E eu me pergunto: quantos peixes vão ter que morrer, quantas aves, quantos bichos de quantas raças diferentes vão ter que se ir até que alguém faça alguma coisa? Até onde vai essa mortandade? Até quando isso vai ficar sem castigo? De todas as maldades que o bicho homem faz?"

farm, mobilizing some characters within this core group. In the first scenes, the antagonist Tenório argues with his son the possibility of selling some of his land to a politician from Maranhão. Then we see Velho do Rio walking through the forest and smelling “a smell that comes from afar” — at which time we see, in the foreground, the fire spreading. The chapter continues with the development of other plots and, when the story returns to Velho do Rio, he speaks disgruntled: “This can’t be happening, it can’t. Fire does not come from drought, it only comes when lightning strikes... and lightning only comes when there is rain. Where is this coming from?”¹⁴ (Pantanal, 2022). Then, the character walks towards the fire: “This will spread to every corner, it will turn the earth into a furnace, it will kill everything it comes across. I can’t allow this fire! I have to end it”¹⁵ (Pantanal, 2022).

We then see the wetland burning in the background, soon after, we return to the conversation between Tenório and his son, which started at the beginning of the chapter. The villain claims that he will sell land in the Pantanal to the front person of a politician from the state of Maranhão, and his son confronts him, accusing him of being a land grabber. The curious thing is that, despite the striking scenes of Velho do Rio announcing the fire, the other characters do not seem to realize what was happening. Only Juma and José Leôncio, who have affective ties to the Pantanal and Velho do Rio, claim to be feeling “anguish in their chest”.

The highlight begins at 33 minutes into the chapter, at which point real scenes of wildfires are shown, filmed by filmmaker and documentarian Lawrence Wahba as part of the documentary *Jaguetê Avá: Pantanal em Chamas* (*Jaguetê Avá: Pantanal on Fire*, 2021). These images are interspersed with fictional scenes that build the presence of Velho do Rio in the middle of the fire. Among the images displayed is a sequence in which firefighters try to control the fire, as well as photos of injured and dead animals. The images are presented for about three minutes, in silence, with no music in the background — just subtle sound effects. After that, the commercial break cue is also aired in silence. It is curious to observe how, to include a contemporary environmental issue in the narrative, the insertion of real images was chosen as a stylistic strategy, exposing more directly the relationship between fiction and reality.

14 Original text: “Isso não pode tá acontecendo, não pode. O fogo não vem da seca, só vem quando cai raio... e raio só vem quando tem chuva. De onde é que tá vindo isso?”

15 Original text: “Isso vai se espalhar pra tudo que é canto, vai transformar a terra numa fornalha, vai matar tudo que vir pela frente. Eu não posso deixar esse fogo! Eu tenho que acabar com ele.”

The sequence ends with Velho do Rio, in his snake form, dying – symbolizing the “spirit of nature” victimized by fire. After this chapter, the narrative continues without much mention of the wildfire or the character and, only in chapter 83 do we discover that Velho do Rio, as an anaconda, was rescued by firefighters. At the scene, veterinarians comment that snakes like that will soon be extinct due to damage to their biome of origin. The depiction of wildfire scenes generated a lot of engagement on social networks and in the journalistic media.¹⁶

After this chapter, the narrative continued to address environmental issues, especially from the contrast between the behaviors of José Leônicio and Tenório. The clashes, present in the structure of the original narrative, were updated and allowed for the exploration of several contemporary agendas. For example, Tenório tries to convince José Leônicio to set up a resort in the region, in partnership with him. In the original plot, the proposal was to create alligators for leather production (Fidalgo, 2022), an issue in line with the context of the telenovela’s exhibition, considering that hunting wild animals was a subject under discussion at the time, since it was only two years earlier, in 1988, that the implementation of the Fragelli Law criminalized the practice (Moreno, 2019).

At the time of the remake’s exhibition, the environmental discourse was also strongly associated with the production of the telenovela, whose environmental impacts were announced as reduced (Globo Repórter, 2022). Even the jaguar chosen to live Juma Marruá was an animal from an NGO that rescues victims of hunting and trafficking (Oswald, 2024). The cast also engaged in the environmental agenda. The protagonist Marcos Palmeira, owner of 200 hectares of land in the mountains’ region of Rio de Janeiro, announced that his farm was part of a reforestation project in partnership with Instituto Terra de Preservação Ambiental (Terra Institute of Environment Preservation), and that he had planted about 200,000 native Atlantic Forest species in the area (Sant’Anna, 2022). Juliana Paes stated that, during the shootings, she got to know the projects of the Arara Azul Institute and accepted the invitation to be an ambassador for the NGO (Camargo, 2022).

It is worth noting that *Pantanal* was also an international success (Observatório da TV, 2022), and that, in the promotional materials of the telenovela abroad, dialoguing with an audience

16 Examples can be found in Moreira (2022) and Pazin (2022).

less affected by nostalgia, the remake was sold as a work with an ecological theme. In the synopsis on Globo's official LinkedIn page for the international market, the telenovela is presented with a focus on the biodiversity and scenery of the Pantanal region, reinforcing the place of this agenda as one of the main aspects of adaptation, in direct dialogue with the contemporary context.¹⁷

Another point that deserves our attention is that, despite the positive approach to environmental issues, the remake also suffered criticism for the representation of agribusiness. It was precisely from the 1990s on, after the exhibition of the original version of the telenovela, that the Pantanal experienced an exponential growth in agriculture. According to data from MapBiomas, an initiative that analyzes vegetation cover in Brazil, between 1985 and 2019, the area destined to agriculture in the Pantanal increased by 259%. The most significant expansion occurred between 1989 and 1999, when pastureland grew 78.5%, going from 822.7 thousand hectares to 1.4 million hectares (Morel, 2020).

Thus, the construction of the character José Leôncio was widely criticized by sectors of civil society that combat the damage caused by agribusiness in the Pantanal (Pittelkow, 2022). The remake followed the proposal of the original work, portraying the businessman as an idealist who puts his environmental awareness above business. This aspect was frequently discussed in the meetings he held with the executives Davi (Lucci Ferreira) and Matilde (Mareliz Rodrigues), who, responsible for managing his business in Campo Grande, always presented him with the "market demands". Leôncio resists, reinforcing the contradictory image of the protagonist as a man who, despite having become a millionaire through agribusiness, protects nature (Extra, 2022).

7 Final considerations

The remake of *Pantanal* reaffirms the strength of Brazilian television drama as a field for the construction of narratives that articulate memory, culture, and contemporary social debates. By revisiting an iconic work, the new adaptation not only rescued the legacy of the original version, but also promoted significant updates, which dialogue with urgent themes, such as the environment, racial

¹⁷ The short synopsis found on the page's posts reads: "Pantanal unfolds the gripping saga of the Leôncio and Marruá families, set against the backdrop of one of the planet's most bio diverse [sic] ecosystems, the Pantanal. This rich and diverse landscape serves as the perfect canvas for a story filled with passion, drama, and intrigue" (Globo International Distribution, 2024).

diversity, and gender representations. The appeal to nostalgia played a central role in this process, working both as an affective element of connection with the public and as a market strategy that fits into a broader context of revaluation of content from the past.

The analysis made it possible to understand that media nostalgia is not homogeneous but crossed by different meanings and intentionalities. The remake of *Pantanal* operated a balance between repetition and innovation, ensuring the familiarity needed to captivate viewers of the original version, while introducing changes to meet the expectations of contemporary audiences. The reconfiguration of characters and plots demonstrated that television drama can be a space for negotiating cultural values, in which discourses on citizenship, belonging and identity are constantly revisited and re-signified.

Our objective was to analyze how the remake articulates past and present to incorporate contemporary debates about race, gender, and the environment, using its condition as a reference work of national television drama. Nostalgia, in this sense, is not seen as a mere return to the familiar, but as a cultural practice that allows new meanings to be reinscribed in consecrated narratives. The interpretative methodology applied to audiovisual narrative, added to the analysis of public repercussions, allowed us to map how these symbolic shifts were structured in the plot and received socially.

Regarding the racial issue, the introduction of a storyline with black characters — nonexistent in the original version — characterized an advance in representation, while it also denoted limitations of the telenovela in promoting an equitable distribution of narrative power. The subordinate position of Zuleica and her children, although broken by moments of agency and criticism of structural racism, is still part of a hierarchical imaginary, reinforcing the urgency of a more radically diverse television drama.

In the gender dimension, the highlight for Maria Bruaca illustrates a process of female subjectivation that shifts the logic of submission to an affirmation of autonomy and desire. The broad empathy of the public with her trajectory indicates a growing sensitivity towards violence against women. At the same time, characters such as Zuleica, Guta, Juma, and even the men in the plot (such as Tenório and Jove) make up a mosaic of experiences that reveal contemporary disputes about masculinity, sorority, resistance, and emancipation.

The environmental axis, in turn, stands out as one of the most striking innovations of the remake, both for the rooting of

the ecological theme in the narrative and for the use of aesthetic strategies, such as the insertion of real images of the wildfires in the wetland. The figure of Velho do Rio, already symbolic in the original version, is here intensified as a guardian of the biome and a voice of denunciation. Although the protagonist José Leôncio is portrayed as a conscious agribusiness owner, the narrative dialogues critically with the contradictions between environmental conservation and agricultural expansion — albeit without deeply straining them.

Thus, the remake of *Pantanal* exemplifies the potential of television fiction as a space for negotiation between tradition and innovation, memory and criticism, affectivity and politics. Nostalgia, far from being just an emotional resource, acts as a language that allows reenacting the past with the eyes of the present, opening gaps for more plural discourses about citizenship and belonging. By updating themes dear to Brazilian society through a consecrated work, *Pantanal* reaffirms the central role of television drama in the construction of collective memory and in the symbolic mediation of conflicts and identities in constant transformation.

The remake of *Pantanal* reaffirms television drama as a dynamic field in constant negotiation between memory and innovation, tradition and change. By revisiting a classic, the work demonstrated that the narratives of the past can be re-signified from the demands of the present, generating new dialogues and interpretations. The complexity of the adaptation and the reception of the telenovela indicate that television fiction continues to play a relevant role in the articulation of social debates, promoting reflections on identity, citizenship, and belonging in contemporary Brazilian society.

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Citizen themes in an enchanted *Pantanal*

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1 Introduction

The Brazilian telenovela, as Lopes (2009) points out, acts not only as a communicative resource, mediating the contact between authorship, work, and reception on a large scale, but also acts decisively through social merchandising. More recently known by the expression “social responsibility actions”, such initiatives only occur because the telenovela brings in its narrative elements of the national reality that reflect and refract aspects of society, fostering, in its content, a chain of meanings that reveal its almost documentary character, without losing its status as a piece of entertainment (Lopes, 2009). These social aspects embedded in fiction are what we call “citizen themes”.

The overlap between telenovela and society can be justified by the fact that media products are guided by social, historical, and cultural contexts, as Martín-Barbero (2004) explains. Jenkins, Peters-Lazaro and Shresthova (2020) define “civic imagination” as

the ability of people to visualize alternatives to existing cultural, social, political, and economic conditions, involving not only the ability to imagine a better world, but also to see themselves as agents capable of making significant changes. Based on this, the authors argue that popular culture plays a crucial role in this process, offering symbolic resources that can be appropriated, remixed, and reused to stimulate citizenship and boost social movements (Jenkins; Peters-Lazaro; Shresthova, 2020).

Considering the Brazilian telenovela as an example of a product capable of fostering civic imagination, this research investigates the construction of the characters Velho do Rio (Osmar Prado), Maria Marruá (Juliana Paes), and Cramulhão (Gabriel Sater), from *Pantanal*, in order to understand the strategies and the process of absorption by television fiction of some of the countless tales of enchantment that are part of our culture, from those of Portuguese influence, such as the Maranhão tales, for example, touching on the Amazonians, to those of the Midwest, backdrop of the object of our research, associating them with emerging social issues, also discussing their narrative and stylistic constitution. On the one hand, we seek to identify characteristics of these characters that show the connection with the oral narratives created and disseminated in Brazilian culture in general and, especially, in the Pantanal; on the other hand, we intend to describe how these same characters are constructed narratively and stylistically to the point of becoming relevant elements for the development of the telenovela and for the discussion of social themes fundamental to the promotion of citizenship.

Throughout the chapters of *Pantanal*, three characters draw our attention: Velho do Rio, Maria Marruá, and Cramulhão. Briefly, Velho do Rio is a mysterious entity, between the earthly and the spiritual, who protects the animals and the Pantanal biome, sometimes appearing as a man, sometimes as a snake; Maria Marruá is a woman who becomes a jaguar to protect her daughter and who, on a full-moon night, goes out to hunt for food, driving away with her roar those who pester her family; Cramulhão, in turn, is a demonic being who agrees to make pacts in which he offers something in exchange for the heart and soul of the person who makes a request — in this case, who incorporates it is the character Trindade (Gabriel Sater).

Escobar (2010), for example, when dedicating himself to the analysis of the fantastic aspects of the first version of *Pantanal*, produced in 1990, starts with the characters Trindade, Velho do Rio, and Juma Marruá (played, in the 2022 remake, by Alanis Guillen) to

discuss the impact of these elements on the development of the story and public perception. For the author, by mixing realism and fantastic elements, the telenovela provides a representation of the Brazilian people, in addition to playing the role of bringing the public closer to the credible and the implausible, stimulating reflections on faith, superstition and the complexity of the human condition. Scabin, Nabeiro and Ferraraz (2024), when observing the political-social themes present in the 2022 remake based on the circulation of memes on Instagram, highlight that fan productions address topics such as access to education, homophobia, and women's rights, emphasizing specific scenes and characters in the plot. The analysis reveals how memes articulate fictional elements of the telenovela with non-fictional references from Brazilian society, in addition to reinforcing community ties between telenovela fans and participating in contemporary political and social debates. For the authors, this dynamic of meme circulation demonstrates the way the digital audience appropriates the television narrative to produce meanings and actively participate in digital culture.

Based on the theoretical discussions, on the possible relations between television poetics and sociocultural context, and on the observations of the group of authors of this chapter on the production and circulation of *Pantanal*, we ask: how does the Brazilian telenovela tend to trigger citizen themes through its fantastic characters and how do narrative and style collaborate with this approach?

2 On characters, styles, and memes

The vastness of the forests, the rivers, the desolate plateaus, the thin vegetation caatingas of the coast, smelling of cashew trees, was not empty of powerful and fiery entities. [...]. In the crucible of forests and tropical waters, Olharapos became Mapinguari, Man-Animal was Capelobo, and enchanted snakes converged on the kingdom of mboiaçú or boiunas¹ (Casculo, 2012, p. 48).

Literature has always played an important role in the development and consolidation of the Brazilian telenovela. There is an intersection between literature that manifests itself in books

¹ Original text: "A vastidão dos matos, dos rios, dos chapadões desolados, as caatingas de vegetação rala do litoral, cheiroso de cajueiro, não estava vazia de entidades poderosas e ardentes. [...]. No cadinho das florestas e das águas tropicais, o Olharapos se tornava Mapinguari, o Bicho-Homem era o Capelobo, as cobras encantadas convergiam para o reino das mboiaçú ou das boiunas."

and popular literature, which has orality as one of its main elements (Fernandes, 2002). It is this cultural manifestation that *Pantanal* relied on to present the characters that are at the center of this research: legends and myths that were forged in television fiction, but that remain rooted in oral accounts impregnated by personal experiences and collective memories, as the author himself observes about the creation of Cramulhão (Memória Globo, 2008). They are, therefore, elements of the field of Brazilian folklore, understood as the “cultural creations of a community, based on its traditions expressed individually or collectively, representative of its social identity”² (Comissão Nacional de Folclore, 1995, p. 1).

The group of authors of this chapter remains with their theoretical-methodological proposal of analysis of television fiction, already worked on in previous publications of the Obitel-Brasil network, to maintain the research focus on the constitution of television products – in particular, on the process of telling the story and on audiovisual material, the narrative and the images and sounds that make up the sensitive texture of each product, respectively. However, this study focuses on a specific field that crosses the narrative of *Pantanal*: the universe of myths and popular legends, represented by the characters Velho do Rio, Maria Marruá, and Cramulhão, as well as the social issues they bring to the screen.

Velho do Rio, a spiritual guardian who watches over nature and protects it from the wickedness of men, heals people and helps them when they get lost in the immensity of the Pantanal, taking on the shape of a sucuri snake, was inspired by four legends of the region: *Pai do Mato*, *Minhocão*, *Sinhozinho*, and *Pé de Garrafa*. *Pai do Mato* or *Mãozão* (Father of the Woods or Big Hand), one of the oldest legends of the biome, is an entity that, according to the imagination, can take over the shape of a hairy animal, like a tapir, or a human shape, like a hairy and bearded man. *Mãozão* echoes a loud scream in the woods, which should not be answered – otherwise, the person may go mad. The second legend mentioned is that of the *Minhocão* (Big Worm). The *Minhocão* is also a long snake of dark color. According to the story, it leaves tracks of its great head by the banks of rivers, and when agitated or hungry, it turns boats over and devours fishermen. An immense noise announces the arrival of *Minhocão*. If the person survives the monster’s attack, they may go insane. There is also the legend of *Sinhozinho* (an affectionate

² Original text: “criações culturais de uma comunidade, baseado nas suas tradições expressas individual ou coletivamente, representativo de sua identidade social.”

diminutive of “*Senhor*,” roughly “Little Mister”), a mysterious friar who toured the Bonito region in the 1930s. Though small in stature and unable to speak, he was known for his powers to bless, heal, and communicate in peculiar ways. The *Pé de Garrafa* (Bottlefoot), the fourth legend, has as its characteristic a body covered with hair, except around the navel, which would be the vulnerable point of its monstrous figure. In addition, it has only one foot, according to some narratives, in the shape of a bottle bottom, leaving traces where it goes. When it has its territory invaded, it lets out strong whistles and can hypnotize anyone who dares to face it. The victims are taken to its cave, where they are devoured.

The character of Cramulhão, also known as *Famaliá* and *Capeta da Garrafa* (devil of the bottle), among other names, is a being originated from a pact that people say can be made with the devil. This pact consists, most of the time, of an exchange: the person asks for wealth, and the little devil will serve them all their life and, at the end of it, take their soul. A recurring figure in Benedito Ruy Barbosa’s telenovelas, such as *Renascer* and *Paraíso*, not coincidentally reminds us of European legends. The proximity between the various legends allows them to be easily adapted.

From the legendary origins to the construction of the characters, what narrative and stylistic strategies and resources were triggered in the work of Benedito Ruy Barbosa (1990), conducted, in the 2022 version, by Bruno Luperi?

3 Above good and evil, the enchanted of *Pantanal*

In the narrative universe of *Pantanal* (2022), the circularity of time, ancestry, and enchantment permeate the trajectories of Maria Marruá, Velho do Rio, and Cramulhão, evoking the fundamental contribution of the myths of traditional peoples to the construction of the Brazilian collective imagination. As Nêgo Bispo (2021) reminds us, history does not follow a straight line, but is renewed in beginning, middle and beginning.

All paths lead to ancestry in the plot, in which the enchantment is passed on to the descendants of the Leôncio clan as a legacy. The mythical allegory of *Pantanal* goes beyond its characters and their destinies; it decodes for the public other possibilities of relationship with the land. Characters as great as the biome — the largest jaguar, the largest sucuri, the largest violeiro (Brazilian viola player) — are also vulnerable to the Anthropocene, drawing our attention to the

fact that, although nature manifests its vocation for eternity beyond human dramas (Machado; Becker, 2008), it is up to us to “fight tooth and nail to be entitled to a future,”³ as the theme song of the work suggests (Sagrado Coração da Terra, 1990).

3.1 In the footsteps of Maria Marruá

“Maria, Maria is a gift, a certain magic,”⁴ sings Milton Nascimento ([1978]) about the essence of Brazilian women, shaped by adversity. Known as Marruá for her indomitable nature, Maria bears on her face the marks of the daily struggle for subsistence, despite the accumulated losses. With simple clothes and few words, she represents the paradox of so many rural women who, although living on the land, find no rest in it, facing the harshness of the environment and the cultural ties that subjugate their autonomy. Her trajectory can be understood from the analysis of the conditions of rural workers in Brazil, marked, as Silva (2010) points out, by hard work, gender violence, and resignation imposed by the patriarchy. The trauma of losing her son hardens Maria and shapes her actions; her refusal to her husband and the journey to exile in the Pantanal express her disillusionment with a world marked by patriarchal violence and with the divine, which also does not spare women from their fate. By experiencing mourning and forced migration, Maria transcends the individual, becoming a symbol of the woman pushed to the limit of her physical and emotional capacities.

The Pantanal is not only a refuge, but the mirror of her strength. In its waters she finds the way of the jaguar – not as a metaphor, but as truth. As she faces the feline to defend her husband, Maria recognizes in its eyes her own power. Gradually, she regains her desire for life, culminating in her becoming unexpectedly pregnant with Juma, which reveals her unwavering maternal instinct.

Like the archetype of the Wild Woman proposed by Estés (1992), Maria’s metamorphosis represents a form of survival in a patriarchal world. Alone, she raises her daughter after the ambush that takes her partner’s life, symbolizing for many rural women the need to “be a jaguar” – embody brute force and resilience. The *oncismo* (a Brazilian literary term describing the intense, animal-like perspective of a character, especially a jaguar, often used to convey instinctual or predatory behavior) (Nóbrega; Santos; Melo, 2016), which

3 Original text: “Lutar com unhas e dentes pra termos direito a um depois.”

4 Original text: “Maria, Maria é um dom, uma certa magia.”

reflects the power of the jaguar in popular culture, highlights the transformation and struggle of Maria. A shrewd hunter, the jaguar is a symbol of power and transmutation for many indigenous peoples, being revered for its strength and spiritual role, guiding communities through the shamans (Muniz; Alzugaray, 2021). In the form of a jaguar, Maria claims her autonomy in a world that seeks to subjugate her. She and the feline become targets of the Anthropocene – trophies to be shot down. Maria Marruá does not escape this fate, being hunted in a world that treats both women and nature as resources (Garcia, 2012). Her transmutation after death reveals her bond with the earth and the duality of her essence: she is mother and predator, symbol of the guardian of the forest and the ancestral connection between woman and nature. By inheriting the jaguar transformation, Juma inscribes herself into a cycle of endurance that transcends time. Woman and beast, she walks alone, but she is not alone; her struggle is a rebirth. Thus, Maria, the Marruá, jaguar and woman, roams the waters of the Pantanal, where the struggle for the right to be is perpetuated, fluid and infinite in her lineage.

3.2 The sage and the snake: the skin changes of Velho do Rio

In the serpentine waters of the Pantanal, the figure of Velho do Rio emerges when farm hand Joventino disappears into the woods to bring the Marruá ox “under a spell”, leaving his son, José Leôncio, forever in his pursuit. As guardian of this rich ecosystem, Velho do Rio embodies the voice of the biome, revealing himself as both a wise man and a sucuri snake, interacting with the other characters only when he wishes. This ambivalence of their identity reflects the duality present in nature, where the boundaries between human and natural dissolve. The figure of the Ouroboros (Jung, 2018), the serpent that bites its own tail, guides our understanding of Joventino’s journey in search of individuation and new understanding of himself, culminating in his enchantment. Velho do Rio is people, nature and spirit, moving between these states with the fluidity of who belongs to all, but is not limited to any. He changes his skin recurrently, sometimes presenting himself as the old man in a cape, hat and staff, sometimes as the majestic serpent that curls up in the waters of the Pantanal, weaving the rivers in the legend of the great snake of the Amazonas River (Cascudo, 2012). The sucuri, the largest snake in the biome and a symbol of fear, evokes the duality of the

occult, manifesting itself in the dimensions of wisdom and danger. In this context, it refers to the symbology of Brazilian mythical snakes, such as *Boitatá*, *Boiguaçu*, and *Boiuna* (Cascudo, 2012), which establish a significant intersection as natural forces that transcend everyday life and challenge the conventions of the Anthropocene. As a shaman, Velho do Rio represents wisdom accumulated throughout life, challenging modern society's aversion to aging by underscoring the importance of respect and reverence for the wisdom that comes with age. Velho do Rio plays a crucial narrative role as protector of the forest and its creatures, reinforcing the idea of citizenship, in which the defense of the environment is intertwined with social responsibility. This function is amplified by his articulations with other characters: for evildoers, he emerges as a punitive force; in contrast, for Jove, Maria Marruá, and Juma, he is a counselor and protector, guiding them in times of need.

The birth of Juma is a crucial point, in which Velho do Rio reveals himself as a catalyst for the metamorphosis of Maria Marruá, who finds in her ancestry the strength to transform into a jaguar. He is also the one who helps his grandson Jove on the verge of death, putting him in the path of Juma, his great love. His ability to hear the thoughts of his son and grandson, even from afar, reinforces his essence as a being that transcends physical limits. This ability to intercede at critical moments reveals a deep understanding of the environment and family relationships, pointing to a legacy that is perpetuated across generations.

The culmination of the story occurs in the meeting of Velho do Rio with José Leôncio. After a lifetime of hidden and mysterious interactions, he finally reveals his identity to his son, justifying that he had not sought him out before because he knew the son never believed in the old man's existence. This recognition is an epiphany for José Leôncio, who, on his deathbed, finally understands the inheritance and the truth about his father, Joventino. The enchanted one gives his son the responsibility of continuing his mission: "It was written, son. Our stories don't end here either,"⁵ (Pantanal, 2022) a statement that points to the circularity of time in the telenovela.

3.3 The enchanted farm hand in Cramulhão's notes

The audience's relationship with a character is not always through a process of identification, since strangeness also

5 Original text: "Estava escrito, filho. Nossas histórias também não terminam aqui."

results from this relationship with the viewer. Cramulhão is an example of strangeness that brings suspense as its main element. Also known as *diabo* (devil), *coisa-ruim* (evil-thing), and *capeta* (another word for devil), he is present in popular oral narratives, for being part of legends in some regions of Brazil, appearing in stories told for generations, in which word of mouth gave rise to more than one version of his story. It was in these wanderings through different regions of the country that the author, Benedito Ruy Barbosa, got to know the story of the character and inserted him into his plots.

The character first appeared in the interior lands of *Paraíso*, in 1982, with his physical form trapped in a bottle, as a space object, but still classified as a character. In 1993, the story is repeated in *Renascer*, with the little devil trapped in the bottle, released by José Inocêncio, according to belief, only to pee on the cocoa plantations, thus keeping them free of the witch's broom, a plague that ravaged the colonels at the time, in addition to allowing the production of the best cocoa.

This story, in the version presented by Benedito, was inspired by Mr. Firmo, founder of farms in the Northeast, who, according to the country folk, was protected from the devil and had the Cramulhão trapped in the bottle:

They confirmed: "It's not a lie! The man had the devil in the bottle. The evil-thing was there, the 'cramulhão'. They said that one day Mr. Firmo had appeared with this bottle, placed it inside the house and, from then on, became protected: no bullet got to him. Everyone there confirmed the story⁶ (Memória Globo, 2008, p. 219).

In the two works mentioned, Cramulhão plays more of a spatial function than a traditional character role, although it presents characteristics that frame it as such. However, in *Pantanal* (1990), particularities related to the construction of narrative figures that incorporate references to traditional peoples, personal experiences of the author, and original elements designed specifically for the work stand out:

⁶ Original text: "Eles confirmaram: "É mentira não, sô! O homem tinha o capeta na garrafa. Tinha o coisa-ruim ali, o 'cramulhão". Contaram que, um dia, seu Firmo havia aparecido com essa garrafa, botado dentro de casa e, a partir de então, virado protegido: nenhuma bala entrava nele. Todo mundo ali confirmava a história."

My universe is Brazil. Usually, an actor goes to Paris or New York when he finishes shooting a telenovela. I'm going to the Pantanal, south of Minas, or the Araguaia River. I'm always messing with this sertão (backlands), because I have a very strong connection with the land. It is a telluric force⁷ (Memória Globo, 2008, p. 234).

In the case of Cramulhão in *Pantanal*, an abstract entity – as occurs, for example, with the object trapped in the bottle –, its presence manifests itself through the interlocution of its messenger, the farm hand Xeréu Trindade. The farm hand, who arrives at José Leôncio's farm with his viola, thought-provoking voice, and enigmatic phrases, reveals his pact with the devil – to become the best viola player in the world in exchange for his soul: "I called it playing the viola at a crossroads of life. He appeared dancing, all flickering, all around me. He sat next to me and said: 'You play very badly'"⁸ (Pantanal, 2022). He then offered the farm hand the possibility of becoming the best guitar player. When asked what prompted him to make such an offer, he explained, "Hell is a very lonely place. There is no fun there, except burning the lost souls in his furnace, listening to people scream in the fire. And even that had lost its fun"⁹ (Pantanal, 2022).

Throughout the plot, Trindade spoke several times about listening to Cramulhão's whisper about premonitions, secrets of other characters or just advice for him and those around him. In these dialogues, the farm hand made a point of mentioning that the idea did not come from him: "I'm not the one saying it" was his recurring warning phrase, after hearing the devil whisper in his ear. However, as a personification, there are scenes in which his voice changes, suggesting an incarnation of the Cramulhão himself. This transformation is not limited to the voice, but extends to the look and body expression, allowing, in addition to the characters within the diegesis, the audience itself to perceive this change.

Such modification was also noted by the use of personal pronouns: when Trindade referred to Cramulhão, he employed third-person

7 Original text: "O meu universo é o Brasil. Normalmente, um ator vai a Paris ou Nova York quando termina de gravar uma novela. Eu vou para o Pantanal, para o sul de Minas ou para o Araguaia. Estou sempre mexendo com esse sertão, porque tenho uma ligação muito grande com a terra. É uma força telúrica mesmo."

8 Original text: "Eu chamei tocando viola numa encruzilhada da vida. Ele apareceu dançando, todo lampeiro, em volta de mim. Sentou do meu lado e falou: 'Cê toca muito mal.'"

9 Original text: "O inferno é um lugar muito sozinho. Não tem diversão nenhuma por lá, a não ser ficar queimando as almas penadas na fomalha dele, ouvindo as pessoas tudo berrar no fogo. E até isso já tinha perdido a graça."

constructions and indirect discourse; when Cramulhão himself spoke through the mouth of Trindade, the speeches were presented in the first person singular. The *Pantanal*'s Cramulhão sometimes resembles the Christian figure of the Devil, for citing hell as a punitive place, where souls are burned, for negotiating an easy path to success with painful consequences, and for indicating the duality between good and evil. In dialogue with Tibério, Trindade states that it was God who created the Devil, the son who went wrong.

But the construction of the character goes beyond the conventional representation of the Devil, presenting him not only as a physical figure, but also as a voice of conscience or an ideology. His presence is never visualized directly in the plot; he exists through the descriptions of Trindade, either in analepses or in narrations made by the farm hand himself at the moment he claims to hear him. The speeches attributed to the devil do not show clear signs of its supernatural origin, except in the situations already mentioned, in which physical transformations occur, embodied by Trindade.

In this sense, the existence of Cramulhão works as a metaphor, as Dourado (2000, p. 106) mentions about the character's role in the narrative:

[...] the character is not only an image but also, and above all, a metaphor. The character has the same function in the novel as the metaphor in the sentence. The great virtue of the character is to have a body, [...] to have a name, to be substantive.¹⁰

It should be noted that the existence of the character Cramulhão is bound to the direct speech of Trindade, that is, he would not exist if not for the farm hand. The only exception is in the chapter in which the viola plays alone, seen by Zaqueu and Alcides, an event that escapes Xeréu's description or action, despite being about him.

The plot unfolds when the character Irma arrives at Leôncio's farm, and the viola player, who previously dedicated his time to work and music, sees in her the possibility of engaging in a romance. With half-closed eyes, he addresses the Princess — the affectionate nickname with which he referred to her — as her slave, in the words of Cramulhão. Soon he tried to explain his dealings

¹⁰ Original text: "o personagem não é só uma imagem, é também e, sobretudo, uma metáfora. O personagem tem no romance a mesma função que a metáfora na frase. A grande virtude do personagem é ter um corpo, [...] é ter um nome, é ser substantivo."

with the devil, which locked his heart, and it would be freed by a princess with the face of an angel, so that if she accepted him, he would be free from the pact. The romance between the angelic princess and the enchanted farm hand happens slowly, giving rise to a new mysterious point in the character's narrative: whether the pact was broken or not. Everything becomes even more complex when Irma is pregnant with Trindade's child, and the baby generates anxiety in everyone about whether it would carry the marks of the pact or not. Irma even fears having a baby with horns, revealing a radically different stance from the skepticism she had when she arrived in the Pantanal in the *chalana* (riverboat).

Before his son was even born, Trindade anticipated the consequences of his pact and decided to leave. In some chapters, they portray the devil's constancy in remaining present in the farm hand's body, like a trance: glances in the mirror to show a dialogue between him and the devil in the camera work. These moments make clear to the audience the transformation of the character, although, within the plot, there was some confusion to identify who the interlocutor was, as Irma says: "I never know when it is you or when it is this damn Cramulhão speaking through your mouth"¹¹ (Pantanal, 2022). To free his son, Trindade departs and leaves Irma in the care of Zé Lucas. The baby is born, with the help of Trindade as an apparition, sealing the breaking of the child's bond with the devil. The farm hand departs — bound to the pact, but not making a home anywhere — with his bewitched viola and the company of Cramulhão.

4 Narrative and style in *Pantanal* through the enchanted characters

Bucolic ambiances often evoke sensations of connection with nature, activating multiple human senses, by the smell of the forests, by the sound of river currents, by the sight of flora and fauna or even by touch. However, when this connection is dissociated from physical materiality and manifests itself in the audiovisualities of a telenovela, a new level of experience emerges. In *Pantanal*, the idyllic atmosphere is used to create events that challenge explanations of the familiar natural world, as argued by Todorov (2004).

¹¹ Original text: "Nunca sei quando é você ou quando é esse maldito Cramulhão falando pela sua boca."

In relation to its narrative space, *Pantanal* is set in the homonymous region, characterized by its geographical isolation and restricted access, evidenced by the need for transportation such as airplanes or long boat trips, such as the riverboat led by Eugênio. The absence of police reinforces the perception of a space where crime can thrive with impunity, since human laws have limited application, as noted by Martín-Barbero (2001).

Martín-Barbero (2001) also identifies the figure of the Punisher as central in the dramatic structure, in which characters such as Maria Marruá, Velho do Rio, and Cramulhão play roles that oscillate between the real and the fantastic, good and evil, with the function of applying justice. The role of the Punisher is illustrated as that of a hero who saves the victim and punishes the traitor, being reminiscent of the epics, in which the hero is often an ornate young gentleman or a man of advanced age endowed with gentleness and elegance.

In the context of *Pantanal*, these characters transcend the role of punishers, acting as protectors in a territory often described as “forgotten by God”. When considering the development of the narrative, the style — *mise-en-scène*, cinematography, montage, and sound composition, as elucidated by Bordwell and Thompson (2013) —, alongside the photography direction adopted in the production, helps to highlight these characters.

Maria Marruá is presented as a protective maternal figure, whose history is marked by personal tragedies and an animal instinct for protection. After the death of her son in a land conflict in Paraná, she and her husband, Gil (Enrique Diaz), take refuge in the Pantanal. The narrative shows a parallel with the biblical story of Moses, when the woman initially abandons her newborn daughter in a river, but later rescues her.

The maternal, powerful and strong character of Maria Marruá, as we have seen, is symbolized by her transformation into a jaguar, representing protection for her loved ones, similarly to the case of Velho do Rio, an entity intrinsically linked to the Pantanal region. Thus, although the narrative is not expressionist, it should be noted that the states of both characters as animal beings always occur through a strong internal feeling that mystically transforms them (Brill, 2002), a characteristic correlated to expressionism.

The introduction of Maria Marruá and the birth of Juma bring a visual contrast, in which the use of vibrant colors, such as the blue of the river and the green of the forests, creates a chromatic

harmony of vitality (Figures 1 to 3). This representation is important due to its naturalness and absence of civilization, as highlighted by Heller (2013).

Figure 1 – Maria Marruá amidst the nature of the Pantanal



Source: Screenshot of *Pantanal* (2022).

Figure 2 – Color point selection



Source: The authors (2025).

Figure 3 – Color palette angle



Source: The authors (2025).

Illuminated by the sun, the scene uses colors that reinforce the idyll and poetic conflict present in the narrative (Figure 4). The symbolism of gold and sunlight, accentuating a certain representation of the divine, with Marruá and Juma bathed in this light, ends up reinforcing themes of protection and sacredness (Heller, 2013). The final sequence, in which Velho do Rio and Maria assume their animalistic forms (Figures 5 to 11), uses textures and colors that highlight the conflict and mutual protection in relation to Juma; colors, therefore, that can produce these effects of meaning.

Figure 4 – Maria Marruá soothing Juma under sunlight



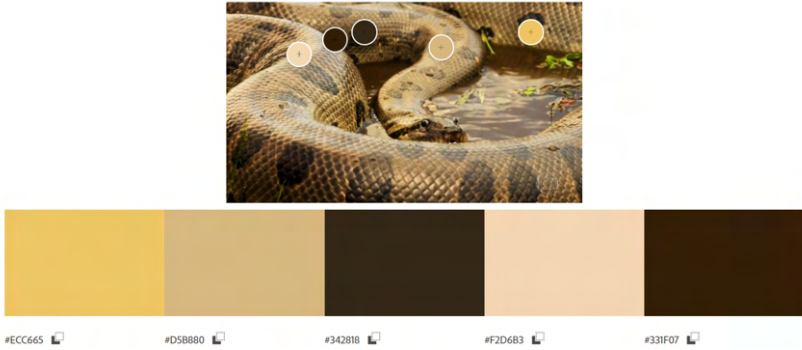
Source: Screenshot of *Pantanal* (2022).

Figure 5 – Sucuri (Velho do Rio)



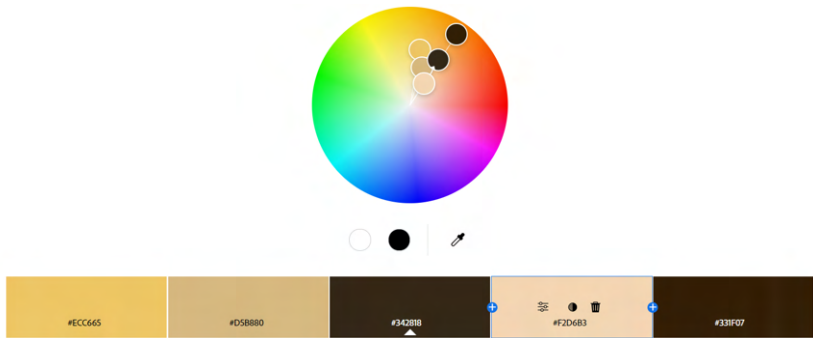
Source: Screenshot of *Pantanal* (2022).

Figure 6 – Color point selection



Source: The authors (2025).

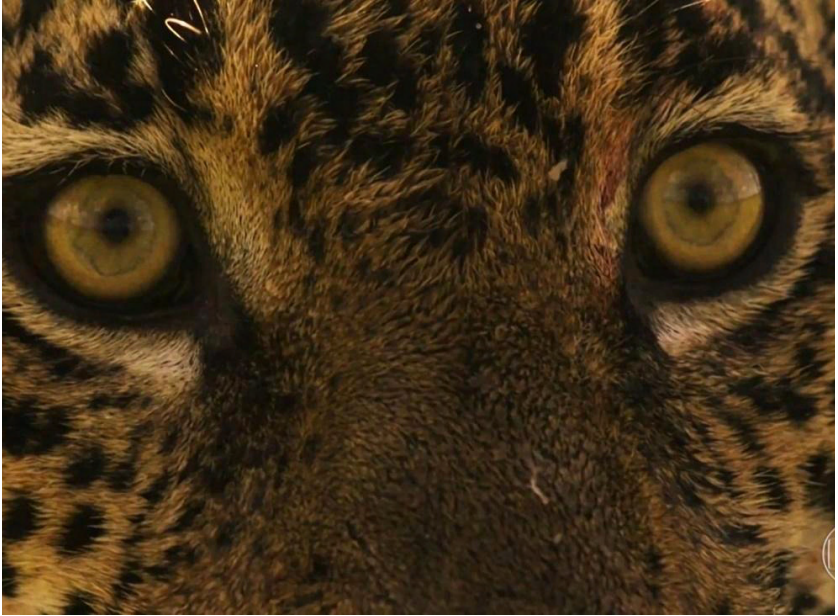
Figure 7 – Color palette angle



Source: The authors (2025).

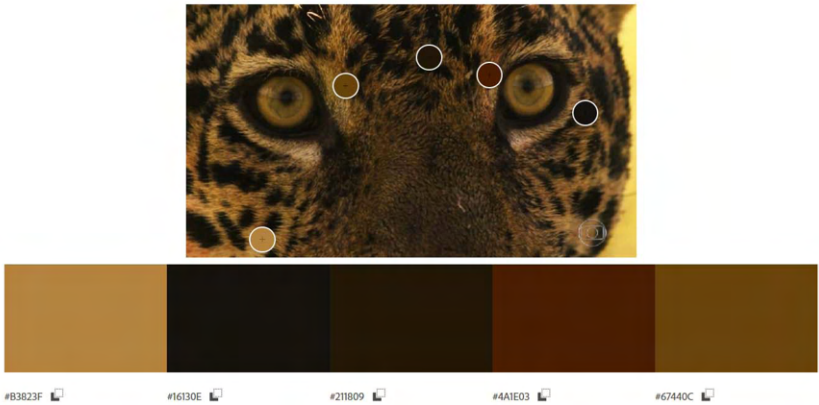
The sucuri, when it appears, has thick and flaky skin in earthy, yellowish and faded-orange tones, a threatening characteristic to newborn Juma. However, when Marruá perceives the proximity of the reptile and turns into a jaguar, the image we have is that of an animal's coat that, due to its texture, categorically contrasts with the scales of the sucuri, although curiously following shades of the “same family” of hues, noticeable when comparing the angles of the color palettes.

Figure 8 – Jaguar (Maria Marruá)



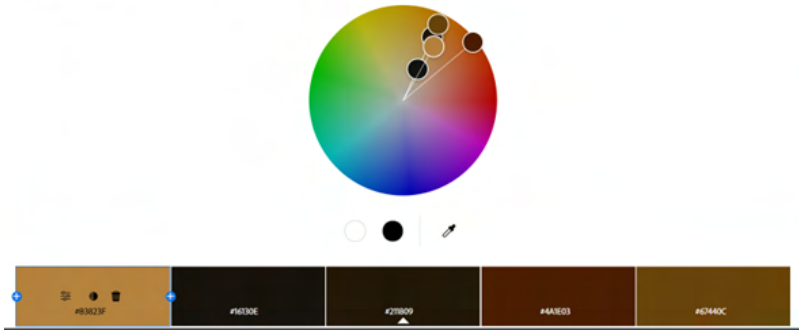
Source: Screenshot of *Pantanal* (2022).

Figure 9 – Color point selection



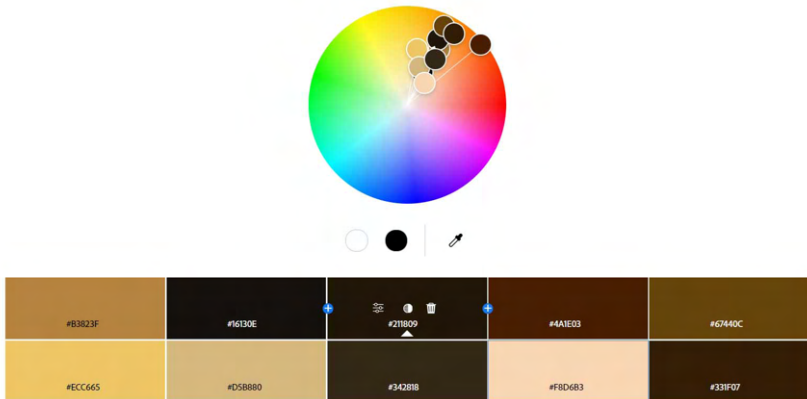
Source: The authors (2025).

Figure 10 – Color palette angle



Source: The authors (2025).

Figure 11 – Angles of the color palettes overlapped



Source: The authors (2025).

Another crucial moment for Maria Marruá occurs when her husband, Gil, is threatened by a jaguar. Armed with a rifle, she faces danger with courage. The soundtrack underlines the jaguar's every move, as well as the growing connection between the woman and the animal, until she decides to drop the weapon and confront it face to face, resulting in its retreat.

The culminating scene of Maria Marruá's trajectory is that of her death, in which she reflects on her past in a flashback, while under Lúcio's aim (Erom Cordeiro). The camera evolves from a general shot to an extreme close-up of her jaguar eyes, until she chooses to attack Lúcio. The soundtrack intensifies the tension

of the scene, culminating in the sound of a gunshot, while Maria Marruá's life fades under the sunset.

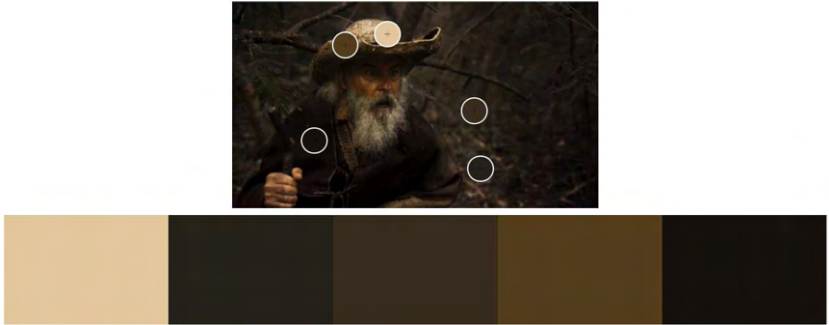
Velho do Rio also exemplifies divine justice, particularly in an emblematic scene in which he faces devastating fires in the Pantanal, the images of which reflect real events documented in 2019 and 2020, as Moreira (2022) records. The character is initially portrayed in robes that trail through the arid forest (Figures 12 to 14), while his gaze is fixed on the gray of the smoke that dominates the trees (Figures 15 and 16). This scenery is described as a “gray sea of smoke,” which turns the land into something barren and infertile.

Figure 12 – Velho do Rio facing the fire in the Pantanal



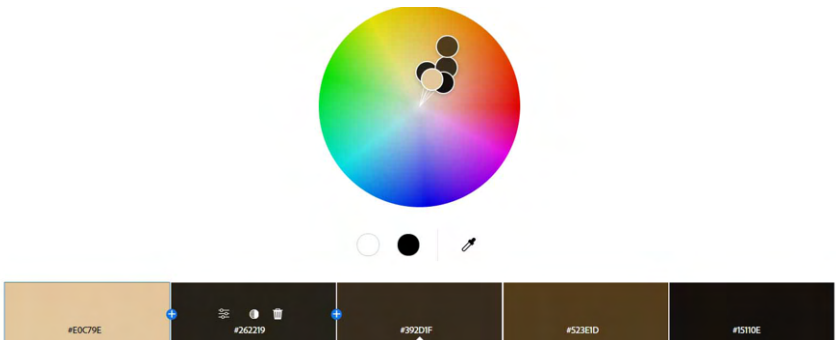
Source: Screenshot of *Pantanal* (2022).

Figure 13 – Color point selection



Source: The authors (2025).

Figure 14 – Angle and color palette



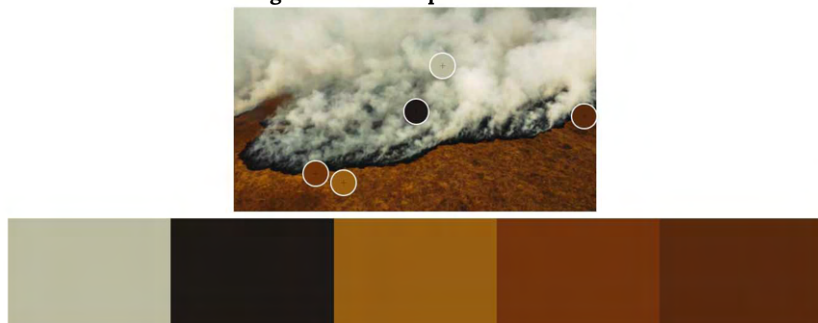
Source: The authors (2025).

Figure 15 – Fire in the Pantanal



Source: Screenshot of *Pantanal* (2022).

Figure 16 – Color point selection



Source: The authors (2025).

The earthy colors in the clothes of Velho do Rio and the burning earth create an analogy, visual and symbolic, in relation to meanings of decomposition and sadness (Heller, 2013). The chromatic palette causes a melancholic feeling, while the low-key and desaturated photography intensifies the feeling of desolation (Heller, 2013). A short shot that shows the fire consuming the green of the plants, now grayish, highlights the brutality of the flames at a color angle that tends to the complementary green-red colors in the chromatic circle (Figures 17 to 19), generating intense visual tension due to the way our eyes evoke complementary colors, because “the mind performs the work of completing, by perceptual processes, partial representations of known totalities”¹² (Bastos; Farina; Perez, 2006, p. 83).

Figure 17 – Pantanal burning



Source: Screenshot of *Pantanal* (2022).

¹² Original text: “a mente realiza o trabalho de completar, por processos perceptivos, representações parciais de totalidades conhecidas.”

Figure 18 – Color point selection



Source: The authors (2025).

Figure 19 – Angle and color palette



Source: The authors (2025).

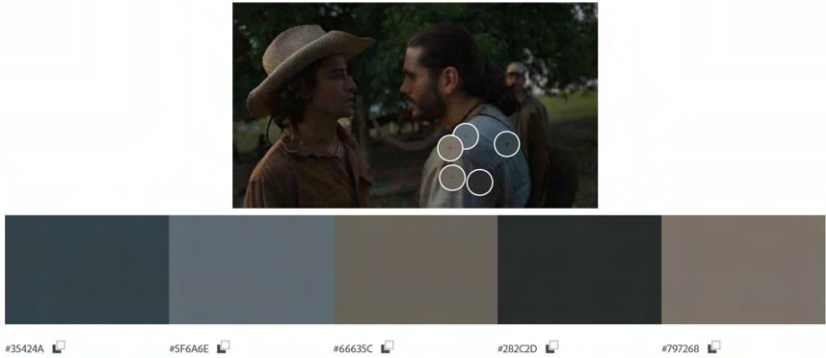
Finally, Trindade, who embodies Cramulhão, has his benevolent role evidenced, for example, by preventing an entourage from an impending storm, showing the protective dimension of his spiritual presence. Manifesting itself through the viola player, Cramulhão adds a dimension of premonition and threat, mobilizing, in its visual representation, the use of the color gray to symbolize the bad omen and horror (Heller, 2013). Its presence is marked by a symbolism of ambiguity and tension, reflecting the complexity of the fantastic narrative. In a significant scene, Trindade alerts Jove of an impending storm (Figures 20 to 24). The scene uses close-ups to emphasize their expressions, while quick cuts highlight the animals' reaction, creating a climate of tension.

Figure 20 – Jove (left) warned about the storm by Trindade/ Cramulhão (right)



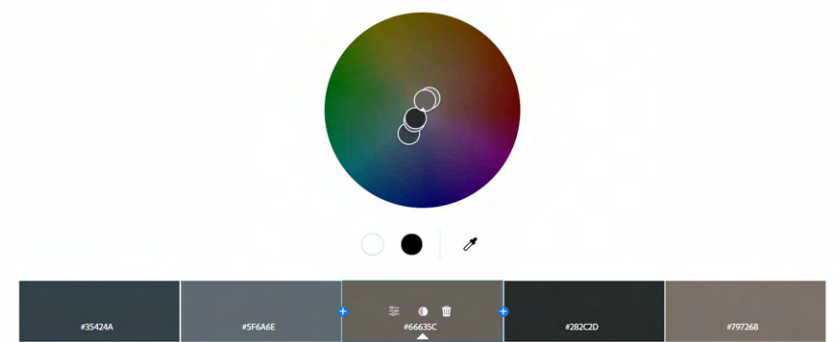
Source: Screenshot of *Pantanal* (2022).

Figure 21 – Color point selection (shirt used by Trindade)



Source: The authors (2025).

Figure 22 – Angulation of the color palette (shirt worn by Trindade)



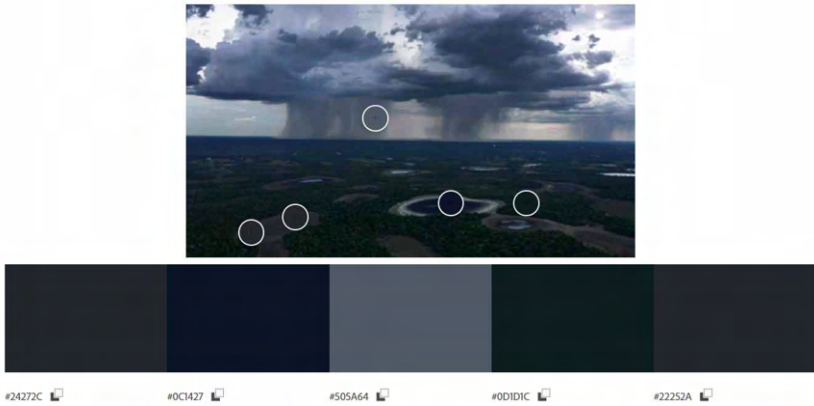
Source: The authors (2025).

Figure 23 – Storm approaching the Pantanal region



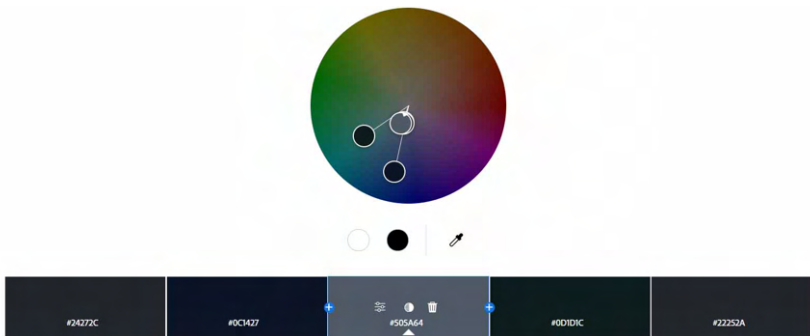
Source: Screenshot of *Pantanal* (2022).

Figure 24 – Color point selection



Source: The authors (2025).

Figure 25 – Color palette angle



Source: The authors (2025).

In short, *Pantanal*, through the activation of fantastic elements, presents characters who explore themes of justice, protection and the eternal tension between good and evil, in an environment in which human laws are often subjugated by natural and supernatural forces. In addition, the stylistic analysis, with an emphasis on the use of color palettes, reveals how the conscious use of chromatic and lighting elements can enrich the narrative, creating an audiovisual experience that transcends reality and explores the fantastic. From this perspective, photography direction and *mise-en-scène* are fundamental to evoke human emotions in contact with nature, while providing a sensory and aesthetic exploration of the Brazilian Pantanal.

5 The enchantment of *Pantanal*: From TV to memes and journalistic coverage

In addition to the reflections outlined throughout this chapter on the citizen themes that are manifested in the enchanted characters of *Pantanal*, we now turn our gaze beyond the narrative resources and stylistic compositions involved in the construction of these characters, to the meanings mobilized in the public repercussion of the telenovela and, in particular, in publicized manifestations, in different media spaces, about Maria Marruá, Velho do Rio, and Cramulhão.

More precisely, we seek to apprehend how the articulations between the three characters and the citizen themes were triggered – and if, in fact, they were triggered – in the space of deferred and diffuse circulation of statements that Braga (2006) calls system of social interaction on the media. To this end, we sought to identify mentions of the characters in *memes*¹³ published on digital social networks and in journalistic coverage.

Regarding this second focus of attention, we consider, as a universe of observation, the case of the Instagram page titled @remakepantanal, which, having remained active until March 2023, gathered publications from fans about the telenovela, playing a curatorial role in relation to these contents. Considering that, at the time of production of this chapter, the page had been taken down, it was not possible to carry out an exhaustive mapping of posts related to the characters Maria Marruá, Velho do Rio, and Cramulhão. Thus, our survey was based on a personal collection of memes by Ana Lucia Pinto da Silva Nabeiro, who, during her master's research at Anhembi Morumbi University, carried out extensive mapping, from the @remakepantanal page, of publications by viewers from the perspective of political and social issues and citizen themes.

Starting from this collection, we sought to manually identify records of publications related to the issue in focus in this chapter. There seems to be, however, a markedly low incidence of memes involving the enchanted characters of *Pantanal* from the perspective of citizen themes. Instead, in the memes about Maria Marruá, Velho do Rio, and Cramulhão, the predominant comments sometimes highlight the unusual enchantment of the characters (Figure 26), sometimes point out similarities between situations experienced by the characters and the daily lives of the spectators (Figure 27), sometimes express feelings directed to the characters and/or their actors (Figure 28).

13 By memes we mean digital content (such as viral images and videos) that share common meanings and are forwarded in online communities (Shifman, 2014; Sarmiento; Chagas, 2020).

In all cases, the publications seem to seek to produce comic effects generated by the incongruity resulting from the juxtaposition between elements indicative of the enchanted aspect of the characters, on the one hand, and the senses of triviality and ordinariness proposed by the situations represented in the memes, on the other.

Figure 26 – Meme about Maria Marruá published on the page @remakepantanal¹⁴



Source: Screenshot of the @remakepantanal Instagram page (2022).

Figure 27 – Meme about Velho do Rio published on the page @remakepantanal¹⁵



Source: Screenshot of the @remakepantanal Instagram page (2022).

¹⁴ Translation: “Maria: ‘I don’t want to have children’. Maria the next week, taking care of Juma.”

¹⁵ Translation: “When you try to give someone advice, but they are extremely stubborn.”

Figure 28 – Meme about Trindade/Cramulhão published on the @remakepantanal page on Instagram¹⁶



Source: Screenshot of the @remakepantanal Instagram page (2022).

Among the memes identified in the research, the only publications that deal with the enchanted characters of *Pantanal* from the perspective of citizen themes concern the case of Maria Marruá, whose ability to transform into a jaguar is read, in some posts, in the light of an affirmative perspective in relation to the strength of women, such as Figure 29. In such cases, the resonance of discursive arrangements typical of the so-called “media feminisms” (Gill, 2007; Prudencio, 2020) stands out, with emphasis on the perspective of “empowerment” as the key to facing the condition of oppression imposed on women. We believe that the popularity achieved by this diffuse form of feminism in digital social networks may explain why, among the enchanted characters investigated in this chapter, Maria Marruá seems to have been the privileged object of comments about the presence of citizen themes in the telenovela, although “unenchanting” characters, such as Filó and Maria Bruaca, whose circulation in memes we investigated in a previous research (Scabin; Nabeiro; Ferraraz, 2024), seem to have been more strongly associated with discussions about women’s rights in fan publications.

¹⁶ Translation: “Trindade talking about Cramulhão #pantanal: seductive, captivating and possessed”

Figure 29 – Meme about Trindade/Cramulhão published on the @remakepantanal Instagram page¹⁷



Source: Screenshot of the @remakepantanal Instagram page (2022).

This apparent “distance” between enchanted characters and citizen themes also seems to manifest itself in journalistic texts about *Pantanal*, albeit with singularities and in a less pronounced way. As an example, we considered the case of the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo*, a vehicle with the highest paid circulation in Brazil (IVC [...], 2023). Through research by the names of the characters and the telenovela, we reached 48 journalistic texts published during the *Pantanal* exhibition period¹⁸.

Of this set, seven texts establish relationships between the characters’ trajectories and the citizen themes that are manifested in them, with only one addressing the case of Maria Marruá: the article “‘Pantanal’: Juliana Paes points out beauty in Maria Marruá’s wrinkles and dark circles,”¹⁹ in which meanings of empowerment and resistance are mobilized in excerpts from the actress’s interview, which highlights the strength of her character in the face of many different adversities (Moreno, 2022).

¹⁷ Translation: “I think it is amazing this message conveyed through Maria turning into a jaguar to either save her husband or defend her daughter. She represents thousands of women who, when necessary, turn into an animal to fight through life.”

¹⁸ The list of identified texts based on the adopted search criteria is available through this link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i2wSgU97u7Yi3xVyKQOhkzKKKvmY0E7A/view?usp=sharing>. Accessed on: 28 set. 2024.

¹⁹ Original headline: “‘Pantanal’: Juliana Paes aponta beleza em rugas e olheiras de Maria Marruá.”

Another six texts address how the issue of environmental conservation and the debate on sustainability manifest themselves in the trajectory of Velho do Rio, highlighting its “ecological posture” (Joaquim, 2022), particularly evidenced in the chapters in which, transmuted into the sucuri snake, the character risks his own life to fight fires in the forest (Padiglione, 2022a), a passage that would act as an “alert to the fires in the region” (Lima, 2022). In this perspective, the enchantment dimension of the character is seen as a key piece for the mobilization of citizen themes: “Velho do Rio fights against arson and sucuri leaves wounded, as has happened with animals in real life”²⁰ (Padiglione, 2022b).

In a similar reading, Tony Goes (2022) highlights the contrast between fantastic realism and historical violence resulting from land conflicts in Brazil, highlighting the cases of Juma, who turns into a jaguar, and Velho do Rio, who turns into a sucuri, as “zoological avatars” who “fought against squatters and killers for hire”. The critic Mauricio Stycer, in turn, defines as “poetic” the way the enchanted characters are introduced in the narrative, highlighting the case of Velho do Rio, “who becomes a sucuri to protect the place” (Stycer, 2022).

Finally, it is noted that part of the texts that address the trajectory of Velho do Rio in the light of its commitment to protecting the environment highlight the insertion, in the telenovela, of images extracted from journalistic coverage of fires in the Pantanal region (Padiglione, 2022b). This is significant insofar as establishing intertextual relations with statements about events in evidence in journalistic coverage — with emphasis on the consequences of the dismantling of environmental policies during the government of President Jair Bolsonaro — can explain the emphasis given, by *Folha de S. Paulo*, to the case of Velho do Rio among the enchanted characters, whose stylistic and narrative construction contributes to the visibility of citizen themes in the telenovela.

6 Final considerations

Returning to the central focus of the collective project from which this research was originated — the citizen themes in the telenovela *Pantanal* (2022) — and the objective of the group of authors of this chapter — to identify how the respective telenovela mixes realism and enchantment to build characters that contribute

20 Original text: “Velho do Rio luta contra incêndio criminoso e sucuri sai ferida, como ocorreu com bichos na vida real.”

to the promotion of citizenship —, we discuss the presence of enchantment in the Brazilian telenovela, drawing parallels with the pedagogical function of melodrama and with the characteristics of the format as a communicative resource.

In this path, we observed the relevance of the characters in *Pantanal* for the dissemination and debate of social issues, such as feminism, gender identity, environmentalism, popular beliefs, among others. Therefore, in dialogue with Barberian cartography (Martín-Barbero, 2004) and the concept of civic imagination (Jenkins; Peters-Lazaro; Shresthova, 2020), supporting the notion of telenovela as a communicative resource (Lopes, 2009), we analyze the dramaturgical, narrative, and stylistic construction of moments led by Maria Marruá, Velho do Rio, and Cramulhão that tend to influence public opinion. Finally, we analyzed the circulation of digital memes and journalistic articles about *Pantanal*, complementing the reflections developed throughout the study of citizen themes and directing our gaze beyond the narrative and compositional resources of these characters, reaching the meanings mobilized in the public repercussion of the telenovela.

Through this reflective path, we hope to make a theoretical contribution from the point of view of establishing dialogues between the concepts of civic imagination and telenovela as a communicative resource applied to the construction of characters embodying magical realism, while we sought to innovate methodologically by combining Barberian cartography with the poetic analysis of the audiovisual, proposing paths of analysis that are able to understand the manifestation of citizen themes from the narrative and stylistic construction of the telenovela.

Nevertheless, it is worth stressing the potentialities observed in the enchanted characters of *Pantanal* from the point of view of their potential to generate public debates on citizen themes. This is because, although the characters Maria Marruá and Velho do Rio are clearly inspired by indigenous references, as we have seen, it should be noted that the plot does not present them as coming from this ethnic matrix. This narrative choice raises reflections on cultural appropriation in symbolic representations and its implications for the debate on citizen themes in the context of television fiction.

At the same time, the discussions established in different media spaces — memes in digital social networks and journalistic articles — unevenly address the articulation between fantastic elements and social reality in the construction of the enchanted characters of the

telenovela. It is symptomatic that publications on social networks prioritize the case of Maria Marruá from the perspective of her own discourses of diffuse media feminisms, which have, in these spaces of digital culture, a privileged space for circulation. In turn, articles and opinion texts published in *Folha de S. Paulo* emphasize the trajectory of Velho do Rio in the plot in the light of debates on environmental conservation, an agenda that had a prominent place in journalistic coverage in the face of the anti-ecological and anti-environmentalist discourse of then-President Jair Bolsonaro.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the consubstantiated record of the thematic, narrative, and stylistic elements fundamental to the creation of the characters Maria Marruá, Velho do Rio, and Cramulhão for telefiction and, in particular, for its unfolding as an object of citizen education leads us to propose the creation of an educational tool (infographic, podcast, video, teaching plan, or similar) with creative content related to the research theme.

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Pantanal: an intersectional cartography for citizenship

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1 Introduction

Since the introduction of television in Brazil in 1950, the Brazilian telenovela has been producing meanings about the nation. Through its plots, characters, spatialities, and temporalities, it creates narratives that not only move and engage viewers but also allow them to recognize and identify themselves, whether in stories set in major urban centers or those that explore the most remote corners of the national territory. The telenovela is, therefore, a narrative capable of creating and articulating meanings about Brazilian people and about times and spaces of the country, defined as a **narrative of the nation** (Lopes, 2003). A narrative shared daily with and among their audiences. Multiple social, political, moral, cultural, scientific themes, among many others, have been represented and debated by it in the last 75 years, which is why we define it as a **communicative resource** (Lopes, 2009), promoter and propagator of struggles of meanings, and creator, over time, of a “telenovela culture” in the country. At the same time, there is the progression of methodologies

of various aspects that have been used and renewed to respond to the growing complexity of the Brazilian telenovela.

It is from this general framework that the Obitel USP team proposes to analyze the telenovela *Pantanal* (TV Globo, 2022), through a *methodological exploration* – **intersectional cartography** – based on the operations of **four social markers: regionality, class, gender/sexuality and race**, which cross each other in this narrative, engendering certain meanings about the nation and acting as thrusters of resources for citizenship.

2 Brief time framework of the remake of *Pantanal*

After 32 years of *Pantanal*'s debut (Rede Manchete, 1990), TV Globo produced its remake in 2022. New perceptions and different layers of meaning were incorporated into the narrative, which evoked in the audience the recognition and recovery of a media and affective memory based on the experiences of previous viewings (Ribeiro et al., 2021), while the updated themes provoked varied receptions between the audience that rewatched the telenovela and the new audience.

The remake of *Pantanal*, with a script by Bruno Luperi, grandson of the original author, Benedito Ruy Barbosa, brought back the *Pantanal* region as *protagonist* (Becker; Machado, 2008), with the struggle for land and the environmental preservation as even more relevant issues. Counted in 167 chapters, with an average of 29.7 rating and 48.2% *share*, rates that a 9 p.m. telenovela on TV Globo had not reached in a long time, the remake can also be considered a *media event* (Neiger; Meyers; Zandberg, 2011).

Re-editing a different language, made of long scenes and contemplative spaces of cinema, the telenovela *Pantanal* brought back the temporal dilation, in the so-called “*Pantanal time*”, the lyrical eroticism, in addition to the *marvelous realism*, with its fantastic characters.

The nation stopped once more to recognize itself in *Pantanal*.

3 The perspective of intersectionality in the remake of *Pantanal*

Inserted in the very title of our research, intersectionality is presented as a theoretical framework of reference. The term intersectionality was first used by Kimberlé Crenshaw, an African

American jurist, in 1989, to designate the interdependence of power relations between people. Although the term became popular in the 2000s, its origin lies in the Black Feminism movement of the late 1970s, whose criticism was directed at white, middle-class, heteronormative feminism (Hirata, 2014).

For authors such as Crenshaw (2002), Akotirene (2019), and Collins and Bilge (2020), intersectionality is a concept that aims to demonstrate that social identities, such as gender, race, social class, sexual orientation, generation, nationality, and others, do not exist in isolation, but rather intersect and influence each other, creating experiences of discrimination, oppression, or privilege. Brazilian authors, such as Lélia González (1984), Sueli Carneiro (2011), and Conceição Evaristo (2020), also addressed multiple issues of intersectionality.

In any case, what brings together the authors mentioned is the theoretical conception of intersectionality, which implies critical and significant practices directed for public policies or for activism and education. It is a clear link with the design of action research, which, unfortunately, we cannot discuss here.

The main objective of our research is to understand how intersectionalities occur in *Pantanal* through **social markers of difference** (Saggese et al., 2018). How do they leave traces in the characters' speeches and in the events under analysis? To answer the problem, we chose **four social markers: regionality, class, gender/sexuality, and race**, due to their great relevance to this narrative, which are presented below.

3.1 Regionality Social Marker

Understanding the territoriality and regionality of the Brazilian physical area called Pantanal is essential for understanding the environmental and social representation carried out in the television drama. A periodically flooded plain, Pantanal is located in the Midwest region of Brazil, covering the northwest portion of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul and the southwest of the state of Mato Grosso, in addition to reaching areas of Paraguay and Bolivia.

It's a habitat of rich fauna, with a large part composed of birds, such as the *tuiuiú*, a bird-symbol of the region that stands out in the opening of the telenovela. Its main economic activities are extensive livestock, fishing, and ecological tourism, especially beef cattle farming, carried out in an agrarian space of a concentrating nature

and located in *latifundia* (large landed estate). A sparsely populated region, its demographic concentration is in local urban centers and around farm headquarters, contrasting with vast uninhabited areas with hydrography marked by rivers and saltwater lagoons. The conception of geographical space made by Araújo (2006, p. 100) is interesting: “for geography, space is not a physical object, with existence in itself, where society is. It is the result of relationships”¹. Within the physical space presented in the telenovela, everything makes up the Pantanal: farms, rivers, houses, pastures, but mainly the relationships that intersect between the characters and the environment that surrounds them, combining their actions, their habits, their beliefs with an exuberant nature.

The Pantanal landscape intrinsically has the *Pantaneiro* individual (from the Pantanal) (Vargas, 2006), whose social/territorial identity may be due to whether or not they were born in the region, since the feeling of belonging is something given or acquired and that results in a “self-attribution.” This is the case exemplified in the telenovela by the trajectory of protagonist Jove (Jesuíta Barbosa), born and raised in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Throughout the telenovela, he goes through a process of appropriation of the Pantanal identity. He speaks and acts as a typical *Pantaneiro* to integrate into the culture and the ways of life of his father, José Leôncio (Marcos Palmeira), and the workers of his farm.

The *Pantaneiro* worker is an expression of the intimate society-nature interaction and integrates with natural beings a single inseparable world, composing something that has come to be called *marvelous realism*². “This leads these men to respect these forces, of a natural, social, or supernatural character”³ (Vargas, 2006, p. 203), like the character Joventino Leôncio (Irandhir Santos), a profound holder of knowledge who, in the first phase of *Pantanal*, becomes the character Velho do Rio (Osmar Prado). A mythical figure of nature protection, he transmutes himself into the form of a *sucuri* snake, an important element of biodiversity and the soulful Pantanal

1 Original text: “para a geografia, o espaço não é um objeto físico, com existência em si mesmo, onde a sociedade se encontra. Ele é fruto de relações.”

2 Figueiredo (2013) states that, unlike fantastic realism literature, which keeps the dichotomy between the natural and the supernatural realms very pronounced, in marvelous realism, the reader does not feel compelled to decipher the unusual events, accepting them as elements integrated into the fictional universe. Therefore, in telenovelas such as *Pantanal* and *Saramandaia*, marvelous realism appears as a stylistic apparatus and is associated with themes of mutual tolerance of difference, multiculturalism, and diversity.

3 Original text: “Isso leva esses homens a respeitar essas forças, de caráter natural, social ou sobrenatural.”

territory, just as Maria Marruá (Juliana Paes) and her daughter, Juma Marruá (Alanis Guillen), transmute into a jaguar.

In the original version of 1990, issues of sustainable development already appeared in line with the idea that humankind is part of the environmental problem, but also of its solution. In the 2022 remake, these issues are updated and treated more directly through the characters' speeches, especially between Jove and José Leôncio, constantly attentive and critical of harmful cultivation methods. Eugênio (Almir Sater) is another example, who, in the final scene of the telenovela, in a mix of anger and resilience, struggles to navigate his *chalana* (riverboat) through the river, already quite dry due to human abuses. The regionality permeates the characters' relationships with nature, with their spirituality, and even in love relationships, marked by an eroticism in a state of nature, a pure conception of love represented in the remake by Jove and Juma Marruá.

The aerial and panoramic shots evoke this biome made up of floodplains, with its fauna and flora. In *Pantanal*, nature is raised to the condition of protagonist of the story; it acts and expresses itself in simultaneity with the human being. Therefore, the centrality of the regionality in the telenovela as an intersection of the social marker “territoriality” with its characters is the same as seeing Pantanal as an ecosystem consisting of practices and collective imaginaries of the social groups that inhabit the region.

3.2 Class Social Marker

The remnants of the Brazilian colonial past are part of the social classes of the Pantanal region, since, within the capitalist logic, as pointed out by Oliveira (2007) and Souza (1994), the acquisition of land through purchase, since the Land Law of 1850 (Brasil, 1850), is important for the emergence and growth of *latifundia*, land grabbing, *coronelismo* (system where local power was controlled by landowners) and its consequences, such as *mandonismo* (local authoritarianism) and male authority. In the formation of Brazilian society, the culture of sponsorship and favor, the elimination of conflict, the denial of structural issues, such as racism and gender, are traits that directly impact the way class divisions are expressed in people's daily lives (Holanda, 1997).

This past, in addition to spilling over into the present day, makes class issues a separate point. If, on the one hand, in telenovelas, there have been more discussions about gender, sexuality, and race, among

the various social markers, on the other hand, the issue of class is still worked through the prism of meritocracy and work as determining factors of enrichment and wealth building (Ronsini, 2012).

In *Pantanal*, traces of this perspective appear clearly in the figures of the two male protagonists: one of them, José Leôncio, is a large landowner, whose fortune was accumulated exclusively through work; the other, Tenório (Murilo Benício), also is a landowner, but whose social ascension took place through land grabbing, which is concealed in the narrative. They also appear in the characters of the boss, whose authority extends in the personal lives of his employees, as well as the employees' criticism of the boss's life, which permeates an alleged erasure of class differences; and in the dichotomous difference between countryside and town skewed by an idyllic vs. violent imaginary.

Pantanal has as its starting point land grabbing, violence in the countryside, and forced migrations, which function as background structures of the plot and follow the logic of class domination, common in Brazil since its formation. Revenge as a mechanism for obtaining justice, derived from the lack of credibility and even the absence of institutions in fulfilling their roles, is also a point directly related to the social class structure.

Thus, we identified that the "class" marker in *Pantanal* is represented in the forms of conflict, conciliation, and villainy. In the form of conflict, it appears, above all, associated with the concentration of capital in the countryside, with differences in the possession of cultural capital and with the social and migrant conditions of the characters involved. In the form of conciliation, "class" marker stands out when represented in the manifestations of devotion and in the close relationships with which employees, both in the rural and urban context, dedicate to their bosses. In the representation of villainy in *Pantanal*, we have, on the one hand, on José Leôncio's farm, the meritocratic example of a farm hand who, with hard work alongside his father, built a fortune, where the relations between boss and employees take place in a conciliatory way. On the other hand, on the farm of the antagonist Tenório, whose wealth was accumulated through land grabbing and corruption, there is a much greater distance between boss and employees and a more evident class division. The exposure of class division in the villain's storyline reinforces the distance to be erased, either by conciliatory acts or by emphasis on the character's bad nature.

3.3 Gender/Sexuality Social Marker

Continuously, the previous discussion intersects with the “gender/sexuality” marker in *Pantanal*, much noticed through several characters.

Gender identities and sexuality are not essential compositions of the body or mind, says Judith Butler (2020). In reality, they are constituted throughout life, through the repetition of acts and speeches, thus assuming an appearance of “naturalness.” Gender is like a production apparatus in which the sexes themselves are established, since “bodies cannot be said to have a significant existence prior to the mark of their gender”⁴ (Butler, 2020, p. 30). The repetition of acts and speeches is what the author calls *performativity*. However, Butler (2020, p. 111) emphasizes that “bodies never completely conform to the norms by which their materialization is imposed”⁵. For Joan Scott (1995, p. 86), gender must be understood as “a constitutive element of social relations based on the perceived differences between the sexes”⁶; that is, “a first way of signifying power relations”⁷.

These power relations can be clearly observed in *Pantanal*, in the character Maria (Isabel Teixeira), whose nickname “Bruaca” (similar to hag, in English) constantly reaffirms that she, as a woman, is inferior to her husband Tenório in the family configuration. It also happens with the character Zaquieu (Silvero Pereira), through the intersectionality of the “gender and sexuality” markers – a gay man who wants to insert himself in the male and homophobic community of *Pantanal*, represented by the relationships of José Leôncio’s farm hands. Tenório treats his wife with inferiority, maintaining patriarchal social relations. Zaquieu, on the other hand, feels the norms of society reaffirmed about him in conversations with the farmhands to the detriment of his own existence. Because he “deviates” from what a heteronormative society prescribes, Zaquieu needs to be reminded, through homophobia, to hide from himself, from his sexuality, so he can discipline himself and adapt to the prevailing norms.

Something similar happens with the characters Jove and Juma, but with different results. By not exercising the kind of

4 Original text: “não se pode dizer que os corpos tenham uma existência significável anterior à marca do seu gênero”.

5 Original text: “os corpos não se conformam, nunca, completamente, às normas pelas quais sua materialização é imposta”.

6 Original text: “elemento constitutivo das relações sociais baseado nas diferenças percebidas entre os sexos”.

7 Original text: “uma forma primeira de significar as relações de poder”.

masculinity that the other farmhands perform, Jove is seen as a “frozô”, a homophobic term used to demean young people in power relations, linking homosexuality to an aspect of inferiority, by intersecting the “gender and sexuality” markers. Juma, considered a “wild animal,” also refuses to perform femininity as a gender marker, but is compelled, in order to be included as part of society, to occupy a position of inferiority in relation to Jove or any other man. After they meet, Jove gradually incorporates characteristics of the Pantanal male performance. While Juma, by relating socially to other women, ends up accepting to introduce into her personality a certain “femininity”, while she reproduces, through her mother, Maria Marruá, her matriarchal power within the new family that she composes with Jove.

Maria Bruaca, a housewife who is completely submissive to her husband Tenório, when she discovers that she is deceived by him (who keeps a secret family for years), rebels against the sexism she has endured all her life. The situation makes it possible to discuss the female position in the **interpersonal domain of power** (Collins; Bilge, 2020), present in the relationship between the oppressive husband and the submissive wife.

Linked to the path of this character is another female figure, Filó (Dira Paes), who becomes Maria Bruaca’s advisor and support after she leaves Tenório. Often, Filó (a woman not officially married to José Leôncio) makes critical speeches about women’s rights, postures, and attitudes that must be rejected. Dialogues with Zefa (Paula Barbosa) and Muda (Bella Campos) also reinforce the combative profile that directly questions the **structural domain of power** arising from fundamental structures of social institutions, associated with the legal, religious, political, and economic apparatuses (Collins; Bilge, 2020).

Guta (Julia Dalavia), daughter of Tenório and Maria Bruaca, is another character who has a prominently feminist discourse, being responsible for revealing to her mother the secret life of her father. Always certain of her progressive convictions, she attacks her father’s sexist attitudes and his condition as a bigamist, fighting a moral battle with him throughout the plot. By confronting the boyfriend for not accepting to be controlled by him, it is possible to identify the disciplinary domain of power (Collins; Bilge, 2020), questioned by the unfair application of rules and regulations.

Juma, the young savage who inhabits the public’s imagination as a being with a ravishing and free spirit, dialogues with the

cultural domain of power (Collins; Bilge, 2020). The character, who was removed from her natural environment (a smallholding with a shack) and inserted into a society with habits and customs different from her own, ends up being ambivalently associated with the figure of an animal, due to her supernatural power to transmute into a jaguar and her lack of access to education and information.

3.4 Race Social Marker

In *Pantanal*, Tenório is a faithful representation of the patriarchal archetype, not only with regard to the traditional characteristics of this figure but also in the expression of its vicissitudes. He is the one who commands with iron fists both his farm and his family, reiterating gender roles and sexual division of labor. But, in contrast to the moralizing and conservative discourse of his speeches, the patriarch's hypocrisy is revealed when his daughter Guta discovers that his father has maintained, for years, in the city of São Paulo, a second family, who happens to be black, leading to further accentuate the humiliations to which he always subjected his wife, whom he nicknamed Maria Bruaca.

When comparing the first version of *Pantanal* and its remake, the fact that stands out the most is how much the country has changed in 30 years. Among the updates that were made is the ambiguous family structure, in which aspects of patriarchal, race and gender domination are combined – something that, in a way, synthesizes the colonial history of Brazil. As Roberto DaMatta (1997, p. 55) recalls: “In Brazil, by contrast, the community is necessarily heterogeneous, complementary and hierarchical. Its basic unit is not based on individuals (or citizens), but on relationships and people, families and groups of relatives and friends⁸”.

On the other hand, one of the main elements of obliteration of the “race” marker, responsible for a certain appeasement of the latent racial tensions in Brazilian society, is, precisely, *miscegenation*, which, stimulated by a state policy (Nascimento, 2016), combines the public with the private and legitimizes infidelity as a social whitening machine. Resuming the thought of Abdias do Nascimento, anthropologist Kabengele Munanga (1999, p. 93) points out that:

8 Original text: “No Brasil, por contraste, a comunidade é necessariamente heterogênea, complementar e hierarquizada. Sua unidade básica não está baseada em indivíduos (ou cidadãos), mas em relações e pessoas, famílias e grupos de parentes e amigos”.

[...] the whitening of the black race is a strategy of genocide [...]. Advocates of progressive whitening of the Brazilian population saw miscegenation as the first step on this scale.⁹

The violence with which the patriarch Tenório treats his two families embodies a metaphor for Brazil, a country in which “the house and the street” (DaMatta, 1997), apparently opposite territorial domains, are always interconnected by an underground dynamic of forced and violent alliances. When we consider Tenório and his families as a synthesis of Brazil, despite the dynamics of race and gender hidden under the cloak of normality, the presence of miscegenation appears as a fundamental and controversial mark in the formation of Brazilian identity.

4 A cartographic protocol for *Pantanal*

The intersectionality observed through the markers that operate in the telenovela led us to the adoption of **cartography as a methodology** (which combines theories, methods, and techniques) to follow the paths of *Pantanal*. The theoretical and methodological perspective of cartography is open to multiple interpretations and approaches. In our case, it was built with the hypothesis of performing a specific representation of intersectionality through the elaboration of a method that combines visuality and graphics, which we initially characterized as a **visual-graphic method** for research on communication.

This is a **methodological exploration** that can serve as a model for other studies of television fiction. As a result, we define the term **intersectional cartography**, which, in turn, is done through **maps and diagrams**. It also pursues the objective of being able to progressively implement the proposal for **audiovisual writing** for television studies in the country (cf. Néia, 2023; Fernandes, 2023), which should be understood as writing that produces television analysis based on the **indivisible unit of image/text/sound**.¹⁰

9 Original text: “o branqueamento da raça negra é uma estratégia de genocídio [...]. Os defensores do branqueamento progressivo da população brasileira viam na mestiçagem o primeiro degrau nessa escala”.

10 It is beyond the scope of the present text to delve deeper into this audiovisual writing, such as, for example, discussing the surpassing of visual studies on Communication, which are based on the analysis of the image through pictures; or examining the similarities and differences between the contributions of Caldwell (1995), Butler (2020), and Bordwell (2008) (visualities, stylistic apparatus) and those of Mittell (2015) (videographic), combined with Martín-Barbero's maps (Lopes, 2018) and Latin American studies on communication and culture.

In addition to the construction of social relations maps, the intersections of social markers were also represented in these maps, revealing both associations and ruptures to produce empirical evidence on *Pantanal's* communicative tools for citizenship.

4.1 A theoretical perspective of cartography

The cartography of differences (Deleuze; Guattari, 1995) is the methodological perspective that inspired this research, along with the theory of **intersectionality** (Crenshaw, 2002). We assume that cartography configures a method applicable to communication, considering the extent of its processuality and the articulations it can make with all levels of research, including epistemological and theoretical (Lopes, 2014). However, it is not a rigid method; on the contrary, it suggests a methodological path that draws an always unfinished map of the object from the interested look, perceptions, and observations of the researcher, which are unique (Rosário, 2016).

Since the Brazilian edition of *A Thousand Plateaus* was published in 1995, cartography has begun to be applied as a research method and/or procedure in the country. In communication research, it is still rarely used and presents different approaches, as Aguiar (2011) observes, but, however, there is a gradual growth of cartography as a methodology in investigations of the area.

It is challenging for the researcher to build their own map/rhizome – a map that is in constant motion –, since cartography does not offer defined rules in advance, a fixed script, or an established method. For this, it can be thought of as a map that “is open, connectable in all its dimensions, reversible, susceptible to constant changes”¹¹ (Deleuze; Guattari, 1995, p. 22). Rolnik (1989, p. 6) emphasizes that cartography is a method that allows, from this map, “to detect the landscape, its accidents, its mutations and, at the same time, create passageways through them”¹². In this sense, cartography, being a map in constant updating, can reveal different social scenarios, symbolic exchanges, or even communication flows, not needing to follow very standardized protocols.

The term *cartography*, in the Latin translation, means *written letter* (*charta* – letter; *graph* – to write). The researcher-cartographer who unravels this shifting terrain must be aware that

11 Original text: “é aberto, é conectável em todas as suas dimensões, reversível, suscetível de receber modificações constantemente”.

12 Original text: “detectar a paisagem, seus acidentes, suas mutações e, ao mesmo tempo, criar vias de passagem através deles”.

their interpretations are only *one* look that builds *one* map/rhizome full of irregularities and connections (Rosário; Coca, 2018).

Thus, the variations of attention guide the paths to be followed in the research, which were redone and reinvented throughout the process, from the attentive and floating look at the singularities of the phenomenon studied¹³. Along this path, we recognized the singularities of the object, that is, of *Pantanal*, as a *communicative tool* for citizenship, through the intersections analyzed, which we detailed in the continuity of the cartographic protocol of our study.

4.2 Building the *corpus* and identifying intersectionalities

The remake of *Pantanal* was displayed in 167 chapters, from which we extracted the *corpus* composed of scenes in which intersectionalities resulting from the four markers selected for the cartographic research were initially identified. They follow the methodological procedures related to the universe and *corpus* of the research, as well as the instruments adopted in the fieldwork.

4.2.1 *Pantanal* observation movements: research universe and *corpus*

The research universe consists of all the scenes of the 167 chapters of *Pantanal*. In the literature on “making cinema”, the **scene** is considered the minimum unit of a narrative composed of an event or series of events that occurs in a specific place and at a specific time, made to meet a certain objective in the plot. It consists of sound/music, image/scenery, characters and actions. According to Suppia (2015), in the television drama script, the scene is the specific unit composed of a *cluster* of action, space, and time. It is followed by the **sequence**, defined as a series of scenes tied by a single idea. Still, the scene is technically constituted by shots, fields, and camera movements.¹⁴

13 We found many similarities between the cartography of Deleuze and Guattari (1995) and the cartographic method of Benjamin (2009, 2013), especially in the stages called *wandering*, *archaeology*, and *montage*, which we intent to explore in future research.

14 We collected information directly related to the definition of what is a scene in telenovela dramaturgy, or *teledramaturgy*. Usually, a typical scene lasts between one and three minutes, but it can last longer, especially if it involves intense dialogue or elaborate action. The structuring of a scene depends on the goal, which can be the development of the plot, the creation of conflicts, the development of suspense or the revelation of secrets. There are comic, tragic, and satirical scenes, which originated in the Greek theater; there are the obligatory or compulsory scenes, those that the audience expects and that generate great excitement and involvement; and there

We made five **observation movements of *Pantanal***.

The **first observation movement** was carried out with the mapping of all 167 chapters of the telenovela and the selection of the most watched ones in each week of exhibition, resulting in an initial corpus of 37 chapters, presented in Chart 1.

Chart 1 – Chapters selected for the corpus of scenes

WEEK	CHAPTER	DATE	PHASE
1	1	28/03/2022	FIRST PHASE
	2	29/03/2022	
	3	30/03/2022	
	4	31/03/2022	
	5	01/04/2022	
	6	02/04/2022	
2	10	07/04/2022	FIRST PHASE
3	13	11/04/2022	

WEEK	CHAPTER	DATE	PHASE	WEEK	CHAPTER	DATA	PHASE
4	20	19/04/2022	SECOND PHASE	19	109	01/08/2022	SECOND PHASE
5	25	25/04/2022		20	115	08/08/2022	
6	31	02/05/2022		21	122	16/08/2022	
7	38	10/05/2022		22	127	22/08/2022	
8	43	16/05/2022		23	133	29/08/2022	
9	51	25/05/2022		24	142	08/09/2022	
10	55	30/05/2022		25	146	13/09/2022	
11	62	07/06/2022		26	154	22/09/2022	
12	67	13/06/2022		27	160	29/09/2022	
13	73	20/06/2022		28	163	03/10/2022	
14	79	27/06/2022			164	04/10/2022	
15	85	04/07/2022			165	05/10/2022	
16	91	11/07/2022			166	06/10/2022	
17	100	21/07/2022			167	07/10/2022	
18	106	28/07/2022					

Source: The authors (2025).

are differentiated scenes, those that present several characters, without a defined protagonist. The purpose of this type of scene is to allow each character to have their moment in the spotlight. It is possible to identify all these scene characteristics in the telenovela *Pantanal*.

The **second observation movement** was watching the 37 chapters selected in the Globoplay streaming service, in which the entire telenovela can be accessed, to choose three scenes in each chapter that best displayed the social markers adopted. From there, we obtained a *corpus* composed of 111 scenes for the cartographic study, which were registered in a spreadsheet.

The **third observation movement** allowed the choice of 20 scenes representing the social markers of regionality, class, gender/sexuality, and race (traits of a “Pantanal identity”),¹⁵ which were discussed and described, given the need for a narratological chain for the *corpus* to have temporal meaning. To this end, we added seven more scenes, due to elements relevant to the chronological understanding of the plot. Thus, the final **corpus resulted in 27 scenes**.

The observation required a careful and sensitive look from the researchers, always guided by the four social markers, which are the principles of the *Pantanal* intersectional cartography.

4.2.2 Observation movements: instruments and fieldwork

For the observation movements, a data collection instrument was also developed to register information from chapters and scenes. This fieldwork took place from June to October 2024, a period in which the chapters were decomposed and in which the scenes were described and registered. The **fourth observation movement** was the creation of an instrument, in the form of spreadsheets created in Excel, for each of the 111 chapters, with date, scene, duration, summary, camera movements, sound (incidental soundtrack), temporal environment, spatial environment, geographic location, characters, internal and external spaces of the scenes. This mapping allowed cross-referencing with social markers.

The **fifth (and last) observation movement** was aimed at registering the scenes and sequences of the *corpus* through the Studio OBS software, compressed in the HandBrake program and made available in .mp4 format. The result was the creation of a set of **27 QR codes**, one for each selected scene. Each registered scene was numbered and given a title indicative of the scene/sequence (e.g., “Juma transforms into jaguar in captivity”), the name

¹⁵ This being a qualitative study, its sampling is also qualitative; therefore, we have no claim to statistical representativeness. And, as we have already stated, it is a methodology of an exploratory and experimental nature.

of the intersectionality markers, and the textual description of their images and sounds.

Regarding this last movement of observation, we want to point out that this was the way we found to approach **audiovisual writing**, mentioned above. At this moment, it should be seen as an initial exercise to demonstrate a possible writing, which can and should be expanded with other resources.

The **QR code allows you to watch the 27 audiovisual scenes (image/text/sound) with the intersectionalities that make up the *Pantanal corpus***, through a QR code reader, as shown in Chart 2.

Chart 2 – Composition of the research *corpus*

SCENES/SEQUENCES FROM THE FIRST PHASE OF PANTANAL					
SCENE/SEQUENCE	CHAPTER	DATE	TITLE	INTERSECTIONALITY	QR-CODE
1	1	28/3/2022	Transfer of power from father to son	regionality and class	
2	2	29/3/2022	Chico's death	regionality and class	
3	3	30/3/2022	Meeting of José Leôncio, Chico and Maria	regionality and class	
4	3	30/3/2022	Introduction of the Novaes Family	regionality and class	
5	4	31/3/2022	Meeting of José Leôncio and Madeleine	gender, class and regionality	
6	6	2/4/2022	Marriage of José Leôncio and Madeleine	regionality and class	
7	14	12/4/2022	Phase change	gender and class	

SCENES/SEQUENCES FROM THE SECOND PHASE OF PANTANAL					
SCENE/SEQUENCE	CHAPTER	DATE	TITLE	INTERSECTIONALITY	QR-CODE
8	16	14/4/2022	Presentation of Tenório	class, regionality and gender	
9	18	16/4/2022	Jove's arrival in the Pantanal	regionality and gender	
10	31	2/5/2022	Madeleine wants to fire Zaqueu	class, race, regionality and gender	
11	31	2/5/2022	Tenório's past	class, regionality and gender	
12	38	10/5/2022	Jove and Madeleine talk about romantic relationships.	class, regionality and gender	

SCENES/SEQUENCES FROM THE SECOND PHASE OF PANTANAL					
SCENE/ SEQUENCE	CHAPTER	DATE	TITLE	INTERSECTIONALITY	QR-CODE
13	43	16/5/2022	Tenório and Maria Bruaca talk with Guta about Jove and Juma.	class, regionality and gender	
14	67	13/6/2022	Filó and Irma talk about desires, daily life, and personalities.	class, regionality and gender	
15	73	20/6/2022	Racism and family	race, class and regionality	
16	85	4/7/2022	Zaqueiu talks to Eugênio about the homophobia he suffered in the Pantanal.	regionality and gender	
17	106	28/7/2022	Jaguar released	regionality and gender	
18	109	1/8/2022	Maria Bruaca tries to kill Tenório.	gender and class	
19	115	8/8/2022	Ingrid and Ibraim discuss José Lucas de Nada's candidacy.	class and regionality	
20	127	22/8/2022	Maria Bruaca's rights at the end of the marriage.	gender and class	
21	154	22/9/2022	Juma turns into a jaguar in captivity.	gender and regionality	
22	160	29/9/2022	Zuleica and Tenório talk about the work on the farm	class and gender	
23	164	4/10/2022	Death of Tenorio	gender and regionality	
24	166	6/10/2022	The drought in the Pantanal	regionality and class	
25	167	7/10/2022	Speech by Zé Leôncio in defense of the Pantanal.	regionality, class and gender	
26	167	7/10/2022	Death of José Leôncio	regionality and gender	
27	167	7/10/2022	José Leôncio as Vêio do Rio and his grandchildren	regionality and gender	

Source: The authors (2025).

Based on the five observation movements performed, the cartography method can now be incorporated into the Methodological Protocol designed for *Pantanal*.

5 An intersectional cartography of *Pantanal*

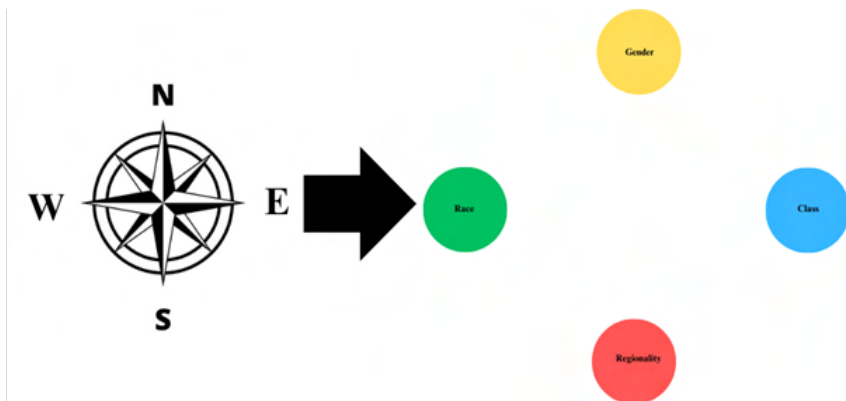
Building an *intersectional cartography* of the telenovela *Pantanal* is to remember, first of all, that cartography is a visual method, which is expressed through maps. Therefore, maps of social markers were created, which were used in the research. Still, it is important to note that our cartographic practice is one possibility – among others – of this fiction.

The cartography of *Pantanal* consists of **two steps**. The first step demonstrates the **intersectionalities in each chapter of the corpus**, while the second presents the **intersectionalities in the 27 scenes of the corpus**, with questions of citizenship pervading the characters.

5.1 First step of the intersectional cartography of *Pantanal*: diagrams and map of the scenes of the chapters of *Pantanal*

The first graphical elements we represent in the maps below are the four social markers — gender, race, regionality, and class — from which we identified the intersections in the *corpus* of 27 scenes/sequences. In our representation, we chose to follow the pattern of the Cardinal Points and present each marker in a circle located at a different pole. All markers were filled with (primary) colors, as shown in the “Intersectional Roulette” (Carrera, 2021),¹⁶ contributing to the presentation of intersectionality, as shown in the diagram of the adopted process, which is a representation of the reference points for the construction of the maps.

Diagram 1 – Location of social markers from Cardinal Points and colors of intersectionalities in Pantanal scenes

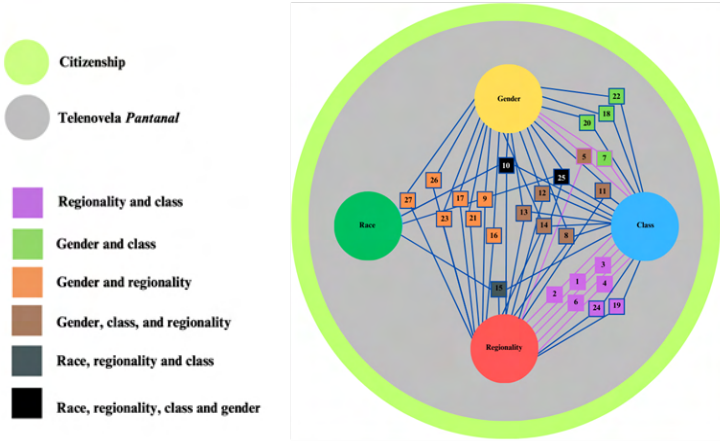


Source: The authors (2025).

¹⁶ Primary colors were assigned to the three recurrent social markers — regionality, gender, and class. The race marker, rarely observed in the scenes, was represented by a secondary color.

Gathering all the previous methodological operations and applying them to the 27 scenes/sequences of the *corpus*, we arrived at the following **Intersectional Map of *Pantanal***.

Map 1 – Intersectionality in scenes of *Pantanal* chapters



Source: The authors (2025).

In Map 1, each identified intersectionality is shown with a line joining two of these markers (poles). Because we work with scenes/sequences of two phases of the telenovela, we chose to adopt one color for each phase, so that the intersections of scenes/sequences of the first phase are in **purple**, while those of the second are in **blue**. Then, we identified each scene to which a line (intersectionality) refers, inserting, in the center of each line, a square with the number of that scene, as well as its (secondary) colors represented in the caption next to it.

In this first map, citizenship is expressed in the illustration of how different social markers (gender, class, regionality, and race) intersect and affect power relations, identities and rights in the plot of the telenovela *Pantanal*. These intersections show how the experiences of the characters in the story are shaped by the social aspects that cross them, indicating how they experience their citizenship in Brazil.

Map 1 shows multiple possibilities for analysis. Since it is not feasible to make detailed analyses of all scenes, we will present only some of them due to space constraints, as an exercise, with examples that can be replicated.

Six intersectionalities were identified among the markers present in the **27 scenes of the corpus**. To facilitate the visualization of the markers that are more prominent in the cartography, we adopted different (secondary) colors and numbered the scenes that reveal the intersectionality in small squares. Thus, in a scene in which gender and regionality markers operate, the square is orange, according to the caption above.

For example, scene 5 presents the intersectionality of gender and class; therefore, its representation on the map is made by a line linking the “gender” marker to the “class” marker, in purple (first phase) and with the number 5. To watch a scene, simply point your phone at the corresponding QR code. Here, we noted a basic operation of the already mentioned *audiovisual writing*.

Visually, we can observe that the intersectionalities in *Pantanal* are located closer to the “gender,” “class,” and “regionality” markers, and less close to the “race” marker.

In both phases of the telenovela, the intersections operated by the “**regionality**” marker predominate, demonstrating that the telenovela is, above all, a plot about the Pantanal region, the experiences of those who are there and their stories, their beliefs, their customs – an evident marker from the first to the last scene. The regionality exudes through characters, scenarios, costumes, mannerisms, and accents – and, even more so, through resources such as the *berrante* (a horn used by cowboys to call cattle), in addition to, mainly, doing it through marvelous realism.

Map 1 also shows that there are many discussions involving the “**gender/sexuality**” marker from a broad perspective. This occurs, above all, through characters such as Maria Bruaca, Madeleine and Zaquieu, in plots that show how gender dynamics are also configured and influenced by other social markers, such as the social class and the race of the people involved.

The intersections related to the “**social class**” markers are, throughout the plot, strongly linked to regionality. Both appeared intrinsically associated with the power that comes from the concentration of land and manifestations of class struggle such as land grabbing, which triggers armed conflict and murders, as in the events of Sarandi. However, ambivalently, class inequalities and oppressions coexist with their naturalization, highlighted in cordial and close relations between bosses and farm hands, as well as in interclass marriages between people from the city and the countryside.

This process of naturalization of social class is particularly exemplary between José Leôncio and Filó, which begins as a working relationship (she is employed in his house) and becomes a romantic and sexual relationship; and, in the parental relationship between Zé Leôncio and his sons Tadeu (José Loreto) and José Lucas de Nada (Irândhir Santos), both employed on the farm. Sexual involvement between employer and employees also occurs on Tenório's farm, in which Maria Bruaca gets involved with both Levi (Leandro Lima) and Alcides (Juliano Cazarré).

The “**race**” marker is the least intersected, dialoguing with others only in the second phase. As previously noted, the *corpus* portrays the plot of the telenovela: despite featuring black actors in Tenório's second family's storyline, composed of Zuleica (Aline Borges), Marcelo (Lucas Neto), Renato (Gabriel Santana), and Roberto (Cauê Campos), the story does not reflect on issues of race, which appear occasionally in some chapters – and, at the intersections of the *corpus*, only in two scenes.

The scenes of *Pantanal*, registered in each of the lines of Map 1, can be watched through the QR codes, as shown in Diagram 2.

Diagram 2 – Scenes of *Pantanal* with colors of intersectionality and their QR codes

SCENE	QR-CODE	SCENE	QR-CODE
1		15	
2		16	
3		17	
4		18	
5		19	
6		20	
7		21	

SCENE	QR-CODE	SCENE	QR-CODE
8		22	
9		23	
10		24	
11		25	
12		26	
13		27	
14			

Source: The authors (2025).

5.2 Second step of the intersectional cartography of *Pantanal*: maps of scenes and characters

The second step consists of a set of maps created for each of the scenes/sequences, in which the intersections in plots or units and characters are empirically evident.

We selected **six scenes/sequences of the telenovela**, including the first and second phases, present in **Diagram 2** (scenes 1, 12, 15, 18, 21, and 25). The maps were created graphically from the characters in the scene, the figures they connect with, and family relationships, all inscribed in a *genogram*¹⁷. Next to each map, there are explanatory captions of the representation processes.

Each scene/sequence highlights intersectionality of the social markers, which are expressed in the characters. On the maps, these representations are made by concentric circles, unfilled, considering the characters in focus in the scene. Thus, we defined the following colors for each marker: *red for regionality; blue for social class; yellow for gender/sexuality; green for race*. If a scene presents intersectionality of social class and regionality, for example, its characters are within blue (class) and red (regionality) circles. The peripheral characters that appear in the scene or those

¹⁷ The genogram is a graphical/visual representation, through maps, that documents family relationships and their stories over time.

who are not physically present in it, but are cited or related to it, are represented in the outer area of the circles.

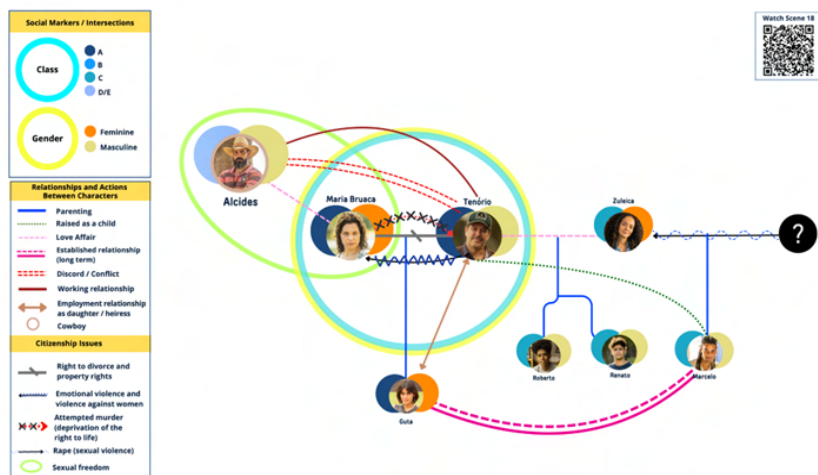
Each of the characters is crossed by traits of the social markers identified in the scene: if the scene was described as a representation of class and gender, each character will be marked by traits related to class and gender. These social markers were represented by colored circles, each marking a social trait, inserted behind the character. In the case of scenes identified with the regionality marker, for example, the characters typical of storylines that take place in rural space have a wine-colored circle behind their image; and those that are part of storylines of urban space, a pink circle. Thus, behind each character are the circles that characterize the social markers that characterize a certain character and operate on it in the plot.

Among the characters, there are also relationships, which tell the story of the telenovela and show the connections verified in the scene. These were represented by conventions, such as symbols and straight or curved lines, continuous and dotted, in different colors, inserted between the characters. The reference to the meaning of each convention is provided in captions that are next to the map itself. Finally, each map is also accompanied by a QR code to watch the scene and by analyses of the intersectionalities identified in the scene in question.

The scene analyzed (scene 18) is part of chapter 109 of *Pantanal* and has a duration of 4:20. The scene takes place on Tenório's farm, and Maria Bruaca tries to kill him with a gun, after being kicked out of the house.

Intersectionality, as an understanding of “interactive effects” (Crenshaw, 2002) based on gender and class markers, is mobilized in this scene to represent the situation of conflict that unfolds between Tenório and Maria Bruaca, in which structures of oppression operate. Expelled and away from home, Maria Bruaca rebels and points a revolver — a symbolic object of historically masculine and virile value in mass culture — at her husband, in contrast to the love and happiness, values conventionally associated with femininity. Desiring to subvert the power structure that, during much of the narrative, imposed on her the role of a submissive woman, through sociological and psychological self-determination (Morin, 1997), she still decides to take revenge with an act of infidelity, considered by Tenório as a more reprehensible attitude than his own betrayal previously committed.

Map 2 - Intersectionalities in scene 18 of *Pantanal*: Maria Bruaca tries to kill Tenório



Source: The authors (2025).

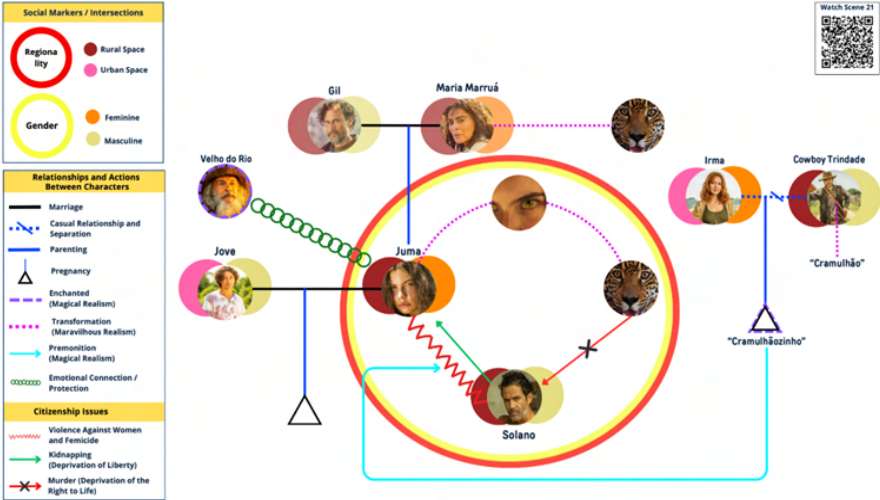
Such an imbalance of moral judgment demonstrates, then, the female position in the interpersonal and disciplinary domain of gender: the relationship between the male figure who can do anything and the female figure who owes him unconditional submission, even if wronged, because otherwise it should be corrected. As part of the punishment, Maria Bruaca loses the rights to the property she shared with Tenório, a property previously owned by her father. This fact demonstrates that, although part of Tenório's fortune comes from the possessions inherited by Maria Bruaca, whose class origin is the agrarian bourgeoisie, the patriarchal power relationship prevails and continues to define female submission to the loss of rights provided for in cases of divorce. On the other hand, the fact that Tenório's family lives in a relatively modest house and adopts a way of life without ostentation does not remove the weight of the intersection of class and gender markers.

It is noteworthy that the climax of the scene is set at the moment when Maria Bruaca claims to have gone to bed “with Tenório’s farm hands” behind his back, adding a layer of meaning about the sexual superiority of the farm hands in relation to her husband, a laughing matter, since it reaffirms the value of the masculine to the extent of his virility. At that moment, there is a turning point in the discussion,

as Tenório immediately stops crying out for peace between the two, then accusing her of being a “slut” and “worthless.” By being sexually invalidated and despised in relation to the farm hands, socially and economically dominated by him, Tenório goes for misogynistic aggressions, demonstrating how class oppression interacts with gender violence in the performance of his wounded ego.

In the scene represented in Map 2, questions about citizenship can be revealed from the structural inequality of gender and class in the country, which determines the loss of rights and the punishments imposed on Maria Bruaca. The facts of the expulsion from home and the loss of property demonstrate the fragility of women’s rights in a patriarchal and agrarian context. It demonstrates how female citizenship is often challenged by moral norms that do not apply equally to male citizenship.

Map 3 – Intersectionality in scene/sequence 21 of *Pantanal*: Juma turns into a jaguar in captivity



Source: The authors (2025).

The scene analyzed (scene 21) is in chapter 154 of *Pantanal* and has a duration of 5:56, one of the longest scenes. It takes place at the shack, where Juma, pregnant with Jove’s child, was kidnapped by Solano (Rafael Siegf). He keeps her tied up, at gunpoint. Juma begs

him to let her have “her cub” in peace, while the man says that she will only leave after “turning into a jaguar.” Juma manages to break free, turns into a jaguar and kills Solano. The scene was one of the most anticipated by the audience who looked forward to watching the marvelous realism and the impactful special effects, with explicit reference to horror films, with claws, human eyes turning into jaguar yellow eyes, a lot of blood, and sounds of deadly groans. It is important to note that the characters (peripheral or mentioned in the scene) located outside the circle, involving the “regionality” and “gender” markers, were mapped in Map 3 to contextualize the analyzed scene.

The “gender” marker appears with Solano threatening to kill Juma, who is immobilized. The weapon, a symbol of virility (Morin, 1997), affirms Solano’s power over Juma. And the climax takes place with the twist in the scene/sequence of Juma’s attack, previously a helpless woman in tears who then attacks and kills the aggressor, saving herself and her baby.

The sequence of marvelous realism also involves the mythical character Velho do Rio. He encourages Juma to fight through “telepathic communication” between the two, mixed with visions of Irma (Camila Morgado), pregnant with “a child of the devil” (Gabriel Sater) nicknamed “Cramulhãozinho,” who will be born normal. There are the enchanted people of the region, present in Velho do Rio, who practice justice and preserve nature, and in women, empowered and defenders of their children, who turn into jaguars, such as Maria Marruá and her daughter Juma.

In Map 3, citizenship issues are manifested showing how the relationship between power and gender occurs in a given region. Solano’s kidnapping of Juma shows gender violence in Pantanal society that manifests itself in aggressions and femicides. The gun pointed at the character is a symbol of male domination and shows how women have been placed in positions of vulnerability over the centuries. However, Juma’s transmutation into jaguar challenges the logic of the oppression of patriarchal society, expressing the female struggle for her own life, dignity, and freedom.

Throughout this research, we noted that our methodological proposal of intersectional cartography is initial, and that its operability should be subject to adjustments and tests. Thus, three maps were created and exposed as an exercise that contains in itself the representative elements of the cartographic methodology. This led us to create the QR code below, which can be accessed to view the four maps that complete this first intersectional cartography.

Figure 1 – QR code for Maps 4, 5, 6, and 7



Source: The authors (2025).

6 Final considerations: citizenship in the intersectional cartography of *Pantanal*

Based on the method of cartography of differences (Deleuze; Guattari, 1995), we elaborated maps with graphical representations of the intersectionality of the *Pantanal* storyline. At the first moment, we constituted representations of the telenovela from a macro-structural approach, identifying intersections in 27 scenes/sequences; then, we selected six scenes/sequences. Despite the limitations inherent to methodological exploration, thanks to the cartographic method, we had the possibility of exercising intersectional cartography in a telenovela and practicing the first movements of *audiovisual writing*.

In a second moment, through the cartographic method, we analyzed a *corpus* of 27 scenes/sequences selected based on markers. We observed that, among them, the **“regionality” marker** was the one that most appeared in intersections with the other markers (gender, race, and class). In the opposite sense, the discussions associated with the **“race” marker** were not prominent, suggesting that reflections on this agenda cannot be based only on the presence of racialized characters, but that they lack narrative conditions in television drama that are up to the complexity of the theme.

Revealing domains of power in the object studied allowed us to reflect on representations of *citizenship*. The structural inequalities of gender and class, as well as the relationship between power and gender in a given region, demonstrated the need for struggles for equity, dignity, and freedom, performed in several scenes by characters in the telenovela. According to Lopes (2009), the telenovela is a *communicative tool* for citizenship actions, and

it is possible to operationalize this concept in empirical evidence in telenovelas. With the name of **socio-educational actions**, a monitoring had already been carried out by Lopes (2009), involving scenes from six 2008 telenovelas that show correspondence with scenes from *Pantanal*. Among them, it is possible to mention: domestic, gender, racial violence; human rights, right to education, health, sexuality, work; rights of minority or excluded groups; defense of the environment, quality of life, identities, diversity, among others. Brazil is in the telenovela, just as the Pantanal is in the telenovela, and the fictional narrative constitutes a space for social debate of meanings and has an implicit and explicit pedagogical function (Thomasseau, 2005).

The use of cartography with its social markers revealed in many plots and characters not only physical traits, language, or region where the people live, but also many kinds of violence and domination suffered, reflecting the inequity in the distribution of power in society, which also affects us as researchers involved in television fiction studies. We share the absence of rights linked to markers such as territory, class, gender/sexuality, and race that the characters manifest in television drama and realize that the struggles for these rights concern fictional figures as much as they concern us.

If we seek, in the plots of the telenovela *Pantanal*, elements to build new futures in telefiction, in the identification of the intersections on which the *Pantanal* narrative is based, could we also understand the intersections that build us, both as citizens and as a nation? Finally, we ask: to what extent can research that uses intersectional cartography as a theoretical and methodological construction characterize an action research? This will be the starting point for subsequent research.

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PART TWO

Gender, Representations, and Citizenship Technologies

The media pedagogical apparatus and processes of subjectivation in *Pantanal*: gender and citizenship in discourses of femininities and masculinities through Jove and Juma

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1 Introduction

Set in the Brazilian biome that gives it its name, the remake of the telenovela *Pantanal* (TV Globo, 2022) honored the success of its predecessor (TV Manchete, 1990) by staging the conflicts of the family of rancher José Leôncio with the stunning landscapes of the region as scenery. Throughout its 167 chapters, the plot reached an average of 30 audience points and addressed contemporary themes such as sustainability and domestic violence, taking advantage of the potential of the telenovela as a communicative resource “that can communicate cultural representations that act, or at least tend to act, for social inclusion, environmental responsibility, respect for difference, the construction of citizenship”¹ (Lopes, 2009, p. 22).

Pantanal brings a rich and complex approach to femininities and masculinities, representing both the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and ruptures and resignifications. The narrative unfolds

1 Original text: “que consegue comunicar representações culturais que atuam, ou ao menos tendem a atuar, para a inclusão social, a responsabilidade ambiental, o respeito à diferença, a construção da cidadania.”

in an environment marked by patriarchal traditions, in which the social division of labor (Kergoat, 2003) and gender is associated with rural culture. However, the serial drama makes room for characters who challenge these norms.

There are several characters that provide opportunities for discussions about femininities and masculinities in *Pantanal*, but we consider that the couple of young protagonists Juma (Alanis Guillen) and Joventino (Jesuíta Barbosa) deserves to be highlighted. Their trajectories suggest counter-hegemonic possibilities to traditional gender standards: Juma embodies an indomitable and self-sufficient femininity, far from stereotypes of docility and submission; Jove questions masculinity conventions by demonstrating sensibility, physical fragility, and a distinct attitude from the dominant virility in the Pantanal universe. Their relationship shows how the telenovela negotiates discourses about what it means to be a man and a woman, promoting reflections on identity, belonging and citizenship.

According to the São Paulo Media Group (2021), TV is present in 95% of Brazilian households, and telenovelas reach a large audience, with 60 million viewers per week (Luis, 2025). It is important to point out that television channels are public concessions and must follow the guidelines of the Brazilian Constitution, which establishes the need for TV programs based on educational, artistic, cultural, and informative principles (Brazil, 1988).

TV operates, according to Fischer (2002), in the constitution of subjects and subjectivities of contemporary society, by generating representations, meanings, and knowledge that, in a way, contribute to the formation of people, guiding them on how to behave and position themselves in the culture in which they are inserted. Television participates in the construction of meanings and senses that influence the ways of being, thinking, understanding the world and relating to life.

TV stations act as an apparatus to produce understandings about reality, including issues of gender and sexuality. Teresa de Lauretis (1994, p. 228) considers media a gender technology that has, along with other institutions, the power to “control the field of social meaning and thus produce, promote and ‘implant’ gender representations”².

It is interesting to analyze the discussions that *Pantanal* proposes around notions of femininities and masculinities, based on the hypothesis that the telenovela embodies an approach that

2 Original text: “controlar o campo do significado social e assim produzir, promover e ‘implantar’ representações de gênero.”

strains traditions of classic telenovelas, updating meanings about what it means to be a woman and a man. If the “jaguar woman” Juma Marruá was already a discursive event (Foucault, 2007) for Brazilian television in 1990, the 2022 version continues to problematize notions about gender, connecting to the spirit of contemporary time (Morin, 2002). From reinforcements of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2020) — a key concept to understand how gender and power relations are structured in patriarchal societies — to the demonstration of plural and dissident masculinities, *Pantanal* is a narrative that sets the agenda for the dispute of gender ideals.

Hegemonic masculinity is not only a normative model of male behavior, but a configuration of practices that legitimize men’s domination over women and other subordinate forms of masculinity. It is based on characteristics such as virility, autonomy, emotional control and, above all, power over other men and women.

This form of masculinity must be understood in contrast to femininities and other non-hegemonic masculinities, such as the subordinated,³ marginalized,⁴ and complicit masculinities⁵ (Connell, 2020). In this context, the concept of emphasized femininity arises, which refers to the form of femininity that accommodates and reaffirms male domination, that is, an idea of the socially constructed feminine that values behaviors considered “traditionally feminine,” such as docility, empathy, and obedience. Emphasized femininity⁶ is characterized by complicity with patriarchy and is expressed through subordination, emotional dependence, and sexualization of the female body.

Jove and Juma’s story reveals a symbolic game between male and female, subverting norms and challenging stereotypes, making masculinities and femininities key concepts for the debate around the characters. This research discusses the contribution of the telenovela *Pantanal*, as a media pedagogical apparatus, to the construction and re-signification of gender subjectivations, through the representations of masculinities and femininities in the characters.

3 Marginalized or inferiorized masculinities in relation to hegemony. An example is homosexual men, whose gender expression and sexuality defy ideals of dominant masculinity.

4 Masculinities marginalized by factors other than gender, such as social class, race, or ethnicity.

5 Associated with men who do not fully embody hegemonic masculinity, but benefit from patriarchy and male domination.

6 For Brownmiller (2013), femininity is a social and cultural construction designed to reinforce gender inequality. It is a set of practices imposed on women to maintain a position of inferiority in relation to men, built through aesthetic, behavioral, and emotional norms that limit the role of women.

In addition to a bibliographic survey on masculinities and femininities (Connell, 2020; Brownmiller, 2013), discourse (Foucault, 2007), apparatus (Foucault, 2001; Deleuze, 1990; Agamben, 2009; Fischer, 2002), and citizenship (Canclini, 2010), the analysis consists of the survey and observation of *Pantanal* scenes in which Jove and Juma participate or are mentioned by other characters. From there, the enunciative recurrences of the *Pantanal* discourse that contribute to the resignification or reinforcement of gender patterns were identified.

Before presenting the results, however, it is important to discuss the role of telenovelas as a genre technology and media pedagogical apparatus.

2 Telenovelas as gender technology for the promotion of citizenship through discourse

Telenovelas play a role in the informal education of Brazilian society, influencing values, behaviors, and perceptions on various topics. When addressing gender issues, the narratives reflect on existing conceptions while contributing to the construction of meanings about masculinities and femininities. Through plots that strain social expectations, telenovelas can stimulate reflections on gender roles and citizenship, promoting debates that go beyond entertainment.

Lauretis (1994) states that different social technologies, such as media, school, and family, produce what is understood as gender. It is important to understand not only how gender representation is constructed in technology, but also how it is subjectively absorbed by each person it addresses.

The concept derives from Foucault's (2001) postulates about the apparatus. Gender technology operates as an apparatus, producing subjectivations. According to the philosopher, the regency of the population's activities is carried out from the structuring of apparatuses, that is, the government is exercised through apparatuses, a set that

[...] encompasses discourses, institutions, architectural organizations, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, philanthropic propositions. In short, what is said and unsaid are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus

is the network that can be established between these elements⁷ (Foucault, 2001, p. 138).

Based on analyses of Foucault's work, Deleuze (1990) states that the apparatus is a multilinear concept based on three major axes: knowledge, power, and subjectivation. The author says that apparatuses are machines to "make one see and make one talk (Deleuze, 1990, p. 155)."⁸ For him, the notion of apparatus approaches the idea of ways of existence, insofar as apparatuses engender ways of living.

Agamben (2009) defines the apparatus as any means capable of influencing, directing, shaping, controlling, and regulating the gestures, behaviors, opinions, and discourses of living beings. For him, the apparatus would be the operation through which the world of creatures is governed, so it must imply a process of subjectification, that is, producing its subject. Thus, we identified the axis that brings together the specificities of the philosophers' definitions for the concept of apparatus: process of subjectivation.

Based on this concept, Fischer (2002) regards the media as an apparatus in the construction of subjects and subjectivities.⁹ She considers that learning about ways of existence happens with the contribution of media, which is configured as a powerful place

[...] with regard to the production and circulation of a series of values, conceptions, representations — related to everyday learning about who we are, what we should do with our bodies¹⁰ (Fischer, 2002, p. 153).

Media spaces are training environments, as are school, family, and religious institutions.

Although it employs the concept of media pedagogical apparatus related to school curricula, the understanding that the media pedagogical apparatus is a discursive apparatus that teaches how to do, be, and live is valid. The notion highlights the role of the media in the

7 Original text: "[...] engloba discursos, instituições, organizações arquitetônicas, decisões regulamentares, leis, medidas administrativas, enunciados científicos, proposições filosóficas, morais, filantrópicas. Em suma, o dito e o não dito são os elementos do dispositivo. O dispositivo é a rede que se pode estabelecer entre estes elementos."

8 Original text: "hacer ver y hacer hablar."

9 The concepts of subjectivity and subjectivation deserve differentiation. "Subjectivity" is related to the experiences that the subject makes of his or herself. Subjectivation processes are analyzed by Fischer (2002) as historical, and should be seen in their wide diversity, in the ways of existence they produce, according to the time and type of social formation being considered.

10 Original text: "[...] no que tange à produção e à circulação de uma série de valores, concepções, representações — relacionadas a um aprendizado cotidiano sobre quem nós somos, o que devemos fazer com nosso corpo."

production of subjectivities, that is, in the way individuals construct their identities and understand the world. This concept is in line with the idea of consumption as a producer of citizenship, developed by Canclini (2010), which highlights how the act of consuming is not restricted to an economic dimension, but also involves cultural and political processes that configure identities and social belonging. The consumption of media content informs and entertains but also guides ways of being and acting in the public space, being a central element in the construction of contemporary citizenship.

Citizenship can be incited when the telenovela inserts the discussion of gender in its narratives, promoting visibility, questioning, and resignifications for identities, rights, and inequalities, encouraging the public to position itself in the social sphere. By questioning masculinities and femininities, the telenovela contributes to subjectivations on the theme based on the discourse used. It also engenders possibilities of citizenship for populations that assume gender counter-conducts¹¹ (Foucault, 2008).

By looking at the telenovela as an apparatus, we can identify how the meanings about masculinities and femininities are put into negotiation and how they contribute to the production of citizenship. It is understood that the processes of subjectivation around gender were produced by *Pantanal* from discursive strategies employed by the telenovela to address the theme.

Discourse constitutes a network of statements and relationships that enable meaning and for which conditions of existence can be defined (Foucault, 2007). It is a set of statements that come from the same formation system. Discursive formation is a set of anonymous, historical rules, determined in time and space, that defines a given time (Foucault, 2007).

A discursive formation is defined if it is possible to establish a similar set; if it can be shown how any object of the discourse in question finds its place there, its law of appearance. Regularity arises from the successive appearance with simultaneous correlations¹² (Moreira, 2022, p. 38).

11 Counter-conduct designates "the movement in power games capable of creating other possibilities of action, insofar as it refuses, not exactly the government, but the way in which it is governed" (Costa, 2019, p. 68). Original quote: "*o movimento nos jogos de poder capaz de criar outras possibilidades de ação, na medida em que recusa, não propriamente o governo, mas o modo como se é governado.*"

12 Original text: "*Uma formação discursiva se define caso seja possível estabelecer um conjunto semelhante; se se puder mostrar como qualquer objeto do discurso em questão aí encontra seu lugar, sua lei de aparecimento. A regularidade surge a partir do aparecimento sucessivo com correlações simultâneas.*"

Given the enunciative recurrences identified in *Pantanal*, it is possible to deepen the analysis of how these discursive regularities operate in the constitution of subjectivations. If apparatuses act as producers of subjectivities, it is in repetitions and enunciative variations that we can recognize their effects and strategies. In the next sections, we will examine these recurrences, understanding how they contribute to the understanding of femininities and masculinities and to the constitution of subjectivations.

3 Methodological procedures

This research analyzes the discourse of the remake of *Pantanal* around the masculinities and femininities of the characters Jove and Juma to understand the processes of subjectivation established by the media pedagogical apparatus. For this, the work began with a collection of the *Pantanal* scenes available on the GShow website in whose description the names of Jove and/or Juma appeared (consisting of scenes in which they are present, together or individually, or that other characters talk about them).

Figure 1 – GShow website with *Pantanal* chapters



Source: GShow (2025).

With data scraping tools,¹³ 685 scenes were collected that corresponded to the criteria, and these were organized in a spreadsheet with the date, description (provided by Globo), and link.

¹³ A form of mining that allows the extraction of data from websites, converting them into structured information. In this case, the data were collected using a Python script developed for this purpose.

From the discourse analysis of scenes in the *corpus* in which issues related to masculinities and femininities were raised or discussed, we identified the recurrence of statements¹⁴ around the subject. Each researcher kept a diary of observations with transcriptions of emblematic dialogues, in addition to identifying the markers in the narrative that allow us to perceive the recurrences around gender. This discourse corresponds to the processes of subjectivation triggered by the text of the telenovela as a media pedagogical apparatus.

4 Recurrences on femininities and masculinities through Jove and Juma

4.1 Femininities

In Brazilian Portuguese, the word “Marruá” is an adjective used to describe oxen with an unruly and not very docile temperament. Living in a shack isolated from the Pantanal society, raised by a mother who deliberately distanced herself from social life, Juma “Marruá” was taught by Maria, her mother, to distrust men and be self-sufficient, extracting her livelihood from the nature of the Pantanal, hunting and fishing to survive. The character is introduced as an instinctive being, free and in connection with nature, presenting the opposition between the savage and the civilized, with her resistance to the norms imposed by life in the city, in order to highlight the tension between traditional ways of existence and the rationality of modernity.

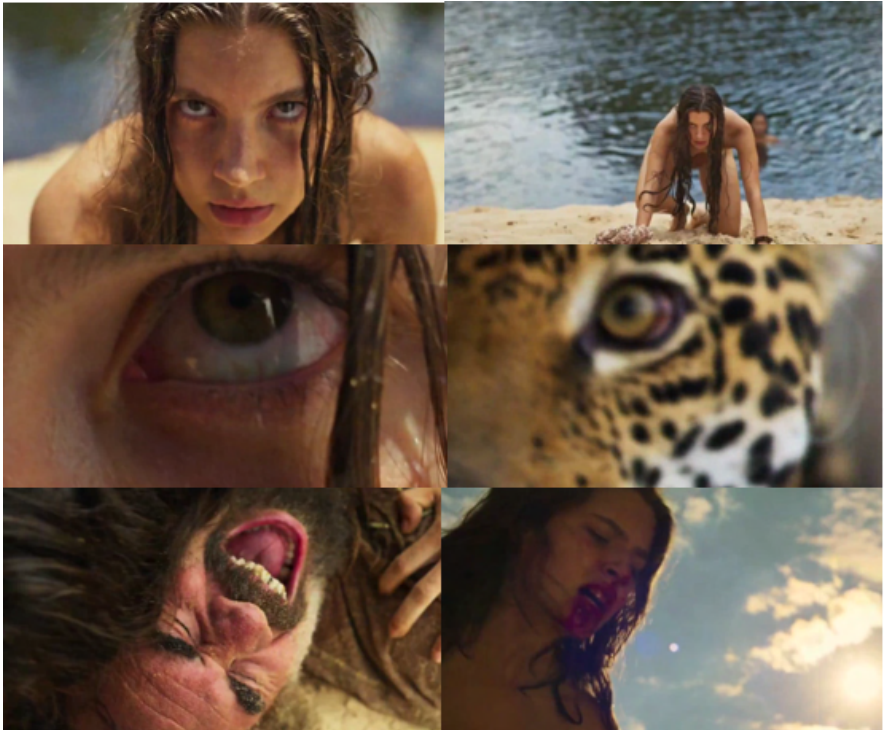
Juma presents characteristics that dialogue with the archetype of the Wild Woman, discussed by Estés (2014). The Wild Woman represents the instinctive, intuitive, and free essence of femininity, an ancestral force that many women are taught to repress. This strength manifests itself in women who resist norms and remain connected to their deep nature.

The young woman inherited from her mother the magical ability to transform into a jaguar, a power that first manifested itself for her to defend herself from an attempt at harassment while

¹⁴ Enunciative recurrences do not necessarily need to be repeated an exact number of times to be meaningful. What matters is the regularity with which certain statements appear in a discourse, demonstrating the formation of patterns that structure knowledge and practices within a discursive field. That is, it is not just about the number of repetitions, but the way these repetitions contribute to the construction of a regime of truth within a given context.

bathing in the river. At the time, Juma bites off the attacker's ear. The sequence aired on April 30, with short and juxtaposed takes of woman and animal: sometimes the attacker is Juma, sometimes the jaguar, with human screams mixing with growls and grunts, building the meaning that woman and feline are one.

Figure 2 – The first transformation of Juma into a jaguar



Source: Screenshots of *Pantanal* (2022).

The word “wild” attributed to Juma goes beyond her ability to transform herself (metaphorically or literally) into a jaguar. It stems from her independent personality, her lack of social skills, and her risky temperament, just like a “marruá.” The character contrasts with notions of “civility” when interacting with other environments and characters, especially Joventino and his family – both the side of his father, Zé Leôncio, and his mother, Madeleine, from the city of Rio de Janeiro, where Jove lived until he became an adult.

Despite respecting and to some extent welcoming Juma's mannerisms, Jove sometimes questions his beloved's civility, taking a paternalistic stance.¹⁵ However, it is, above all, his family that demands from the heroin an effort¹⁶ to adapt to social norms. In this sense, the clashes between her and José Leôncio are the most recurrent.

Such tension appears in a conversation between Zé Leôncio, Mariana, and Irma, Jove's grandmother and aunt, respectively. The dialogue makes it clear that Juma's notion of the wild is demarcated by gender-related nuances.

Zé Leôncio: I knew it wouldn't work if she [Maria] raised that girl alone in that shack without any men around.

Mariana: And what do you mean by that? That a man around would be the solution to all the evil in the world?

Zé Leôncio: No, if Gil were alive, they would not be holed up in that shack like two jaguars.

Irma: Oh, José Leôncio, it's not like that. Stop it, come on.

Zé Leôncio: Drop it, that thing is worse than a jaguar, that is a beast.

Mariana: Come on, don't talk about her like that, José Leôncio.

Zé Leôncio: That's what she really is. I keep thinking, when Joventino contradicts her on something, what will she do to him¹⁷ (Pantanal, 2022).

Juma causes strangeness by not behaving according to the expectations of what it means to "be a woman," with the absence of a male figure throughout her upbringing, this absence is being pointed out by Zé Leôncio as the cause for this "problem." The character is unaware of social practices and codes and, consequently, the restrictions historically imposed by patriarchy on

15 In the chapter aired on May 5, Jove refuses to kiss Juma because he considers that she "is not aware of what she is doing" (Pantanal, 2022).

16 In Rio de Janeiro, for example, on the chapter aired on May 7, Jove's grandmother and mother find it strange and mock Juma's behavior.

17 Original text: "Zé Leôncio: Eu sabia que não ia dar certo ela [Maria] criar aquela menina sozinha naquela tapera lá sem ter nenhum homem por perto. Mariana: E o que é que você quer dizer com isso? Que um homem por perto seria a solução para todos os males do mundo? Zé Leôncio: Não, uai, se o Gil tivesse vivo, elas não ia tá entocada naquela tapera feito duas onça-pintada, ara. Irma: Ai, José Leôncio, não é assim não. Para, eu, heim. Zé Leôncio: Larga mão, aquilo lá é pior do que uma onça, aquilo é um bicho. Mariana: Que é isso, não fala assim dela, José Leôncio. Zé Leôncio: É isso que ela é mermo. Eu fico pensando aqui na hora que o Joventino contrariar ela com alguma coisa, o que é que ela vai aprontar pra ele."

women's bodies — she did not, therefore, become a woman, in the meanings denounced by Beauvoir (2009). Therefore, she is reduced to a dehumanized category: Leôncio refers to Juma with terms such as “that,” evaluating that the girl is “worse than a jaguar, she is a beast” (Pantanal, 2022).¹⁸

The savage/civilized opposition is placed in a binary and hierarchical way, with Juma being read as a “threat” that must be tamed or trained. Throughout the plot, it is often that we hear Zé Leôncio say that the “jaguar” must be contained “in the rope,” like one of his oxen. Madeleine and Mariana also judge the girl with adjectives such as “difficult” and “fussy.” Such statements appear with intensity when Juma acts without considering the wishes of others, refuses to remain in situations of discomfort, refuses to live with Jove on Leôncio's farm, or almost abandons her wedding ceremony.

This kind of observation also comes at times when Juma demonstrates that she can live on her own. In several scenes, she says that she does not need anyone to take care of her, showing that she can live alone and knows how to defend herself. In addition to biting off her harasser's ear, Juma has on other occasions shown her ability to react to dangerous situations, defending herself against villains such as Levi and Tenório. Thus, she refuses to be subjugated, without fear of resorting to violence, challenging the archetype of the passive woman (Penkala; Ebersol, 2021) and reaffirming her refusal to depend on a man to protect herself.

This characteristic is sometimes read as lack of civility by the other characters in the telenovela, including those closest to her, such as her best friend, Muda, and Jove. The association of Juma's independence with the fact that she is “wild” builds a negative notion of the archetype of the wild and free woman described by Estês (2014).

Juma is also treated as ignorant. She did not have access to formal education, being illiterate. She causes astonishment and laughter when she questions inventions and institutions of modern society, such as photography, the car, marriage, the police, and even perfume. On the other hand, the knowledge she has is not usually worthy of credit: even Jove disregards it when she insists that Velho do Rio, her father figure and kind of guardian spirit of the Pantanal, is capable of transforming himself into a *sucuri* snake. This reinforces the hierarchy between the civilized and savage positions, with Juma in an inferior one.

18 Original text: “*pior do que uma onça, é um bicho.*”

Although combative, Juma is willing to negotiate some of her positions due to her relationship with Jove. On the issue of literacy, the girl says that she has always been interested in words, but she had no one to teach her. In the chapter of April 30, Jove watches Juma flip through a booklet on the floor of her shack and is surprised to find that she cannot read:

Jove: How come? How can a human being live away from society, like an animal.

Juma: Animal? I am not an animal!

Jove: I'm not saying you're an animal, Juma... You are a human being. In the simplest sense. You are proof that men are born pure and...

Juma: I am not a man!

Jove: No... I'm not saying that. I'm saying you're pure. You are a human being in the most genuine way.

Juma: I don't know what that is.

Jove [approaching]: You don't have to behave like a jaguar with me, Juma (Pantanal, 2022).¹⁹

Here, Juma alludes to the myth of the “good savage.”²⁰ Infantilized, she enchants Jove for being “a human being in the most genuine way,” that is, before being corrupted by society. Jove, in turn, is at the other pole of the savage/civilized opposition, representative of reason and common sense, signs socially considered to be proper to masculinities. However, he criticizes the conventions of modernity, insofar as they restrict and harm mankind and other living beings. In the Pantanal, he seeks a utopian state of freedom provided by nature. He is willing to abandon the bonds of civilization as he falls in love with Juma, in a demonstration of confluent love (Giddens, 2003)²¹ and in a compliment to the Wild Woman. But that doesn't stop him from trying to tame her. He does not do this through the

19 Original text: “Jove: Como é que pode? O ser humano viver afastado assim da sociedade, igual um bicho. Juma: Bicho? Eu num sou bicho! Jove: Eu não tô dizendo que você é bicho, Juma... Você é um ser humano. No sentido mais simples. Você é a prova de que o homem nasce puro e... Juma: Eu num sou homem! Jove: Não... Eu não tô dizendo isso. Tô dizendo que você é puro. Você é um ser humano da forma mais genuína. Juma: Não sei o que é que isso. Jove [se aproximando]: Não precisa se comportar como onça comigo, Juma.”

20 The myth of the good savage emerged in Europe after contact with indigenous populations of America, being explored in the literature. Philosophers such as Rousseau popularized the concept, arguing that the human being is naturally good and naive, but is corrupted by civilization.

21 The concept of confluent love (Giddens, 2003) refers to relationships based on equality and mutual satisfaction, differing from traditional conceptions of romantic love. The relationship is not seen as an unbreakable commitment or determined by rigid norms, but as a partnership that exists as long as it is rewarding for those involved.

strength defended by Zé Leôncio, but through persuasion. When Juma reaffirms her desire to learn to read, Jove offers to help her, but sets one condition: he says he will teach her as long as she promises “not to show her teeth for nothing.”

Throughout the telenovela, Juma undergoes other processes of assimilation of a “civilized” culture, although she does not do so without conflict. In addition to learning to read, Juma is baptized and marries Jove in a religious ceremony. She also adopts behaviors of the women she lives with, such as Filó, Zé Leôncio’s life partner. She learns cooking recipes and starts decorating the shack with flowers and rags, so that Jove feels more comfortable.

In their relationship, she quickly absorbs notions associated with the concept of romantic love, by demonstrating jealousy and offering affective-sexual exclusivity, repressing any feelings of desire for other men. “It’s harder to be people than to be animals, Juma. You’re getting this now. Patience is needed,”²² says Velho do Rio (Pantanal, 2022), in a dialogue that seems to synthesize the character’s trajectory.

Gradually, Juma conforms, in part, to some ways of the patriarchal society, seeking an alignment with Jove. Because she has a relationship with him, she knows and subsequently faces different roles imposed on women, especially that of the mother-wife, when she feels the desire for motherhood awaken.

The concept of Mother-Wife Captivity (Lagarde, 2015) describes how women are conditioned to assume the roles of mother and wife as an inevitable fate. This imposition restricts their autonomy, making them hostage to family and social expectations. It stems from the belief that the female body determines motherhood, naturalizing its dependence on heteronormative marriage (Costa, 2024). In patriarchy, this structure reinforces inequalities and limits women’s freedom.

In the first phase of the telenovela, encouraged by her mother, Juma rejects motherhood, stating that she does not want to have children. The refusal is questioned by Zé Leôncio, who defends the need for heirs as a male decision and in direct relation to the “biological destiny” socially imposed on women (Badinter, 1985).

Two moments are decisive for Juma’s change of perspective. First, a conversation with Filó (Chapter 71), who, although admitting the challenges of motherhood, reinforces the idea that being a

²² Original text: “É mais difícil ser gente do que ser bicho, Juma. Você tá entendendo isso agora. É preciso paciência.”

mother reveals true love, in a romanticized view of motherhood (Badinter, 1985). The second moment occurs when Velho do Rio asks her for great-grandchildren, stating that motherhood is her destiny and can occur without her having to leave the shack (Chapter 84). This convinces her, leading Juma to desire a child raised in the wild, like her.

Such romanticization is based on the myth of maternal love, discussed by Badinter (1985). It is about the perspective that maternal love is an inherent condition of women, justified by the female biological nature. Being the responsible person for gestating, reproducing, and caretaking, maternal love would be inherent to the woman even before becoming a mother.

Motherhood is anchored in the idea of the private as a female space (Okin, 2008), in caretaking as a woman's duty (Gilligan, 2013) and in the belief that only she can raise the child (Costa, 2024), reinforcing the maternal instinct (Badinter, 1985). The myth of maternal love is forged (Del Priore, 2009) from the perspective of women's subservience and their imprisonment in the domestic space, in order to leave them captive to home, marriage, and motherhood (Costa, 2024).

Pregnant and married to Jove, Juma faces pressures to fit into the traditional mother-wife model (Lagarde, 2015). In the chapter of August 1, for example, Zé Leôncio reprimands Zé Lucas, Jove's brother, for approaching her with affective interests. The patriarch states that Juma belongs to Jove, to which the girl states that she is "no one's wife," challenging the view of marriage as possession.

During pregnancy, Juma is encouraged by Jove and her family to give birth in the hospital, contrary to her desire to have her daughter born by the hands of Velho do Rio. Several scenes thematize this discussion, in which the imposition on motherhood and female autonomy is noted, reinforcing how women's decisions are questioned or disregarded.

In addition to Jove, Zé Leôncio, Filó, Irma, and Mariana try to convince Juma to review her decision, asking her to give birth in the hospital or on Leôncio's farm, but the jaguar-woman is irreducible. In the chapter of September 23, Juma disappears to have her daughter and, in a dialogue between Jove and Muda (Pantanal, 2022), discourses on women's freedom and respect for Juma's choices as a mother are presented:

Jove: She wants to put her life at risk. Now, my daughter, Muda, my daughter, no!
Muda: Joventino, let's respect her wishes, for God's sake.

Jove: What about my wishes? My wishes, Muda? Doesn't she respect them?

Muda: She's giving birth to your child, Joventino. Let's let her have it her way. She should know what's best. Let's take it easy. Everything will be okay.

Jove: Do you think she needs anything?

Muda: Juma never needed anyone in this life. It won't be now that she will.²³

The scene exposes the conflict between male authority and female autonomy in motherhood. In expressing concern, Jove subtly suggests that he should decide on the child's gestation and upbringing. Muda offers a counterpoint, reaffirming female self-determination and the deconstruction of Mother-Wife Captivity (Lagarde, 2015). By legitimizing Juma's ability to decide about her body, the scene highlights the clash between traditional and contemporary conceptions, reinforcing motherhood as a choice, not submission.

The recurring tensions between Juma and Zé Leôncio also reveal the girl's resistance to patriarchal norms. After unsuccessful attempts to subject her to the male will, when she gives birth to his granddaughter, Leôncio recognizes her independence. The chapter of September 24 brings an emblematic moment (Pantanal, 2022):

Zé Leôncio [with the baby in his arms]: If she were a little boy, I would run around these pastures at will like I did with you [the children].

Jove: Don't even try it, Dad.

Zé Leôncio: I'm not trying anything, son. I'm just talking nonsense anyway. I'm not going to do anything to her, ok?

Juma: Why not? She's a Leôncio. Blood from your blood, isn't she? It's your duty.

Jove: Juma, she's just been born.

23 Original text: "Jove: Ela quer colocar a vida dela em risco. Agora, minha filha, Muda, minha filha, não! Muda: Joventino, vamos respeitar as vontades dela, pelo amor de Deus. Jove: E as minhas vontades? A minha vontade, Muda? Ela não respeita? Muda: Ela tá parindo o filho de vocês, Joventino. Vamos deixar ela ter como ela quer. Ela deve saber o que é melhor. Vamos ter calma. Vai dar certo. Jove: Será que ela tá precisando de alguma coisa? Muda: A Juma nunca precisou de ninguém nessa vida. Não vai ser agora que ela vai precisar."

Juma: But she's a Leôncio, isn't she?

Zé Leôncio: You're going to become a jaguar, aren't you? Will you run with me? I'll do to her what I did to you. What your grandfather did to me, what his father did to him too.²⁴

This dialogue challenges the notion that certain experiences belong to men. Zé Leôncio associates riding and exploring the *Pantanal* with the masculine, while Juma claims her daughter the right to the same experiences (Gilligan, 2013). The intervention breaks with the patriarchal conception of family inheritance restricted to male children. After all, Leôncio leaves on a horse with his granddaughter in his arms, with his mother's permission. Leôncio's recognition points to a resignification of gender roles (Connell, 2020), showing that femininity can coexist with strength, freedom, and connection to the land (Brownmiller, 2013).

Although *Pantanal* brings advances in the representation of female characters resistant to patriarchy, Juma's trajectory carries contradictions. Her strength and autonomy coexist with elements that link her to traditional romantic ideals. The narrative perpetuates in various measures the myth of romantic love, which idealizes love as absolute and unconditional (Esteban, 2011), with the idea that two people can be "destined" for the affective bond and must endure any kind of suffering.

Romantic love is a role naturalized to the feminine (Lagarde, 2023), and we see in the plot how Juma's catechization process teaches love as a function. On behalf of this ideal, Juma softens her original positions, and her trajectory starts to be told mainly due to the relationship with Jove. Such dependence reflects a classic dynamic of television drama, in which women are defined by the impact they have on the hero.

The character is written around the romance, embracing practices associated with the roles of wife and mother. However, she does so in her own way, insisting that she will not be imprisoned. It signals an effort by the telenovela in the direction of updates of apparently crystallized meanings of femininity, providing opportunities for problematizations about different ways of being a woman.

24 Original text: "Zé Leôncio [com a bebê nos braços]: Se fosse um machinho, eu ia sair correndo aí por esses pastos à vontade que nem eu fiz com vocês [os filhos]. Jove: Não inventa não, pai. Zé Leôncio: Tô inventando nada não, filho. Tô só falando bobagem mesmo. Não vou fazer nada com ela não, né? Juma: E por que não? Ela é um Leôncio. É sangue do teu sangue, não é? É teu dever. Jove: Juma, acabou de nascer. Juma: Mas é Leôncio, não é? Zé Leôncio: Vai virar oncinha, vai? Vai correr mais eu? Vou fazer com ela o que eu fiz com você. O que seu vô fez comigo, que o pai dele fez com ele também."

4.2 Masculinities

Joventino lived in Rio de Janeiro most of his life, translating meanings of a white, urban, upper-class, and educated youth. In this way, Jove occupies a place of privilege that is reflected in his position within the narrative. His origin guarantees access to resources, knowledge and opportunities that other characters do not have, reinforcing structural inequalities present in society. Their presence in the Pantanal is not only a cultural shock, but also an example of how subjects from urban and economically favored contexts move more easily through different spaces, being more accepted and legitimized. This shows how gender, race and class operate together to produce hierarchies and inequalities within the telenovela.

In the initial chapters, the protagonist discovers the existence of his father, Zé Leôncio, and decides to go to the Pantanal to meet him. The clash of cultures is immediate, generating conflicts not only between Jove and the father, but also between him and his brothers (Zé Lucas and Tadeu) and the other farm workers in the region. He is different from other men in the Pantanal not only in physical attributes and clothing, but also in behavior and ideological positions, and is forged in a perspective of masculinities in deconstruction (Barreto Januário, 2016).

At the party to welcome him in the Pantanal, in the chapter aired on April 18, Jove faces the farm worker Alcides when he tries to dance with Guta, daughter of dishonorable Tenório, without the girl's consent. Alcides incites the physical confrontation, but Jove avoids the conflict, stating that he is new to the region and does not know the customs of the place. When Alcides pushes him, Jove leaves the scene: "Do you want to fight? Then you fight alone, it will not be with me," (Pantanal, 2022)²⁵ to which Alcides cackles and calls him "chicken." The scene takes place under the scrutiny of Zé Leôncio, who evaluates his son's attitudes in the face of conflict.

25 Original text: "Tu quer brigar? Então briga sozinho aí, que não vai ser comigo não."

Figure 3 – Jove faces Alcides to defend Guta



Source: Screenshots of *Pantanal* (2022).

The comparison between Jove and the other men in the telenovela indicates a gender debate that contrasts rigid and traditional models of masculinity, set here in the context of rural work (virility, strength, nature), to patterns associated with plural and deconstructing masculinities, which point to other values (reason, sensitivity, science). The concept of Plural Masculinity (Aboim, 2016) offers a contemporary scenario of the dynamics and forms of masculinity, emphasizing the multiple and contradictory ways in which men remake their identities.

Jove represents the product of Enlightenment society, but seeks to deconstruct patterns of hegemonic masculinity to which he was exposed, with discourses on sustainability, democracy, and veganism. He is sensitive and keeps in touch with his emotions, having chosen a professional field linked to the arts – photography – as a vocation.

About being vegan, Adams (2018) points out how the act of eating meat is linked to virility and being a man in society. This idea

is noticeable in the chapter aired on April 16, when Jove shocks his father by stating that he is vegan. For him, the act of not eating meat is a position against the mistreatment of animals, while Leôncio considers his son's decision an "affront" to life in the countryside. It is thus possible to see how much the people of the Pantanal see Jove as strange, whether due to the preference for dialogue or not eating meat.

In the first part of the telenovela, we note the debate about how Jove's upbringing, without his father's presence, may have influenced his attitudes. This stems from a generational male identity vision that links masculinity and virility to individuals who had a direct influence from the male figure to create their identity. For Connell (2020), these identities are influenced by a complex and dynamic social context, in which factors such as generation and geographic location play crucial roles. These nuances can produce multiple facets of the individual in different versions of masculinity (Christofidou, 2018).

While his skills are put under suspicion by his father, brothers and other cowboys, Jove returns the hostility, stating firmly, and on more than one occasion, that he will not adapt to the "retrograde" customs of the Pantanal. It should be noted that Jove uses adjectives such as "reactionary" and "conservative" to disqualify not only rural workers, but also characters who came from the same (urban) context as him. When Mariana recriminates his decision to live in Juma's shack, Jove reprehends his grandmother, stating that he does not want "conservative people" around (Pantanal, 2022). That is, his criticism of traditional models does not focus on the Pantanal region specifically, but on a way of thinking and conceiving masculinities in a canonical way.

One of the characters that best incorporates the clash between Plural Masculinity and other modes of masculinity is Zé Leôncio. Throughout the story, Jove has managed to convince his father of some of his progressive views, when he is allowed, for example, to implement a sustainable business model in the Leôncio company. In other ways, his father is more resilient. When Juma refuses to live with Jove at the Leôncio farm, his father says that a man cannot act that submissive. Jove corrects his father, pointing out that neither man nor woman should submit to anyone. In another scene, Zé Leôncio says that Jove must assert his will in relation to Juma, forcing her to live in the house with them. Jove explains that he will not force Juma to do anything and that, for him, man and woman must enjoy the same rights, and that it is not the man who imposes his desires.

The choice of their daughter's name, in the chapter of September 23, presents an interesting debate on Plural Masculinity, reflecting the transformations in gender dynamics and authority within the family. When deciding to name the baby Maria Leôncio Marruá, Juma subverts the traditional order of surnames, putting her name at the end, reversing the patriarchal logic that privileges the paternal surname as the main identity inheritance.

Jove, in agreeing with this decision, reaffirms his posture as a man of more flexible vision, who does not cling to the norms of traditional masculinity. When communicating the choice to his father, he realizes the strangeness of José Leôncio, a man marked by a hegemonic masculinity, linked to the authority and continuity of the family name.

The clash illustrates a generational shift in conceptions of masculinity. While Leôncio represents an authoritarian, centralizing model linked to tradition, Jove embodies a man who values dialogue, respect, and contemporaneity. In the sequence that follows, when Zé Leôncio questions Jove about "acting like a man" and "imposing his will," he expresses a masculinity in which being a man is associated with dominance over the family and the need to leave a legacy — in this case, ensuring that the paternal surname occupies the prominent position. Jove challenges this logic by rejecting the idea that masculinity is defined by power over others. His response, focused on the well-being of Juma and their daughter, suggests a caring and affective masculinity, aligned with more egalitarian values.

In the same chapter, the moment when Leôncio is forced to go to Juma's shack to meet his granddaughter also reinforces this dispute. For him, who has always been at the center of decisions, it is uncomfortable to have to submit to Juma's will. Upon accepting his granddaughter's name and agreeing to visit her under the terms established by Juma and Jove, Leôncio relents in an indication of transformation, albeit reluctantly. The fact that the protagonist accepts his son's decision suggests a generational change, in which rigid and unquestionable values are negotiated.

By his way of thinking and acting, Jove challenges values traditionally associated with masculinity. In line with this, it is also possible to see emerging senses of masculinity through the character's appearance. Slight, with delicate features and curly, voluminous hair, with necklaces and one earring, the boy contradicts traditional notions of masculine appearance, approaching an aesthetic read

socially as feminine. Also for this reason, he is perceived as fragile and again has his masculinity (and his heterosexuality) questioned.

In his confrontations with Alcides, in addition to being called “chicken,” Jove is given the nickname “Flozô.” The name derives from “flower,” referring to a notion of fragility associated with the feminine and to stereotypes that surround gay men. The nickname “catches on,” being said by other antagonists, such as Tenório and his henchman Levi. Even if he is affectionately and sexually involved with women (Guta and Juma), his heterosexuality continues to be questioned.

It is worth mentioning that farm workers such as Alcides and Levi present themselves within a model of complicit masculinity (Connell, 2020), which refers to men who, although they do not correspond to the ideal of hegemonic masculinity (in this case due to class issues), still enjoy male privileges and contribute to the maintenance of male domination. They are muscular, rustic, and also sexist and truculent, including sexually – Alcides is a persistent harasser of women, and Levi does not accept Muda’s refusal, almost raping her. Jove is the opposite: thin, slender, with a delicate body, with attitudes of non-violence that escape the “normality” of the Pantanal. Therefore, he is not considered “male” enough.

Through Jove himself, notions that relate masculinity to violence are tensioned by the telenovela’s script. In a scene where Jove and Levi argue, the villain again uses the nickname “Flozô” to provoke the protagonist. Jove comments that that man “only feels macho raping a woman or pulling out a knife” (Pantanal, 2022)²⁶, in an attempt to deconstruct patterns of a hegemonic masculinity that is expressed and reaffirmed through violence, with Jove serving as a counterpoint.

Due to his appearance and behavior, Jove is perceived by the men of the Pantanal as an example of Subordinated Masculinity (Connell, 2020). Subordinate forms of masculinity in a position of less prestige or subordinated in relation to the dominant model are considered. Connell associates this type of masculinity especially with issues of sexuality. In the telenovela’s discourse, this perception is supported by characters who represent hegemonic and complicit masculinities (Connell, 2020), such as Tenório and Alcides. By refusing violence, Jove is labeled a homosexual.

Jove’s effort to deconstruct hegemonic masculinity is a relevant but not unambiguous movement. To gain his father’s trust, there are times when he tries to approach the model of masculinity performed

26 Original text: “só se sente macho violentando uma mulher ou puxando uma faca.”

by the men of the Pantanal. He agrees to manage the family business and enters the competition proposed by José Leôncio to choose which of his children should inherit the “silver saddle” that belonged to his father. In addition, during his and Juma’s wedding ceremony, the boy finally gets involved in a physical fight with Alcides. At the time, the cowboy tries to force Juma to dance with him, then attacks Jove with a knife. The photographer tries to dialogue, but ends up punching the farm worker, who falls unconscious. Zé Leôncio does not hide his satisfaction: “you did well,” he celebrates, in a vision that reaffirms hegemonic models of masculinity. Even Juma finds the situation amusing, showing pride when she realizes that, at that moment, her husband “turned into a jaguar.”

In the relationship with Juma, we also noticed oscillations. Jove’s masculinity performances in the plot contribute to the approach of confluent love (Giddens, 2003) by showing relationships based on affection and the search for egalitarian partnerships, reflecting transformations in love dynamics. Still, the narrative gives way to traditional positions of male dominance, at times when Jove behaves in a paternalistic way, as if he were more apt to decide for Juma than herself – such as the aforementioned conflict around the birth of the couple’s daughter and the frictions about where they should live (at Juma’s shack or at Leôncio’s farm). In these clashes, we notice that Jove’s position slips: sometimes he places himself in an imposing way and from an alleged superiority (“I’m not going to live like an animal”), sometimes he tries to respect his partner’s choices.

Thus, based on the identified recurrences, we set up an analytical framework (Chart 1) that helps us visualize the frameworks of how these discussions are inscribed in the characters and their plots.

Chart 1 – Discursive topoi around femininities and masculinities in Jove and Juma

Recurrences on femininities and masculinity through Jove and Juma
Wild Woman
Mother-Wife Captivity
Plural Masculinity
Perceptions of Subordinated Masculinity

Source: The authors (2025).

Chart 1 allows us to visualize how discourses reiterate, negotiate and transform conceptions of gender, reflecting both the maintenance and contestation of norms. The enunciative recurrences linked to the Wild Woman and Mother-Wife Captivity represent contrasting discursive constructions about femininity. The first is related to instinctive and indomitable femininity, often associated with transgression of social norms. The second, to femininity shaped by the role of women in the domestic space, linked to caretaking, motherhood, and dedication to husband and family.

The discursive formation associated with Plural Masculinity and Subordinate Masculinity brings oppositions between hegemonic understandings of what it is to be a man and possible counter-conducts. Jove approaches Plural Masculinity and, therefore, is understood by the others as a representative of Subordinate Masculinity, being the target of judgments and clashes. Through these tensions, the telenovela finds narrative resources that allow us to discuss possible masculinities.

Jove and Juma's representations in *Pantanal* go beyond fiction and influence the way the public perceives masculinities and femininities. Jove's sensitivity and delicacy can both challenge and reinforce traditional expectations about gender roles, while Juma's strength and independence broaden the possibilities of what it means to be a woman, albeit within certain narrative conventions.

5 Final considerations

The recurrences identified in the *Pantanal* discourse are fundamental to the production of subjectivations, operating through the media pedagogical apparatus (Fischer, 2002). The repetition of themes, symbolic oppositions, and narrative constructions reinforces values, identities, and ways of existing, guiding how the audience should interpret the issues presented. Elements such as the duality between nature and civilization and gender representations in the telenovela act as statements that shape perceptions, creating shared meanings within the social imaginary and contributing to the configuration of contemporary subjectivations.

The analysis of *Pantanal* from the perspective of gender technology shows how this narrative format acts in the construction and resignification of female and male subjectivities, in a binary logic. The study of the protagonist couple reveals that the plot

strains traditional gender discourses, presenting characters that challenge hegemonic norms and introduce identity and performance possibilities. While Juma's trajectory reflects a clash between emphasized femininity and resistance to patriarchal domestication, Jove represents a masculinity that oscillates between the attempt to negotiate new values and to adapt to certain performances. The telenovela, when raising these conflicts, refers to its role as a pedagogical apparatus, proposing ways of being in the world based on statements about gender and citizenship.

The construction of masculinities and femininities in *Pantanal* differs from other telenovelas by straining gender roles more explicitly. While many Brazilian productions feature male protagonists who reinforce hegemonic models of masculinity – such as José Inocêncio's virile and domineering behavior in *Renascer* (another rural telenovela by the same author) – Jove emerges as a figure who strains these patterns. Similarly, Juma distinguishes herself from other heroines who, even when portrayed as independent, are still shaped by conventions that reinforce delicacy or emotional dependence. Juma embodies a femininity marked by nature and instinct, refusing social conventions and maintaining her autonomy even within the loving relationship with Jove.

The telenovela reinforces certain forms of citizenship by articulating gender representations anchored in relationships of confluence between masculinities and femininities. The discourses shape perceptions about the roles of men and women, influencing the symbolic construction of citizenship in its link with gender identities. *Pantanal* demonstrates how the telenovela, while reproducing classical narrative structures, opens space for symbolic disputes and social questions, reaffirming its relevance in the constitution of contemporary subjectivities.

The present analysis can be expanded to pedagogical practices, critical media, and informal education. In teaching, for example, it can stimulate reflections on gender representations in telenovelas and their cultural influence. Future research can investigate how the public interprets these dynamics and their impact on the construction of identities, that is, on subjectivities, in addition to focusing more directly on how factors such as race, class, age, sexual orientation, regionality, among others, interact with the gender issues discussed through these characters. In addition, media education can use the telenovela to promote debates on diversity and inclusion, encouraging a more critical consumption of the media.

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Agency of citizenship in the *Pantanal* telenovela: the construction of the feminine from the perspective of gender and territoriality

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1 Introduction

This research aimed to analyze the trajectories of the characters Filó and Irma, in the remake of *Pantanal* (Bruno Luperi; TV Globo, 2022), in order to understand how gender representations, in their intersection with the issue of territoriality, enable movements of melodramatic innovation in citizenship agency regarding gender equity in the telenovela. In the previous research (John *et al.*, 2021), one of the objectives was to develop, based on the theoretical matrices established in the studies of Latin American and, particularly, Brazilian telenovelas, in articulation with the theoretical model of Williams (1979), a specific methodological protocol for the studies of the text (plot) of television drama. Based on this objective, this research establishes a continuity relationship with the previous one by adopting the same methodological protocol and correlating

the objectives, which have as central theoretical operators the issue of the agency of citizenship in telenovelas, articulated by the perspective of gender and territoriality.

Also in the previous research, we discussed the construction of female archetypes in the telenovela, if and how innovation movements occurred in the narrative of melodrama from these constructions. At that time, we focused our attention on the construction of motherhood as an operator of the discussion on gender in the telenovela; here, we prioritized the relationship of these constructions through the lens of territoriality (Lindón, 2006; Martín-Barbero, 2018; Santos, 1990; 2008).

Our object, the remake of *Pantanal*, is set in two very distinct spaces, Rio de Janeiro and the countryside of Mato Grosso do Sul. Although the city of Rio de Janeiro is not so central in the plot, it plays an important role in the articulation between some of the main characters. Thus, when we selected our analysis considering characters representative of each of these spaces, we established a perspective to think about forms of citizenship agency regarding the gender roles of “urban Brazil” (Irma) and “deep Brazil” (Filó).

The notion of territoriality is central to understanding how citizenship agency operates (Tufte, 2008) in *Pantanal* with regard to the construction of the feminine and how this contributes (or not) to the achievement of gender equity. Regarding the importance of understanding inhabited spaces, Martín-Barbero (2018, p. 26) points out that this is “the primitive space of bodies and territories. [...] The inhabited space refers to the vital need of the niche-home, a place with warmth, without which the body cannot survive.”¹ Still on the different impacts of spatiality on the construction of the characters’ trajectories, it is worth remembering that

[...] the inhabited space is inseparable from time, not that of clocks, but the time that does and to which myths of origin and rites of initiation give shape, and the time of the rhythms of the day: morning, afternoon, night; of the seasons: spring, summer, fall, winter; and of the stages of life: childhood, youth, maturity, old age² (Martín-Barbero, 2018, p. 27).

1 Original text: “o espaço primitivo de corpos e territórios. [...] O espaço habitado se refere à necessidade vital do nicho-lar, um lugar com calor, sem o qual o corpo não sobrevive.”

2 Original text: “[...] o espaço habitado é inseparável do tempo, porém não o dos relógios, mas sim o tempo que faz e para os quais os mitos da origem e dos ritos de iniciação dão forma, e o tempo dos ritmos do dia: manhã, tarde, noite; das estações do ano: primavera, verão, outono, inverno; e as etapas da vida: infância, juventude, maturidade, velhice.”

Also because of these aspects, we chose to establish the empirical scope in two characters who, in addition to representing the different territorialities of *Pantanal*, were present in both phases of the narrative, enabling an analysis that comprises several phases of their trajectories. We also bring up the discussion of Alicia Lindón (2006), who addresses the territorialities of gender and how spaces define the “places” to be (or not) occupied by women. Territories can constitute spaces of “confinement” for women, whether they are from fiction or reality.

This is how we get to the characters Irma (Malu Rodrigues/Camila Morgado) and Filó (Leticia Salles/Dira Paes). The issue of citizenship, based on the construction of gender in its relationship with territoriality, is fundamental to promote equality and social inclusion, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN). The SDG agenda provides a global framework to address social, economic and environmental challenges, encourage gender equality and women’s empowerment (SDG 5) and promote the reduction of inequalities (SDG 10), key elements to achieve more just and sustainable societies. In *Pantanal* (2022), Irma (Malu Rodrigues/Camila Morgado) and Filó (Leticia Salles/Dira Paes) exemplify different aspects of these issues.

When we consider these two profiles, it becomes evident how the intersectionality of gender and territoriality impacts the experiences of citizenship represented in the narrative by Irma and Filó. Intersectionality is understood here through the proposition of Kimberle Crenshaw (1989), whose approach highlights the necessity to think about the gender category in articulation with other constituent aspects of experiences. The initial premise of her theory states that the violence many women experience is most often shaped by other dimensions of their identities, such as race and class. Although her initial discussion has a greater centrality in the intersection of the gender and race dimensions, the intersectional perspective, from her discussions, can be understood as the study of the overlap or intersection of social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination. Thus, we understand that “intersecting” gender and territory allows us to understand fundamental aspects of the constructions of the identities and experiences of the characters Irma and Filó.

While Irma faces gender restrictions in a privileged urban context, Filó faces challenges related to her gender identity and her geographical location in the countryside. Therefore, to promote

inclusive and equitable citizenship, it is essential to recognize and address the complex intersections between gender and territoriality. Through this analysis, it is possible to obtain tangible empirical evidence on the impacts of social constructions of gender and territoriality on the experience of citizenship, providing valuable insights on the formulation of public policies. This evidence can direct efforts to promote gender equality, deconstruct stereotypes, and broaden opportunities for women in different social contexts.

It should be noted that we understand that the issue of class is relevant, as social class significantly impacts opportunities, resources, and power relations that shape the lives of the characters analyzed. This category helps to understand how inequalities accumulate, creating distinct experiences of oppression and resistance.

However, it is important to clarify that, despite the relevance of the class issue, this research delimited the dimensions of gender and territory without directly extending to class dynamics, which, although relevant and interconnected, are not part of the scope defined for this study. This delimitation allows a deeper focus on the nuances of gender relations and the impact of geographic space on the lives of the characters. Thus, the research seeks to contribute to a clearer understanding of the intersectionalities at stake, maintaining a focus that allows a more in-depth and specific analysis.

On the importance of the telenovela as an agent of citizenship from a gender perspective, we follow the proposition of Thomas Tufte (2008) regarding the potential for edutainment of fictional audiovisual narratives. Based on a definition by Hannah Arendt, Tufte (2008, p. 159) explains the power of agency of fictional narratives: “storytelling can take on the role of transforming concerns of a private nature into matters of public, and therefore political, interest.”³ In the case of this research, in a telenovela like *Pantanal*, which was a true “media event,” with a good audience⁴ and significant repercussion on digital networks, the ways of presentation (and representation) of the feminine contribute to the political agency of the debate on gender equity in Brazilian society. According to Jackson (2002 *apud* Tufte, 2008, p. 160), storytelling

3 Original text: “la narración de historias puede ocupar el rol de tornar a las preocupaciones de carácter privado en cuestiones de interés público, y, por ende, político.”

4 The average audience ratings of the telenovela was 30 points. Although it did not reach the level of other successes, it was 8 points above its predecessor, *Um Lugar ao Sol*. The last chapter of *Pantanal* scored 34 points in São Paulo’s Metropolitan Region, well above the 25 points of its predecessor. Bruno Luperi’s adaptation was the most watched Globo telenovela since *Globoplay* was launched in 2015 (Nery; Vaquer, 2022).

can act as “a vital human strategy for sustaining a sense of agency in the face of disempowering circumstances.”⁵ In addition to the intersectionality between gender and territoriality, our concern also lies in this perspective of understanding the audiovisual as an agent of citizenship, since telenovelas have the unique ability to reach a broad and diverse audience throughout the country, crossing geographical, socioeconomic, and educational barriers. This massive reach allows the messages conveyed in telenovelas to reach a vast and heterogeneous audience, contributing to the construction of an audiovisual citizenship (Conill; Gozálvéz, 2004). Put differently, audiovisual citizenship arises from the idea that the means of communication, including the telenovela, are not only forms of entertainment, but also powerful manifestations to educate, inform, and engage citizens in issues that potentially can produce social change.

When we consider the telenovela as an element that can lead to public debate and promote the concept of audiovisual citizenship, we recognize its importance as a means of communication that has the capacity both to reflect and refract reality and to actively influence the construction of a more just, democratic, and inclusive society. Thus: “If citizens, as we will see, must be the protagonists of public life, they must be so in a media society, a society that becomes incomprehensible when the means of communication are not taken into account as one of their essential interpretive keys”⁶ (Cortina, 2004, p. 12). Likewise, through the analysis of the works already produced, it is essential to recognize the potential of narratives to represent and problematize different aspects of life in society, contributing to the strengthening of democracy and the formation of a collective consciousness of a people that consumes the melodrama of telenovelas every day.

In view of this theoretical and thematic contextualization, having the telenovela *Pantanal* as our empirical object, we established our problem around the following research question: **how are the representations of the feminine constructed in an intersectional perspective between gender and territoriality in the telenovela *Pantanal* and how does this promote innovation movements in the melodramatic narrative in a perspective of citizenship agency**

5 Original text: “una estrategia humana vital para sustentar un sentido de agencia frente a circunstancias desempoderantes.”

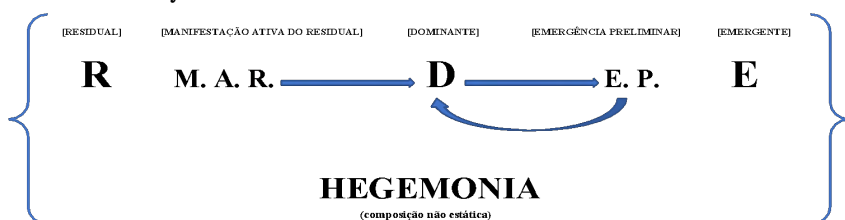
6 Original text: “Se os cidadãos, como veremos, devem ser os protagonistas da vida pública, devem sê-lo em uma sociedade midiática, uma sociedade que se torna incompreensível quando os meios de comunicação não são levados em conta como uma de suas chaves interpretativas essenciais.”

regarding gender equity? To answer this problem, we defined as the central objective of the research to analyze the trajectories of the characters Filó and Irma in order to understand how gender representations, in their intersection with the issue of territoriality, enable movements of melodramatic innovation in the agency of citizenship regarding gender equity in the telenovela.

2 Methodological strategy

We adopted the same methodological protocol as our previous research (John *et al.*, 2021). We chose, therefore, to think about how issues related to gender and territoriality show (or not) innovation movements in the telenovela from the perspective of the cultural processes proposed by Raymond Williams (1979): dominant, residual, and emergent. The author's reflection helps in the interpretation of how innovation processes take place within the hegemony, as explained in the previous research, the methodological model of which can be seen in the figure below.

Figure 1 – Development and co-optation of innovation processes and dynamics in the narrative of serial television melodrama⁷



Source: John *et al.* (2021, p. 86).

The concept of innovation (Rossetti, 2013) is approached through the analysis of how the elements of emergent culture are articulated, in a preliminary phase, in the traditional narrative structure of the telenovela. Instead of looking for ruptures and evidence of a product innovation process already implemented and possibly completed, we chose to present *preliminary emergences* present in the narrative of the remake of *Pantanal*, thinking about how the connections, productions, and disputes of meaning around it occur.

⁷ Caption: R: Residual; M. A. R.: Active Manifestation of the Residual; D: Dominant; E. P.: Preliminary Emergence; E: Emergent; Hegemony; (non-static composition).

The empirical approach is based on the selection of the characters to identify and establish the innovative relationships (of *preliminary emergences*) present in the trajectories of Irma and Filó. The technical operationalization of the analysis takes place in the use of the *Analysis of Moving Images* (Rose, 2002), which “covers a set of concepts and techniques that can serve as guidance in the analysis of many social representations in the audiovisual world”⁸ (Rose, 2002, p. 343). The method of Analysis of Moving Images denotes an attention to the verbal-visual aesthetic field of the telenovela by proposing three stages of empirical approximation to the television work: 1) the definition of which programs will be analyzed from a pre-existing thematic and theoretical perspective; 2) the verbal and visual transcription of the material selected for analysis, with the objective of “generating a set of data that lends itself to careful analysis”⁹ (Rose, 2002, p. 348); and, finally, 3) the (analytical) coding of this material based on criteria established by the researcher.

To analyze the *locus of enunciation* in which the characters are built, we used the *female melodramatic archetypes* or *prototypes*, defined by Silvia Oroz (1999), mobilized in order to ascertain the construction of the trajectories of Irma and Filó. The purpose is to discuss the ruptures and reinforcements of the archetypal aspects, which makes it possible to point out how the innovations are constituted with regard to the elaboration of the characters. These aspects are tensioned, in an intersectional way, in relation to the elements related to territorialities/spatialities that, as already said, actively participate in the gender roles attributed to Irma and Filó.

To carry out the analysis of the characters' trajectory, all 167 chapters of the *Pantanal* remake available on the Globoplay platform were examined. A spreadsheet was filled out indicating all the appearances of the two characters in the two phases of the telenovela. The data collected were the chapters and the respective scenes and/or sequences in which they appeared, the length of time on screen, in which spaces and places the narrative took place and with whom they appeared. The quantitative results of this process show the importance of both characters and, above all, the protagonism of Filó, who appeared in 165 of the 167 chapters of *Pantanal*, being absent only from the first chapters of the plot.

8 Original text: “abrange um conjunto de conceitos e técnicas que podem servir de orientação na análise de muitas representações sociais no mundo audiovisual.”

9 Original text: “gerar um conjunto de dados que se preste a uma análise cuidadosa.”

Filó participated in 817 scenes/sequences, with a total screen time of 20 h 57 min 10 s. Irma, although less present than Filó, was also in the spotlight, participating in 645 scenes/sequences, with a total screen time of 15 h 47 min 38 s. These data and the verbal-visual aspects observed in the configuration of the characters' trajectories made it possible to understand the gender representations that shape the identities of both and how aspects of the spatialities and territorialities that they inhabit throughout the plot reinforce or contest such representations and, to some extent, differentiate said trajectories.

3 Trajectories: Filó and Irma

As the first movement to understand the trajectories of Filó and Irma, we analyze their narrative constructions from the proposition of Silvia Oroz (1999), who, in *Melodrama: o cinema de lágrimas da América Latina* (*Melodrama: the cinema of tears of Latin America*), addresses the origins and development of melodrama. Among the multiple characteristics that make up the genre and mark its continuity over the centuries, Oroz (1999) argues that melodrama is built from four basic myths, guided especially by the Judeo-Christian patriarchal imaginary: love, passion, incest, and *the figure of the woman*. That is: the female figure, traditionally and usually represented according to patriarchal perspectives, is itself one of its fundamental and structuring foundations.

Oroz (1999) develops six melodramatic female archetypes or prototypes that help understand the construction of characters in melodrama through time. Such models configure representations of the female figure — or what is expected of “being a woman” — structured by myth and socially shared values, forming images, stories and characters that, at the moral and aesthetic (visual) levels, become easily assimilable by the public. Following the schematization of Silva, Ribeiro, and John (2017), the archetypes of Oroz (1999) can be described as follows:

Figure 2 – Melodramatic female archetypes

The Mother	Related to guilt and the Virgin Mary. The archetype of the Mother is the only one “that can be unrestrictedly trusted when it comes to the values and virtues of women (especially because of the explicitly asexual view that is projected on this prototype)” ¹⁰ (Silva; Ribeiro; John, 2017).
The Sister	Often associated with household chores, she can replace the mother in “her chores.” The absence of sexual freedom is recurrent, since she will always “be faithful to her brother, and he will dedicate himself to taking care of her virginity” ¹¹ (Silva; Ribeiro; John, 2017).
The Girlfriend	Marked by patience and resignation. She represents the possibility that the male protagonist returns home, his object of longing.
The Wife	Here patience and understanding appear again, associated with the elements that configure fragility, economic dependence, submission, dedication, and fear of male authority. “Man” singular, since her story is marked by love for only one male figure.
The Evil One/ Prostitute	Evil and dangerous precisely because she dares to “invade” spaces not assigned to the female figure. Her wickedness comes not only from breaking the “good habits,” but because she can take revenge on anyone who crosses her path. “She is vindictive, she is bold, she is rebellious, she is hated, she is feared, she is desired, she defies order” ¹² (Silva; Ribeiro; John, 2017).
The Beloved	Realization of the notion of feminine perfection and the myth of courtly and romantic love, the Beloved loves without contradictions and dives into “promises of eternal happiness” (Oroz, 1999). She is the object of desire of the protagonist and can lead him to change his behavior. Unlike the Prostitute, this figure “brings no disgrace to the man,” and they “always marry” (Oroz, 1999).

Source: Schematization of Silva, Ribeiro, and John (2017) from the models of Oroz (1999).

Such categories are mobilized here in order to understand how Filó and Irma can represent continuities and/or transgressions to the model prescribed to the female in the melodramatic genre.

¹⁰ Original text: “que se pode confiar irrestritamente quando o assunto são os valores e virtudes da mulher (especialmente pela visão explicitamente assexuada que se projeta sobre este protótipo).”

¹¹ Original text: “será fiel ao irmão, e este se dedicará a cuidar de sua virgindade.”

¹² Original text: “Ela é vingativa, é ousada, é rebelde, é odiada, é temida, é desejada, ela desafia a ordem.”

3.1 Filó: the beloved mother

The beginning of Filó's trajectory in *Pantanal* occurs when she hears, for the first time, José Leôncio playing the *berrante* (an instrument made of cattle horn to call cattle). Young and living in a "*currutela*,"¹³ Filó is introduced to the audience as the woman who, from the first moments, would be definitively marked by knowing the one who would become the only love of her life.

At first, the character will live on José Leôncio's farm as a maid, but, in love, she lives waiting for the farmer to return to the *Pantanal* whenever he travels to Rio de Janeiro. Over the years and especially after his breakup with Madeleine, she and Leôncio begin to live a kind of unofficial "marriage," in which Filó assumes an uncertain posture, between the housewife – responsible for household chores – and the farmer's wife – the one with whom he becomes sexually and emotionally involved. She will also assume, throughout the plot, the role of trusted advisor to all the characters with whom she lives; one who is reliable, wise, understanding and whose values are always "in the right place."

The archetypes of the Wife (identified in 151 scenes in which the character appears) and the Mother (present in 139 of her scenes) therefore indicate the core of what Filó represents in *Pantanal*. The deep patience, dedication and understanding she demonstrates in relation to José Leôncio, associated with economic dependence, characterize her as a classic Wife, even if the relationship will only be made official at the end of the story. This lack of officialization, throughout most of the *Pantanal*, ends up bringing up issues of legitimacy, power and recognition of women, particularly because they are limited to a traditional rural setting. Even though she was sexually involved with other men in her youth, due to her past as a prostitute, Filó is also firm in asserting and showing, through speeches and actions, that José Leôncio was not only the only one she loved, but her exclusive source of sexual satisfaction, further strengthening her representation as a Wife.

Filó does not, however, present the "fear of male authority," as is prescribed for such a prototype. Occasions are frequent, especially in the second phase of the *Pantanal*, when she challenges her beloved's attitudes and is emphatic in pointing out his mistakes, demonstrating that she has deep-rooted opinions and values of

13 *Currutela* (or *corrutela*): denomination given, in the countryside, to villages located outside the cities, by the side of roads, which receive drovers, pilgrims; a kind of village inhabited by prospectors; isolated places, with small commercial establishments, bars, cabarets, brothels.

her own. Such behavior, however, never reveals itself in the sense of confrontation: it always appears in a way that reinforces the engagement with Leôncio. In defending or contesting him, Filó demonstrates the ability to contemplate what José Leôncio would be thinking or to suggest what would be “best for him.”

The archetype of the Mother is also crucial for understanding the construction of Filó. Not only with Tadeu, her biological son – and one of the characters with whom she appears the most, besides José Leôncio –, but with practically all the other characters with whom she interacts, Filó assumes an unequivocal posture as a counselor and caregiver. She not only raises and educates, but is also an absolute emotional pillar. As the plot draws to a close, she begins to play a kind of “big mother” role, becoming involved in Juma and Irma’s pregnancies; in contact with these and other women, the theme of motherhood is a constant.

The predominance, throughout the plot, of Filó’s presence in the internal environments of the house – mostly in the kitchen, serving others – reinforces her role within the family (and rural) space and her direct connection with caretaking, always relegated to the private environment. The territory/space, represented at the macro level by the Pantanal/farm and at the micro level by the kitchen, thus becomes a foundational element of Filó’s construction and her archetypal reinforcement as Mother.

At the end of *Pantanal*, Filó and José Leôncio get married, making the relationship official. Nevertheless, such an outcome contains, in itself, its uncertainties. If, on the one hand, there is the achievement of legitimacy on the part of the character – both for the legality of the marriage and for, after the death of José Leôncio, her becoming the head/matriarch of the farm –, on the other hand, such legitimacy remains guided by the relationship with the beloved man, prescribing to the female figure the role of “passionate” or “dependent,” both economically and emotionally. In multiple scenes of this outcome, Filó declares herself to her partner and reinforces that “she is nothing without him.”

Thus, even though she is a challenging character and has her own opinions, in addition to having a past considered “uncomfortable” to conservative values, Filó does not present major ruptures in relation to the models of Wife and Mother. On the contrary, she constantly reinforces them, either by her absolute surrender to José Leôncio, or by the unrestricted care she gives to all the characters with whom she interacts, or by the intrinsic relationship with the house and the

kitchen, almost never appearing outside the private environment. If Filó is not asexual, as archetypal Mothers are usually represented, it is because she is the Wife in love, and her past with other men becomes irrelevant in the face of the love she feels for Leôncio.

3.2 Irma: the controversial sister and substitute mother

At the beginning of the telenovela, young Irma is a figure who inhabits two worlds: Rio de Janeiro and the Pantanal. This “being-in-between” will determine the character’s entire trajectory. Starting with the name she receives – Irma, the sister (in Portuguese, sister means *irmã*) –, her development is deeply marked by her relationship with her sister, Madeleine. The sexual/romantic desires and/or loves imagined and nurtured by Irma are materialized by Madeleine: centrally, the marriage with José Leôncio in the Pantanal; secondarily, the involvement with Gustavo in Rio de Janeiro. Although Irma experiences brief entanglements with both of them, it is Madeleine they love.

In addition to Madeleine, throughout the plot, Irma will often interact with several other characters: Mariana, Filó, Jove, José Leôncio, and male figures with whom she is involved, such as Trindade and José Lucas. If this characteristic reinforces Irma’s permeability through the most different character units (and territories/environments) of the narrative, it also raises the question: what is her space? Especially during the initial and intermediate phases of *Pantanal*, Irma’s story is set fundamentally *in relation* to those of other characters.

In addition, although she is a character who is allowed to inhabit the space outside the house – unlike, for example, Filó –, Irma also moves through, most of the time, the rooms, bedrooms, and kitchens of the residences she frequents; and it is worth mentioning, none is officially “hers”: the house in Rio de Janeiro belongs to Mariana, as the matriarch – and is maintained economically by José Leôncio from the financial resources he provides to his son Jove; the house in the Pantanal, in turn, officially belongs to the farmer.

In this constant “being-in-between” or “being-in-relation-to,” unlike Filó, Irma is a character less easy to define archetypically, but she is not completely removed from the models prescribed to women in the television melodrama. If the conflicting relationship with Madeleine prevents her from fully adhering to the Sister’s archetype, it is not negligible how much Irma gives up her life and

her desires to privilege her, a situation that she will try to reverse from the middle to the end of the plot, just before and especially after her sister's death.

Even before officially becoming a mother (which will happen in the last chapters of *Pantanal*), the maternal archetype is one of those most identified in Irma (67 times), highlighting her as a supporting and caring figure. This movement occurs mainly in interactions with close family members – fundamentally, Jove, the nephew whom she shelters and defends throughout the plot.

In addition to the impossible love with José Leônicio, the defense of the love between Jove and Juma is one of the great characteristics that permeate Irma's story during the unfolding of *Pantanal*. In addition to the genuine love she has for her nephew – this being a narrative option to build Irma as a “good” aunt, unlike the desired but questionable figure of Madeleine, Jove's mother, or ambitious Mariana, the “boy's” grandmother – this defense is also guided by personal disillusionment with José Leônicio: Irma, in favor of her nephew and in protest of her mother, reinforces (before effectively moving to the Pantanal) that she would exchange the luxury of the city to feel as alive and loved as she did during the brief involvement she had lived with the farmer in previous years.

After Madeleine's death, when Irma settles in the Pantanal, her interaction with other characters (especially Filó) often connects to the domestic environments of communion, such as the kitchen and living room, as well as to the moments at the table. In these places, Irma experiences many of the occasions in which she acts in Jove's defense. However, it is especially from external environments – such as the stable, for example – that the other archetype most often associated with Irma will emerge, first with Trindade and then with José Lucas: that of the Girlfriend (69 scenes).

Through the communion between these two factors – the narrative permission to the external environment, although not totally public, and the involvement with “her” men, no longer influenced by Madeleine's trajectory –, Irma will gradually find her private space in *Pantanal*. Although her professional life is not a predominant facet of the character, it is in the external environment that Irma will find, at the end of the telenovela, a career, as a teacher.

If Irma cannot be framed in the archetype of the Evil One/Prostitute, since she is not an antagonist in the story, it is relevant to point out that, at times, she approaches some characteristics attributed to this prototype, if not by villainy or “malice,” by a

greater permissibility conferred on the sexual and loving desires of the female figure.

In addition to the prohibited interest for José Leônicio, her sister's (ex-)husband, who, in the course of the plot, starts to configure a denial of abdication and a prioritization of her own desires, Irma's involvement with Trindade marks a moment of interesting complexity. In addition to objectively functioning for Irma as the possibility of sexual relations outside of marriage (contrary to what she later builds with José Lucas), Trindade is also the major figure of "sin," being the physical incarnation of the "Cramunhão" (the Devil); however, he does not acquire the configuration of an "evil" character: Trindade is, first of all, a representation of the metaphysical plan constantly evoked in *Pantanal* — a kind of supernatural/premonitory power that is also passed on to Irma after her involvement with him.

As much as she longs for Trindade to return after the departure of her "boyfriend," mainly because she finds herself carrying his child, Irma often states that she is determined to raise the baby alone. It is a constant uncertainty, which, while it helps to complexify the character — does nostalgia or independence matter more? —, it also reinforces in her the archetype of the strong and selfless Mother. Nevertheless, at the end of the plot, the feeling developed with José Lucas becomes marriage, and both romantic love and motherhood can thus be carried out in the "traditional" way and expected for the female figure. Finally, although it is relevant and liberating for the character, it is important to realize that the conquest of a "proper" space in Irma's narrative is also fundamentally linked to the relationships she develops with men.

As can be seen, although they come from different territories and social classes, the archetypes of Filó and Irma do not differ much and are constantly reinforced by the spaces that both characters occupy and through which they transit during the development of the telenovela.

3.3 The spatialities that make up the identities of Filó and Irma

Filó's story has roots, as was already mentioned, in a *currutela*, in Mato Grosso do Sul, a space and territory that defines and explains the character's situation with regard to "being" as a permanent condition (in Portuguese, *ser*) and "being" as a temporary state (*estar*),

in the world¹⁴ of the plot: Filó is a “woman of *currutela*,” a demarcation indicative of a certain melodramatic female archetype, that of the prostitute, although, in this case, this aspect is only punctual in her trajectory and none of the typical elements constituting this archetype, as proposed by Oroz (1999), are manifested. This space, however, demarcates an important element in the character’s life, which is this kind of *non-place*, of *non-belonging*.

When she moves to José Leôncio’s Pantanal farm, she finds loopholes to inhabit the other archetypes pointed out. Her first scenes show her sitting in front of a dressing table: we get to know the character as she recognizes herself in the refracted image. A kind of tear in the physical and social space, the mirror works there as a rift, a portal that enables the intimate framing of women playing roles, embedded in presupposed archetypes. If, in the environments that Filó occupies, she is faced with cracks linked to *being permanently* and *being temporarily*, would the rooms in which she circulates be places of shelter or discipline? The organizing and articulating mechanisms of patriarchal society project an inescapable *docility* on bodies, especially on women. Not gratuitously, the domestic sphere tends to be under the care of women: the engineering of the family home guarantees *partitioning* movements that establish hierarchies of domination, control methods that imprison the body “within very tight powers, which impose limitations, prohibitions, or obligations”¹⁵ (Foucault, 2014, p. 134).

In this architectural and symbolic regulation, forms of life find modes of resistance through (accidental) “fractures” and (constructed) “escapes” that are effected by enabling illumination of aesthetic and esthetic experiences: it is the effort to build the sensitive, the search for deautomatization of everyday life (Greimas, 2002). By inhabiting the archetypes of the mother and the beloved, Filó manages to overcome oppressive partitionings, thus engendering something close to the *shell-house* (Bachelard, 1989), a cradle that ensures sensitive experiences that will later experience complex universes of possibilities, encounters, and appropriations.

For the character, the waiting for José Leôncio inside the home is constitutive of her “place in the world.” At the farm’s headquarters,

14 The verb “to be” (*ser*, in Portuguese) — originating from *sedere*, to be seated — implies the notion of residence: “It derives from *sedere*, to be seated. We speak of ‘residence.’ Thus is named the place where dwelling lingers. To linger is to be present with...” (Heidegger, 1979, p. 450). Original text: “Ela se deriva de *sedere*, estar sentado. Nós falamos de ‘residência’. Assim se denomina o lugar onde se demora o habitar. Demorar-se é estar presente junto a...”

15 Original text: “no interior de poderes muito apertados, que lhe impõem limitações, proibições ou obrigações.”

the relationship with her son Tadeu and other figures mobilizes the production of escapes, taking Filó out of the situation of inertia. By overcoming archetypes that would be pre-established, she transposes the *anesthetic landscape* of traditionally crystallized topologies – partitioned and compressed by the rarefaction of physical-affective appropriations – and reaches the *esthetic space*¹⁶ of subversively dynamic landscapes, instituted by the relational movement inherent in the coexistence of multiple modalities of *being permanently* and *being temporarily* in the world. In this choreography, the numbness fractures: despite the structural architectural and social orders, Filó does not appear apathetic or paralyzed. Analyzing her development, it is noted that, if it is feasible to exist in the anesthetic landscape, *re-existence* is only possible in the esthetic space that reveals the course of life in its dimensions of sensitization and perseverance (she resists as an active body assuming and sustaining kinesthetic/synesthetic relationships and affective dispositions).¹⁷

After the death of José Leôncio, in the scenes of the last chapter, Filó continues to wish that the farmer – who now appears to his grandchildren as the figure of “Velho do Rio” – would appear to her. Contradictorily, in addition to the docility of a disciplined female body to wait for the comings and goings of romantic love, such desire drives the movement of physical-affective appropriations. As if the disorder caused by the finitude of life were not enough, the character is dressed in Leôncio’s clothes, thus stripping her, to a certain extent, of the melodramatic female archetypes and the subjections imposed on corporeality subjected to patriarchal norms.

Filó acquires the stature not only of *owner of the house*, but *owner of herself*. Sitting on the balcony, she leaves the confinement of domestic interiors and looks at the horizon: no longer the narrowness of the gap provided by the reflecting mirror, but rather the integration into the external space permeated by Pantanal nature. Filó’s last words in the telenovela plead for the appearance of José Leôncio, who, in turn, navigates the waters of the river. If

16 We borrow from Milton Santos (1988) the distinction of the terms: *landscape* would be everything that is within the reach of our vision; being at the top of a building or walking down the street builds the perception of the subject who sees the landscape; this becomes *space* through the relationship of the territory with society, that is, space is related to social use – landscape would be the *thing*, space would be the *process*.

17 The esthetic space proposed here implements, perhaps, “Spinoza’s practice that *condenses* several dimensions of the ‘life course’ in which to persevere, in fact, is not only ‘to continue,’ but ‘to continue against or despite’ something that would prevent it from continuing” (Fontanille, 2014, p. 70, emphasis added). Original text: “*prática de Spinoza que condensa várias dimensões do ‘curso de vida’ onde perseverar, na verdade, não é somente ‘continuar’, mas ‘continuar contra ou a despeito de’ algo que impediria de continuar.*”

[...] space must be considered as an inseparable set in which participate, on the one hand, a certain arrangement of geographical objects, natural objects, and social objects, and, on the other, the life that fills and animates them, that is, society in motion¹⁸ (Santos, 1988, p. 26),

the territory of deep Brazil is filled with and animated by the movement of waiting/hope. They become mobilizers of sensitive experiences, allowing archetypal abilities and transformations in the ways of *being* in the world, in fictional and non-fictional universes.

In turn, Irma's trajectory is, in principle, exclusively linked to the family institution. Let us see that the notion of family favors a repressive and classificatory order:

People and things, in this context, are juxtaposed, tied together in the same enclosure, as if everything there were organized, in principle, under the paradoxical logic of a certain "paralyzing dynamic"¹⁹ (Fischer, 2006, p. 22).

Irma carries, as said, from the spelling of the name the features of the archetype of the "sister." The family load is there, explicitly mentioned. "Irma" emerges as Madeleine's "sister" who is often framed in architectural enclosures, housed in a certain "form of life in which the collective experience is aborted, frustrated, or undermined, preventing the character from persevering, preventing life from moving on"²⁰ (Fischer; Vaz, 2024).

If Madeleine is confined to domesticity, to the environment of the house, unable to escape the anesthetic landscapes, Irma settles "in-between," always in the midst of conflicts that are not her own, shrouded in family dramas usually related to her sister and nephew. The "in-between" that Irma inhabits, different from the gap found by Filó, functions as a kind of bridge over which the other members of the family balance themselves. The character, in symbolic and topological terms, ends up playing the role of advisor, positioned

18 Original text: "[...] o espaço deve ser considerado como um conjunto indissociável de que participam, de um lado, certo arranjo de objetos geográficos, objetos naturais e objetos sociais, e, de outro, a vida que os preenche e os anima, ou seja, a sociedade em movimento."

19 Original text: "As pessoas e as coisas, nesse contexto, encontram-se justapostas, atadas na mesma clausura, como se tudo ali se organizasse, em princípio, sob a lógica paradoxal de uma certa 'dinâmica paralisadora.'"

20 Original text: "forma de vida em que a experiência coletiva é abortada, frustrada ou minada, impedindo que a personagem persevere, evitando que a vida caminhe."

among figures who lead conflicts: she is a supporting character in the plots, taking on a supporting role in her own life.

If the plots are not hers, the internal environments of the residences that serve as her stage also do not belong to her: they are initially located in her parents' house in Rio de Janeiro, then in José Leôncio's farm in the Pantanal. She occupies a position of submission, whether as a daughter or as a guest. When moving through the archetype of the Mother, the "son" to which she dedicates herself is also not hers, it is her nephew Jove. Her first loves in the narrative — José Leôncio and Gustavo — are her sister's boyfriends. Partitioned in the aforementioned domestic environments, these places impose stories that are not hers. If the gaps inhabited by Filó give her some belonging, Irma's "*in-betweens*" belong entirely to the order of non-belonging. The character conquers only the permanence between protagonists of the central conflict of the scenes, never surpassing the limits of the anesthetic landscapes extended in the sites of other people's stories.

On the other hand, the love story that Irma gets for herself is with an outsider and in a foreign place in relation to the domestic environment: it happens in the shed with the guitar player Trindade, a kind of mythical being who transits the farm claiming to have a pact with "Cramulhão" (Devil). Sometimes, Trindade sneaks into Irma's room, which she shares with her mother at her brother-in-law's house. To experience a plot that is her own, she must do so in clandestinity. The spaces of the homes offered to her are formatted so that Irma remains on the margins, without the feeling of belonging overflowing the limits of the "*in-between*." When she comes out of the paralysis of living among other people's plots, the character does not conquer the heightening of an esthetic experience, but the instability of an unwelcoming stranger, which leaves her without the security of her family. Trindade leaves the farm, while she fears that the baby she generates in her womb is the son of Cramulhão. Already without a roof over her head, Irma also loses her ground. The space that will finally belong to her and give her the opportunity to play a leading role by occupying a place outside the domestic site will be that of the school she will manage.

4 Distinct territorialities, similar trajectories

Pantanal is the first production of the *trilogy on Brazilian rurality* written by Benedito Ruy Barbosa. The original version of *Pantanal* (Rede Manchete, 1990) was followed by *Renascer* (Tv Globo, 1993) and *O Rei do Gado* (TV Globo, 1996-1997). The three narratives address this deep Brazil, of the countryside, the rurality, the contrast with the frequent and recurring urban scenarios represented by the TV station, especially in telenovelas aired on the 9 p.m. slot. This aspect shows that, when looking at the remake of *Pantanal*, it is necessary to think about the dimension of territoriality in which the plot takes place.

Milton Santos (1990) developed a deep understanding of the notion of territory, understanding it not only as a physical space, but as a set of social, cultural and economic relations. Territory is a human construction marked by the interaction between individuals and the environment. This perspective leads us to realize that territories are dynamic, as they are transformed by people's practices and experiences.

Santos (2008) postulates that territory is a space of power in which struggles and demands are manifested, reflecting social inequalities and tensions between different groups; he also emphasizes the importance of territorial identity, which is formed from the collective experiences and memories of the inhabitants, shaping the way they relate to the space they occupy.²¹ Another aspect signaled by Milton Santos (1990) is related to the processes of globalization and its implications on territories: although there is a cultural and economic homogenization, the author warns, territories continue to have local specificities that must be valued.

The notion of territory in Martín-Barbero, closely linked to the way social, cultural and political spaces are understood and experienced by communities, is close to Santos' conception: his work *Dos meios às mediações: comunicação, cultura e política* (*From media to mediations: communication, culture and politics*) (2013) proposes a vision of communication that goes beyond the transmission of messages, emphasizing the importance of local contexts and social dynamics. Like Milton Santos, Martín-Barbero points out that the territory, as a symbolic space in which identities, power relations and cultural practices are built, is not restricted to a physical

21 See *Por uma geografia nova* (Santos, 2008). In this work, the author discusses the notion of territoriality based on power and identity, highlighting the importance of considering social inequalities in territorial analyses.

site: they are spaces for the construction of meanings, in which different voices and narratives intersect, promoting diversities and interactions between individuals.

In *Pantanal*, the notion of territory is presented in a complex way, reflecting the intimate and symbiotic relationship between the characters and the natural environment of the Pantanal region.²² Such complexity includes the diversity of actors and many social relationships. The setting presents itself as a central element that influences the lives, traditions, and social interactions of the characters. The narrative makes use of the notion of territory to explore human interactions with nature, reflecting the importance of land in cultural identity, social conflicts, and environmental preservation. In this sense, in the analysis of the collected data, it was possible to verify at least four aspects that dialogue with the notion of territory: 1) relationship with nature; 2) cultures and traditions; 3) conflicts and notion of belonging; and 4) notion of identity.

Although these aspects cross all the characters of the plot, our interest was to problematize how this territory could contribute to different conformations of gender identities, focusing on Filó and Irma. We sought to stress whether there would be marked differences between the configuration of the woman from the big city, from urban Brazil, and that of the woman from the countryside, from the rural space of deep Brazil, from the Pantanal.

Junqueira (2017, p. 52), in an analysis of Benedito Ruy Barbosa's rural narratives, highlights that "the Brazilian rural environment is symbolized in the media as patriarchal territory."²³ Not by chance, for the author, these telenovelas have the male figure as the protagonist, "all the seminal symbolic force of the pioneer farmer-colonel, lord of lands, bodies, souls, Justice, and destinies"²⁴ (Junqueira, 2017, p. 52). Benedito Ruy Barbosa's telenovelas demonstrate an "appeal for the recurrence of the same themes, psychological traits of the characters and even the same actor – characteristics that usually ensure the success of [his] telenovelas"²⁵ (Junqueira, 2017, p. 52). And what place is assigned to women in these narratives? For Balogh (1998, p. 16), it is the place "of good, primitive females, very attached to the land, and not at all intellectualized."²⁶ In the Benedito Ruy

22 Considered a natural treasure of Brazil, a vast floodplain that is home to a unique biodiversity.

23 Original text: "o meio rural brasileiro é midiaticamente simbolizado como território patriarcal.

24 Original text: "toda a força simbólica seminal do coronel-fazendeiro desbravador, senhor de terras, de corpos, de almas, da Justiça e dos destinos."

25 Original text: "apelo à recorrência aos mesmos temas, traços psicológicos dos personagens e até ao mesmo ator – características que costumam assegurar o sucesso das [suas] telenovelas."

26 Original text: "das fêmeas boas, primitivas, muito apegadas à terra e nada intelectualizadas."

Barbosa's telenovelas, on some occasions this representation is crossed by ruptures, by "granting space to reveal the possible emancipation and self-discovery for rural women. And it does so even within the most traditional groups of characters of male of farmers"²⁷ (Junqueira, 2017, p. 53).

From the perspective of territorialization, it is possible that the broader context of the problematization carried out here between the characters Irma and Filó is the negotiation that is established in the relationship between countryside and city in the *Pantanal* narrative. Baseio and Silva (2017), paraphrasing Raymond Williams (2011), highlight that there are emotional attitudes that have crystallized around the countryside and the city. The countryside is often associated with natural life, peace, and simple virtue, while the city is seen as the center of achievement and is associated with knowledge, communication, and light. Other conceptions associate the countryside with backwardness, limitation, and ignorance, and the city with noise and ambition.

For Williams (2011), countryside and city are historical realities in constant transformation, in themselves and in their interrelationships. The author signals the need to confront the representations of countryside and city with historical realities, since the opposition between them, as his literature suggests, is a strong reflection of the world's capitalist constitution.

In *Pantanal*, from the beginning to the end of the narrative, Filó's immutable perception of the agitation of the urban space is full of questions and suspicions, while the countryside (a place which she never leaves; she does not even get to know the metropolis of Rio, without ever expressing any regret for it) is perceived by her as an idyllic space of experiences and sheltering. Reaffirming that discourses build identities and subjects, Irma, in turn, experiences disenchantment, if not with the city, at least with the life lived there, and seeks in rural areas access to the happiness that she does not find in Rio de Janeiro.

In addition to them growing closer due to the enchantment of the rural environment, there are much more similarities than differences in their narratives. Even though Irma represents the urban woman, apparently "educated" (especially if we take into account her ending up as a school principal), in contrast to the simple woman, with no apparent education, represented by Filó,

27 Original text: "conceder espaço para revelar a emancipação e a autodescoberta possíveis para as mulheres rurais. E faz isso mesmo no interior dos mais tradicionais núcleos masculinos de fazendeiros."

both live mostly circumscribed to domestic spaces. Even the great landscapes of the Pantanal are not very accessible to them throughout their trajectories: they are spaces reserved for male figures (the only rupture in this scenario is configured by the characters Maria Marruá and Juma, not considered in this analysis).

If we take into account that “territoriality is the set of relationships woven by the individual, as a member of a society, with their surroundings”²⁸ (Lindón, 2006, p. 14), the territories in which Irma and Filó live are much more similar than distinct. In their trajectories, therefore, the territories that conform their identities break with a possible dichotomy between rural and urban, and approach a logic of confinement territory (Lindón, 2006). The confinement of which Alicia Lindón (2006) speaks goes far beyond a demarcation of some public spaces (or even the prohibition of access to these spaces) and the idea of “physical imprisonment;” the author points out that the problem of the confinement territory is precisely not to refer to a physical or mobility limit:

*[...] space confines them in how they must present themselves, in the behaviors and performances they are expected to follow, and in those they must not engage in. This confinement is produced through the imposition of codes that are always external to the actor, or of codes that the actor is not allowed to adopt*²⁹ (Lindón, 2006, p. 17).

Filó and Irma are confined to the archetypes that shape their trajectories, which grant them spaces between places, from places circumscribed to the domestic, to motherhood, to the role of the self-sacrificing beloved woman, mixing traces of these archetypes in fleeting movements of ruptures to soon return to their “roles.” Their characters’ endings signal a brief movement of innovation, a simple “preliminary emergence” (Williams, 1979; Rossetti, 2013) when they finally gain public space, becoming, respectively, the farmer and the school principal.

Their territorial confinements are so similar that they even inherit powers from their beloved men: Filó becomes a Leôncio and, never seeing Velho do Rio, as had happened before with José Leôncio, it appears that she too will have the power to become a supernatural

28 Original text: “la territorialidad es el conjunto de relaciones tejidas por el individuo en tanto que miembro de una sociedad, con su entorno.”

29 Original text: “[...] el espacio los confina en la forma en que deben presentarse, en las conductas y actuaciones que deben seguir y en las que no deben realizar. El confinamiento se produce por medio de la imposición de códigos siempre ajenos al actor o bien código que el actor no puede adoptar.”

figure when her journey is about to end. Irma, on the other hand, inherits the premonitory powers of Trindade. Both, then, are bathed in the metaphysical and supernatural that belonged to the men they loved most and go on to play roles that were theirs. Visually, this is evident in Filó's wardrobe: upon becoming the matriarch of the family, she abandons the dresses that characterized her throughout the plot and starts to wear clothes, hats, and boots sported by men throughout the narrative.

Despite the preliminary emergences, the correlation between the archetypes of the feminine in the melodrama with the spatialities and territorialities that shape and approximate the identities of Filó and Irma points to the significant presence of the "residual" in *Pantanal's* narrative. The residual, as Williams (1979, p. 125) pointed out, is what "was effectively formed in the past, but is still active in the cultural process."³⁰

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30 Original text: "foi efetivamente formado no passado, mas ainda está ativo no processo cultural."

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Rights and citizenship in *Pantanal* (Globo, 2022): repercussion on journalism of the public discussion on sustainability, homophobia, and female freedom

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1 Introduction

Studies on Brazilian telenovela corroborate the power of this daily serial fiction to move a nation and give visibility to discussions around moral and public interest themes which could strengthen positions seeking to expand rights and citizenship. These dimensions of telenovelas are explained in the meaning of this genre as a communicative resource (Lopes, 2009). Of the aspects responsible for this potential of the telenovela highlighted by Lopes, it is interesting here to emphasize the strong relationship between the ways of narrating the themes, especially the resources that operate in the pedagogical function of the melodramatic matrix and the circulation systems that gave visibility to the approaches of these themes.

The 2022 version of the telenovela *Pantanal* is a good example of this power. Released by Globo¹ 32 years after its original exhibition

¹ We chose to use the term “Globo”, instead of “TV Globo”, to address the company producing the remake for two reasons. The first is the fact that we do not face the consumption of the telenovela broadcast on TV and streamed on Globoplay in a dissociated way. The second lies in the fact that Globo concluded in 2020 a process of unifying its electronic and audiovisual media companies as part of its digital transformation strategy, through which it ceased to

on TV Manchete in 1990, it was produced and watched in a context of significant changes in the global media ecosystem, marked by the platformization of social life (Couldry; Hepp, 2010; Van Dijck; Poell; De Waal, 2018) and by the transformations of television in times of digitalization of communication ecosystems (Lotz, 2022; Johnson, 2020; Mesquita *et al.*, 2024). The production reached a relevant audience while it was broadcast – on TV and Globoplay –, with wide repercussions on social media platforms. To this extent, *Pantanal* could be considered a successful initiative of Globo's strategy to integrate telenovelas into a business model adapted to the new digital context, in which brands run their advertisements programmatically, that is, the ads are driven by data.

The mobilization and social commotion caused by *Pantanal* correspond to its characterization as a media event (Couldry; Hepp, 2010). This is due to its power to create a circulation and consumption system capable of focusing the attention of a wide spectrum of the audience, especially those who are present in digital arenas. In this context, the *Pantanal* case corroborates the thesis that public discussions about social themes addressed in telenovelas, which highlight access to rights and the democratic mechanisms that guarantee and expand them (Gomes, 2007; Lopes, 2009; Dorcé, 2014), could contribute to the processes of building citizenship.

The media event *Pantanal* (2022), promoted by Globo, used the affective memory of the audience with the telenovela (Ribeiro *et al.*, 2021), mobilized by the trademark of Benedito Ruy Barbosa's recognized authorial imprint, updated by Bruno Luperi. Barbosa is recognized for his ability to create and manage, with a high degree of autonomy, a melodramatic dramaturgical serial architecture capable of engaging the audience affections. This production also stood out for its pedagogical tools which stimulated public discussion about the land issue, the environmental problem, and access to fundamental rights, especially women's rights.

The critical and commercial success achieved by *Pantanal* provided significant visibility for points of view aligned with progressive liberal forces, in a political context marked by the strong impact of right-wing extremist positions (Lynch; Cassimiro, 2022), as well as by the intense disinformation disseminated by automated systems in digital media (Mendonça; Aggio, 2023). This

be a television network and became a MediaTech, that is, a media and technology company. Therefore, if this investigation treats *Pantanal* (2022) as a media event that occurs at a time when the media ecosystem is already digitized, we believe it is more coherent to use the term "Globo."

political stance of Globo had already been observed in several actions promoted by the company in the sphere of telenovelas over the last decades, through what was conventionally called social merchandising (Schiavo, 2002; Lopes, 2009).

This chapter, therefore, presents the results of the research that examined how press outlets reflected the themes of homophobia, environmental sustainability, and women's freedom represented in *Pantanal*, before, during, and after this telenovela's exhibition, that is, from February 2022 to March 2024 (data collection period). The journalistic material examined in this research included the discussions about prominent themes addressed by *Pantanal* on social media platforms: a content circulation system recognized for its abundance, accessibility, and visibility which, as Mendonça and Aggio (2023) highlight, affects the public agenda.

By focusing the attention of the investigation on the treatment provided by journalistic outlets to the themes most mobilized by *Pantanal*, we sought to understand which positions circulated in these media, which of them supported forces and organizations critical of inequalities and injustices with a view to consolidating citizenship and defending the democratic processes that promote the assurance and expansion of fundamental rights.

It is known that, in the current platformized media ecosystem, the public media visibility of discussions promoted by the points of view addressed by telenovelas no longer tends to have the press as the primary scene. Nevertheless, studies recognize that the analysis of digital journalism outlets, from traditional to those that emerged in this ecosystem, must consider the “complex relationships of feedback loops”² with digital platforms (Mendonça; Aggio, 2023, p. 51). In short, the repercussions promoted by the consumption rituals of *Pantanal* that circulated in the online arenas were also part of the news materials that were the object of investigation and circulation in journalistic outlets.

The themes investigated in this paper — homophobia, female freedom, and environmental sustainability — were chosen because they are the most recurrent in journalistic content from two sources: production instance (articles from outlets belonging to Globo) and creation instance (speeches by Bruno Luperi). These themes were selected after an exploratory search for content in outlets belonging to Grupo Globo: Globo.com, Gshow, Globoplay, and O Globo, using the keywords “Pantanal” and “Pantanal

2 Original text: “complexas relações de alimentação e retroalimentação.”

telenovela”. For the creation instance, the search was similar to that of the production instance, with the addition of other outlets that published interviews with Luperi.

We noted that the author and the company have emphasized environmental issues since before the production’s debut. However, throughout the exhibition, the recurrence of themes such as homophobia, female freedom, and racism was notorious. These results allowed us to infer that the other themes were highlighted throughout the development of the plots.

After defining the most recurring themes, another methodological path was traced to achieve the objectives of this research. We chose to carry out an open Google search³, using 36 keywords elaborated from variations of terms and expressions similar to the themes “Environment”, “Homophobia”, and “Female Freedom”, along with the terms “novela Pantanal” and “telenovela Pantanal”, and we considered the first 50 result entries of each keyword for the analysis. This was done to identify how *Pantanal* and the themes and social issues associated with it resonated in journalistic outlets and how this resonance may have impacted public discussion before, during, and after the exhibition of the telenovela.

It is important to emphasize that, in this media ecosystem, we consider as journalistic outlets the following cases that emerged in our research universe: traditional; specialized; independent; podcast; others, whose specificities will be presented later. This effort helped to demarcate the differences between them and to understand the attitudes of these outlets in the public discussion on the social issues linked to *Pantanal*.

2 *Pantanal* (2022): visibility of the media event and public discussion on fundamental rights

The first version of *Pantanal* (Rede Manchete, 1990) reaped the audience of *Rainha da Sucata*, leading Globo to face one of the most bitter moments with its competition. The second version, produced by Globo, was shown in a media context in which competition with other Brazilian telenovela producers on commercial broadcasting was more comfortable, considering the distance it maintained from the others in terms of audience and repercussion. The new

3 We tested open Google searches and Google News. We decided on the open system when we observed that blogs and smaller websites were not indexed in Google News results, and that open Google included content such as podcasts.

competitive configuration was marked, among other aspects, by the expansion of *streaming* services and by a new dynamic of public repercussion of the topics addressed in social media.

Nevertheless, this new configuration cannot prescind the traditional ability of the telenovela to attract the attention of the general public. It is known that, in the early 1990s, the return of author-screenwriter Barbosa to Globo, after the success of *Pantanal* (TV Manchete), signaled the recognition of his power to leverage audiences that has since been confirmed by numerous successes in original broadcasts, reruns, and remakes. The commercial and critical success of *Pantanal* in 2022 reiterates this force in the national imagination of Barbosa's style and brand, which is recognized by the emphasis, among other subjects, on the issue of land and the emancipation of women (Souza, 2004; Hamburger, 2005; Rios, 2019). A style that has mobilized public discussions through the dramaturgical composition of controversial themes that that traverse the private sphere, moral and subjective dimensions that gain breadth by establishing connections with collective issues that tend to converge for reflections on changes in the cultural, social, and political spheres (Marques, 2015).

The media visibility of these discussions, set in motion by telenovelas in Brazil, configures what Marques (2015, p. 22) identifies as "a communicative arena in which multiple voices and actors position themselves in relation to each other."⁴ It is a realm of disputes that can be the scene of the emergence or consolidation of the forces that are engaged in the construction of citizenship and that manifest themselves in the civic or citizen imagination (Kim; Shresthova; Lanz, 2024; Mesquita *et al.*, 2024). Kim, Shresthova, and Lanz (2024) underline that civic imagination transcends individual position, and must translate a socially shared and socially constructed common goal.

The conception of citizen imagination is thought-provoking, as it allows us to understand that telenovelas, as a communicative resource, would be committed to the points of view defending citizenship and rights. Therefore, they may generate effects that, under specific circumstances, favor positions conducive to questioning and revising value frameworks of perception and judgment that are exclusionary and antidemocratic. Aligned with this, there are numerous studies that deal with the treatment of certain social themes in telenovelas. We can cite as an example

4 Original text: "arena comunicativa na qual múltiplas vozes e atores se posicionam uns em relação aos outros."

the research of Marques (2010) on the approach to homophobia in this type of production, which reveals how narrative and discursive elements of two Globo telenovelas stimulated in the audience a critical reflective experience regarding the public invisibility and ostracism of homoerotic subjects. These representations would have, to some extent, favored the expansion of public discussions and deliberations around the access to the rights to civil marriage, adoption, among others.

Despite the growth of conservative forces, which weaken citizen imagination, Globo's telenovelas are still recognized for an increasingly less stereotypical and more complex representation of women, black people, and members of the LGBTQIAPN+ community. The survey on innovation in telenovelas undertaken by Souza *et al.* (2021) showed that one of the dimensions in which the product has innovated the most in recent decades is precisely this approach to social issues, recognized both by the specialized press and by the scientific field. Among the themes that have advanced the most are: homosexuality, racism, and women's freedom. The study also reveals that 20% of the telenovelas identified as innovative were recognized in this way due to the themes they addressed or the treatment given to these themes. Of this total, 93% were produced by Globo.

It is worth remembering that this research does not examine the repercussions of telenovelas on the audience. What interests us here is to examine one of the many processes of managing public discussion in Brazil, driven by media organizations, which are able to disseminate and reinforce mobilizing representations of citizen imagination. Thus, we consider that the visibility promoted by media events (Couldry; Hepp, 2010), such as telenovelas, is a key approach to understanding how journalistic outlets participate in these processes.

Understanding telenovelas as media events allows us to infer that the media circulation system of this type of television serial fiction is designed to focus on public discussion, acting as a communicative resource capable of expanding media visibility of social, political, and religious issues. Dayan and Katz (1992, p. 1), in turn, demonstrated how certain television programs became vectors of media visibility, bringing together a "great nation" tuned "to tell a primordial story about current affairs."

Couldry (2003) amplified the contributions of Dayan and Katz (1992) by drawing attention to one of the conditions of existence of the media event: live broadcasting. According to the author, this condition can also be simulated, that is: the exhibition of

pre-recorded yet unreleased programs – such as new episodes or chapters of serialized productions, such as telenovelas – can mobilize millions of viewers by providing them with the experience of watching something for the first time, whether on broadcast television, cable channels, or *streaming* services.

These aspects highlight two relevant dimensions: on the one hand, the growing reality of a multiplicity of channels and media that would be involved in the elaboration of this effect of live broadcasting of media events; on the other hand, the uses of these media in order to promote feelings and sensations in the audience around this occasion, mobilizing social interaction, especially online, during media events that, according to Couldry and Hepp (2010), may become part of daily life, that is, would no longer be associated only with sporadic and special events.

This analytical premise emphasizes a contemporary way of generating the media visibility of mass media products such as telenovelas, which is characterized by a direct relationship with the audience through the public discussions that take place in digital arenas. This aspect leads us to consider another key dimension of contemporary media events, namely, the media instances or organizations that conceive, plan, and carry out these events around products such as telenovelas. Couldry and Hepp (2010) remind us that, in addition to being less celebratory and more oriented towards daily pleasure, these events are often promoted to capture the attention of specific cultural segments around mobilizing agendas.

In short, the analysis of the visibility of public discussions about rights and citizenship in telenovelas presupposes the understanding of this type of mass media product as a media event promoted according to the projects and interests of the media organizations responsible for its production and distribution. In this approach, we recognize that the perception of *Pantanal* as a media event indicates the analysis of the points of view orchestrated by the production company and the author-creators, assuming that, in this context, the strength of the telenovela as a communicative resource (Lopes, 2009) mobilizing the citizen imagination through the pedagogical resources of melodramatic matrix tends to be amplified.

To understand the points of view built by the production company and the author-creators in *Pantanal*, it is necessary to call upon Globo's progressive liberal institutional project at that time. During the airing of this telenovela, the broadcaster launches Jornada

ESG⁵, its first sustainability report, and adheres to the United Nations (UN) global pact. Of the commitments to ESG policies proposed by the broadcaster⁶, we highlight “Social Impact of Content”, “Diversity and Inclusion”, and “Biodiversity and Environmental Awareness.” This organizational posture was present in the scheduling of the telenovela’s journalistic and promotional materials, as well as in the validation of the thematic approach of the screenwriter and other professionals involved. *Pantanal*, as a media event promoting the defense of citizen agendas in the public sphere, would thus be in tune with the image that Globo wants to build for itself.

The reflection of Mendonça and Aggio (2023) on the recent transformations of the public sphere that show the coexistence of a weaker State with a stronger individual agency deserves to be resumed here. This configuration tends to modify the notions of public in the public sphere. By analyzing the impacts of the rise of neoliberalism, the authors demonstrate how this context makes it difficult to sustain the symbolic and material strength of a worldview based on public and republican interests. Therefore, the challenges to sustain the foundations of the ideals of rights that underlie the citizen’s imagination become even greater, since, in this scenario, the perception of subjects as members of a collectivity is more fragile.

Globo’s telenovelas, in this environment, act as one of the forces defending this ideology of rights and citizenship. Reflecting on the role of telenovelas in the ongoing transformations of the public sphere, in the light of the arguments of Mendonça and Aggio (2023), thus refers to the dynamics of contemporary communication flows and the regimes of visibility of public interests in the public agenda. These processes are characterized, among other factors, by the polarization of discussions and the dissemination of disinformation, elements that influence how certain topics gain or lose relevance in public discussion.

To this extent, as previously pointed out, we assume that Globo needed to understand these transformations that occurred in the regime of visibility of public interests to follow the repercussions of the social themes represented in its telenovelas. Therefore, this management of the repercussions of the themes of public interest represented in telenovelas would be a resource for the company to achieve a privileged position in the communication flows in digital

5 The acronym ESG means “environmental, social and governance”, and corresponds to the practices of an organization in relation to these topics.

6 Globo and ESG. Available at: <https://somos.globo.com/esg/pt/2021/globo-e-esg/>. Accessed on: 20 February 2024.

environments. This would occur both through monitoring systems, interpellation and responses to the demonstrations that circulate on the platforms, and through the articulation with other means of information and communication, such as news outlets, our object of attention in this research.

3 Contemporary digital journalism and telenovelas: a brief approach

As digital journalism is one of the sources of this research, it is essential to explain that we understand it as a practice focused on the selection, interpretation, editing, and dissemination of information on topics of public interest. This practice is intrinsically connected to digital technologies and maintains an interdependent relationship with its audiences (Steensen; Westlund, 2021; Issa, 2023).

Digital journalism is not limited to its link with digital tools, but involves structural transformations related to the economy, audience behavior, and network distribution, and consumption mechanisms (Steensen; Westlund, 2021; Barbosa; Silva; Lima, 2024). In this sense, the platformization of journalism – that is, its insertion in digital environments highly intermediated by platforms such as social networks and search engines – plays a fundamental role in the reconfiguration of contemporary journalism, influencing both the way news is produced and the modes of circulation and engagement of the public.

Barbosa, Silva, and Lima (2024) state that the platformization of journalism is directly linked to the growing influence of big techs and their digital infrastructures, shaping the production, circulation and consumption of news. This dynamic has an ambiguous impact on journalism: on the one hand, there is a loss of autonomy, reduced revenues and flexibilization of journalistic values due to the dependence on these platforms. On the other hand, they drive innovation by offering pre-formatted structures for the creation of journalistic products. The authors also evoke the concept of “Journalism of Things,”⁷ based on Barcellos *et al.* (2017 *apud* Barbosa; Silva; Lima, 2024), to address the process of dematerialization and adaptation of journalism to the needs of the public.

Another relevant phenomenon in contemporary times was the rise of entertainment websites. In the networked media ecosystem, news

7 Original text: “Jornalismo das Coisas.”

is often guided by audience engagement, leading outlets to prioritize content that generates greater interaction, often to the detriment of more in-depth coverage of controversial topics and facts. After all, in this logic of the social media algorithm (Carvalho, 2021; Cardon, 2015) it is economically more advantageous for journalistic companies to produce news content on these topics, in order to enhance users' attention and debate than to investigate and explain these themes and facts, offering information and arguments that can often close or reduce discussions on these companies' digital channels.

In this spirit, it is also correct to state that media convergence has transformed the way the public consumes and interacts with telenovelas, especially with the use of what is known as the second screen. Watching these productions while commenting and sharing impressions on social media has become a common practice, with viewer-generated content also influencing news coverage. In fact, many news agendas are defined based on the repercussions of these online debates, highlighting the growing interdependence between journalism and the dynamics of social media. Thus, telenovelas, historically relevant in shaping citizen imagination and stimulating public discussion, continue to play an expressive role in this media ecosystem.

From this perspective, it should be recognized that the relationship between journalism and telenovelas has been strengthened in this process of digitalization of the media ecosystem. As a result of this transformation, there has been an expansion of the possibilities of public engagement and the development of new practices, business models, and journalistic products that work together in the public discussion and in the conformation of the dominant public opinion on a given subject. Thus, by reaching a hegemonic position, this opinion can benefit one of the ideological forces in dispute.

Based on this scenario, we made a methodological choice to fit the journalistic outlets — the sources of the collected data — into five categories to demarcate the differences between them and explain the positions that stood out in the public discussion about *Pantanal's* approach to the three social themes already mentioned. The categorization, presented in Figure 1, took into account mainly the way these outlets are organized and presented as a business and journalistic initiative.

Figure 1 – Categorization of journalistic outlets

CATEGORIA DE VEÍCULOS	DESCRIÇÃO
 TRADITIONAL	Outlets that act nationally or locally and are journalistic products developed or maintained by journalism companies within the logic of commercial journalism, that is, in which news content is produced and offered to capture an audience, and this attention and the access to this audience are commercialized to companies interested in having an impact on it. Thus, in this category are outlets such as <i>Folha de São Paulo</i> , <i>Estado de Minas</i> , <i>MS Notícias</i> , etc.
 SPECIALIZED	Sector-specific media outlets , from audiovisual entertainment coverage to one of the social topics that are the objects of this study. They may or may not follow the logic of organization of traditional outlets , contemplating diverse experiences such as <i>Na Telinha</i> , a blog that used to cover Brazilian television, got specialized, and nowadays is linked to UOL, one of the biggest news outlets in the country, which belongs to a big journalism company in Brazil. In this spectrum, we can still insert outlets such as <i>Ciclo Vivo</i> (specialized in covering the environmental theme), <i>Notícias da TV</i> (UOL), <i>Popline</i> , <i>Pure Break</i> , <i>Fauna News</i> , <i>Revista Lado A</i> (focused on the LGBTQIAPN+ public), <i>RD1</i> , etc.
 INDEPENDENT	Outlets that are not maintained or managed by journalism companies, are organized in a smaller structure, but they almost always adopt the logic of commercial journalism, producing/offering journalistic content to capture an audience that will later be advertised as a valuable asset for brands that want to impact those people. <i>O Cafezinho</i> , <i>Hora Campinas</i> , <i>Olhar Direto</i> , and <i>Brasil de Fato</i> are some of the outlets that fit this category.
 PODCASTS	Podcast channels that may or may not be produced by major journalism companies . Considering podcasts are affected by the dynamic of audio streaming services, which have their own rules of functioning, we choose to group them in this specific category.
OUTROS	Other entries that do not fit the criteria of the other four categories.

Source: The authors (2025).

4 Methodology

The data collection of journalistic texts on the topics of environmental sustainability, homophobia, and female freedom on Google had its own key terms for each of them.⁸ For the searches of

⁸ We clarify that all the keywords utilized for this research were in Portuguese, and that their translation to English, in this chapter, was done to give the international reader a better understanding of the procedures carried out by Obitel UFBA's researchers.

the theme “Environment,” we listed four key terms: “Environment,” “Nature,” “Sustainability,” and “Environmental preservation”⁹; for those on the theme Homophobia, six: “Gay,” “Homosexual,” “Homosexuals,” “Homophobia,” “LGBTphobia,” and “LGBT”¹⁰; finally, for those on the theme “Female Freedom,” eight terms: “Masculinity,” “Feminine,” “Feminist,” “Female Freedom,” “Male Chauvinism,” “Misogyny,” “Violence against women,” “Empowerment.”¹¹ In total, including variations of telenovela *Pantanal*, we used 36 keywords. We clarify that such terms were chosen from previous tests and analysis of combinations that covered as many results as possible, in order to cover the most relevant articles within Google’s indexing logic and, at the same time, taking precautions that these combinations did not cancel each other out, restricting the volume of searches.

The data collection¹² was conducted through searches in Google’s incognito mode, to minimize interference from factors such as geolocation and indications based on users’ preferences and browsing history. Regarding the volume of results, we chose to consider the first 50 entries of results from each keyword, aiming at the feasibility of the investigation, as we understand that the most relevant results would be included in this universe. Excluding sponsored content, all types of products that appeared in the searches were analyzed, including articles in text, video and also audio, as well as publications in social media networks of journalistic outlets.

The cataloging procedure of these data occurred through the registration of entries from each theme. During the process, there were situations in which the same material appeared in searches for different themes. In this case, the team inserted different entries in the spreadsheet, since this is data that shows the intersection and transversality of the themes in the public discussion. However, when the same content appeared in different keywords of the same theme, we only took note of this fact without repeating the entry, to optimize the results obtained, since these repeated entries would not only not bring new and relevant data, but could lead us to mistaken readings about *Pantanal*’s ability to guide public discussion.

The data were organized into analytical categories that revealed relevant information to the investigation and the hypotheses tested. Thus, we have catalogued more objective information, such as:

9 In Portuguese: “Meio ambiente”, “Natureza”, “Sustentabilidade”, “Preservação ambiental.”

10 In Portuguese: “Gay”, “Homossexual”, “Homossexuais”, “Homofobia”, “LGBTfobia”, “LGBT”

11 In Portuguese: “Masculinidade”, “Feminino”, “Feminista”, “Liberdade Feminina”, “Machismo”, “Misoginia”, “Violência contra a mulher”, “Empoderamento.”

12 The data collection period was between June 18 and July 12, 2024.

Source (journalistic outlet); Content link; Date of publication; Nature of the content (video, text, audio, etc. to understand resources, language, and tools used); Broadcasting period (when the content was published in relation to the remake's airing); Theme; Keywords used; Chapter¹³ (if cited); Character (if cited in relation to the theme); Narrative situation (if cited in relation to the theme).

In addition, we included more specific categories, such as "Was there any agency by Globo?". In it, we examined whether the article indicated that Globo played a role in mediating or promoting that social issue within the telenovela, also noting in the observations when such agency was made explicit by the author Bruno Luperi or by Globo representatives in interviews. Another relevant category for the investigation was "Does it bring data from digital arenas?". In this category, we mapped the process of repercussion of these arenas in the media, signaling as positive the cases in which the materials informed that certain characters/subjects related to the theme had repercussions on social media, understanding circumstances in which there were examples or not and direct citation of which platform.

The intersections between the social themes dealt with in telenovelas and the political sphere and social organizations were also mapped through the category "Does it cite social agents and politicians/organizations?", in which we verified the situations in which agents and organizations were present in the contents to comment and reverberate on certain subjects that were being dealt with in *Pantanal*.

Finally, we created the "Repercussion" category to investigate how the topics addressed in *Pantanal* resonated in the media. The methodology indicated that the approach to social issues in *Pantanal* would be considered positive when the material was complimentary to the approach. Likewise, it would be negative when it was critical of the way the themes were addressed in the remake. Predicting scenarios in which the contents would bring both praise and criticism to the approach, the methodology guided the analyst to point out the evaluation that prevailed.

Although the methodology indicated that the analyst should avoid cataloging the entries as neutral, since this data does not bring such relevant information, when it was not possible to clearly identify the predominance of criticism or praise, the contents were categorized as neutral, as well as when they did not present value

13 In Brazil, we utilize the term "chapter" for the episodes of a telenovela.

judgments on social themes or on the construction of the characters that represented them. We emphasize that these observations and categorizations were carried out with the evaluation of the treatment of the theme in question, since some contents brought comments on several variables simultaneously.

5 Process challenges

The process of cataloguing the data proved to be challenging both by the categories and by the nuances of the social themes. Therefore, the team needed to align analytical decisions to be followed in this procedure, starting from the inclusion or exclusion of content on the merits of relevance, as well as by indicators of completion of these data.

The first aspect for the evaluation of valid entries was for them to be materials from journalistic outlets. Materials that had news content, from outlets of different sizes, were considered in the search, as evidenced in the categorization previously presented in this chapter. In this process, entries from non-pertinent websites, such as blogs, and non-news content, such as scientific articles, were excluded.

Each theme brought its treatment challenges. The results on keywords about “Homophobia” presented the lowest degree of difficulty among the three themes, bringing only an initial stalemate in contents that, although announcing discussions about diversity in the telenovela, addressed only the sexual orientation of the actors, being promptly discarded. Regarding the theme “Environment,” we noticed that some articles addressed only the animals that participated in the remake, without observing the repercussions of the telenovela’s approach to environmental issues, so we chose to disregard this type of entry. Another difficulty faced was the fact that many entries had as sources websites specialized in covering the theme of the environment, which were on the limit of what was considered in this research as a journalistic website.

The theme “Female Freedom” proved to be particularly challenging for the cataloging process, imposing more complex analytical choices. The choice of this terminology for the theme was mainly due to the desire to focus, in this research, on the female characters of *Pantanal*, and on how their constructions and trajectories in the telenovela were reflected in the news media and generated public discussions. However, we observed that, in this telenovela’s narrative construction,

the feminine issue was treated with contradictions that were also reflected in the results found in this research. The keywords brought a series of results that alluded to the theme, but that analytically did not apply to the scope of the research. Thus, for example, we chose to disregard content about male chauvinism when they were not related to the agency of female characters.

We emphasize that some of the excluded entries, although not relevant to this research, are interesting for the phenomenon studied from the perspective of the reverberation of the approach of these social themes in the telenovela in other spheres, such as academic and legal. The searches led us to some academic articles from different areas of knowledge about the remake, focusing, for example, on reflections on gender, debates on feminism and toxic masculinity.

The contents of legal websites, on the other hand, raised debates based on characters and narrative situations of the remake, such as the theme of family violence against women, exemplified by the case of Maria and Tenório, alerting to the existence of other types of violence in the Maria da Penha Law¹⁴ that are not limited to physical aggression, such as psychological and patrimonial abuse. It should also be noted that, concerning the theme “Environment,” articles from websites of institutions in the environmental sector were found discussing how the remake presented the current situation of the biome and how it is different from that portrayed by the original telenovela, as well as articles talking about lessons that could be learned from this production in caring for the environment.

6 The circulation of *Pantanal* in the press and the visibility of positions in defense of rights and citizenship

As previously pointed out, the search was carried out considering the first 50 entries of each of the 36 keywords elaborated (when available). However, not all entries were considered valid. Thus, the total number of valid entries in the spreadsheet was 199. In a panoramic aspect, we found that most of the content analyzed was in text format, but applicable results were also analyzed in audio, video, webstories, and posts on pages of media outlets on social media platforms. Most of the news was published by Traditional (44.7%) and Specialized (41.2%) journalistic outlets, followed, to a lesser extent, by Independent outlets (11.6%), Other (1.5%), and Podcasts (1%).

14 “Lei Maria da Penha” is the popular name for the Brazilian Law No. 11.340/2006, created to prevent and punish acts of domestic and family violence against women.

During the period prior to the exhibition of *Pantanal*, Globo used a series of communication strategies to promote the telenovela, which, at that time, was the broadcaster's major bet to regain the expected audience level and repercussion of the telenovelas aired at 9 p.m. (primetime), reduced in 2021 during the exhibition of *Um lugar ao sol*. Despite the effort, this pre-exhibition period was responsible for only 9.3% of the materials that mentioned the telenovela due to the approach of the three social themes studied. The repercussion of the themes was concentrated during the exhibition of the remake, since 80.9% of the collected journalistic content was published while the telenovela was being aired and only 9.8% after its end.

These data refer to the relationship between the attention focused on the production during its exhibition (effect of live broadcast), the skill of the author Bruno Luperi in conducting these approaches and Globo's agency in the treatment of social themes. When we observe the theme "Environment," for example, we realize that, although it was highlighted as a central subject in the telenovela's promotion, the environmental issue was the one that generated the least repercussion, with only 26.6% of journalistic materials. "Homophobia" and "Female Freedom," themes that gained prominence during the exhibition, had more repercussions, accounting for 45.2% and 28.1% of the cataloged content, respectively.

We cannot fail to consider the possibility that the difference in engagement is also explained by the way these themes were developed by the production, since the themes of individual rights ("Homophobia" and "Female Freedom") appeared as central issues for the characters Zaqueu and Maria Bruaca, respectively, which may have facilitated the establishment of affective connections by the audience. In turn, the theme "Environment" (of collective and diffuse rights) only had Velho do Rio as its representative, without sustainability directly affecting the character's life. Therefore, we can infer that the differences in engagement may be connected to the types of rights (collective or individual) and the way in which the themes were associated with the dramatic situations of the characters, as well as the previous existence of activist networks around the themes of individual rights in digital environments.

We believe, finally, that this concentration of the repercussion of the themes addressed by the production during its exhibition is due to the live broadcast modality, since it is a media event designed to concentrate the audience's attention, in fact, during its

exhibition. Another factor concerns the nature of the telenovela's open narrative, a modality that allows creators and the production company to follow what has, or not, captivated the audience and contributed to their engagement or disinterest, as well as allowing both (TV network and creators) to interfere in the narrative construction to make adjustments. This circumstance allows us to evaluate the dissonances and proximity with the defenses for rights and citizenship advocated by the company and by the creators of the telenovela.

7 Topics of main repercussion: homophobia and female freedom

From the data collected, we noticed that the themes that presented the greatest nuances in the contents examined were “Homophobia” and “Female Freedom.” We noticed that the repercussion on the three themes was mostly positive, but the theme “Female Freedom” had a higher rate of criticism (16.1%) – mainly due to disagreements regarding the construction of the character Guta and her connection with feminism – and the theme “Homophobia” had a lower rate of criticism (4.4%), which we assume is a consequence of the elaboration of the character Zaquieu's narrative arc.

These themes also presented a higher volume of reverberation in social media in the journalistic content (category “Does it bring data from digital arenas”). In “Female Freedom”, the majority of the audience's impressions was about Maria Bruaca and Guta, the latter of whom was both praised and criticized by the audience for her narrative construction. In “Homophobia,” in turn, we believe that the fact that it is a controversial theme added to the gay kissing scene in the last chapter of the telenovela helps to explain why this is the theme in which the influence of the arenas was bigger.

The agenda of “Female Freedom” was reverberated in multiple ways, with the citation of several of the telenovela's characters in materials that brought comments on the theme. The character Juma was mentioned for her upbringing being unrelated to social constraints, with freedom to express her desires and negatives, symbolized by the catchphrase “querimbora” (I wanna leave). Filó was featured in articles for her practiced sorority, demonstrated through her care for the women who surrounded her. Zuleika, on the other hand, was mentioned for the contradictions of being an independent woman who was in a relationship with a married and abusive man.

The biggest highlights, however, were the characters Guta and Maria Bruaca. Guta, introduced in the plot as a representative of feminism, had a mixed repercussion in the media for her narrative construction. She was the subject of praiseworthy articles, such as “‘Pantanal’: Guta’s lessons for those who are sexist and have not yet noticed”¹⁵ (Geraldo, 2022), but also of critical articles, such as “The feminist incoherence that bothers in ‘Pantanal’”¹⁶ (Moratelli, 2022). The criticisms were mainly based on the contradictions of a character built to be a defender of women’s rights, but who focused on the theoretical elaboration of these issues and did not apply them in practice.

On the other hand, the trajectory of emancipation of the character Maria Bruaca – “bruaca” being an insulting adjective incorporated into her name by her abusive husband – was the topic of several articles, in a mostly praiseworthy way. In the telenovela, Maria was a housewife, Tenório’s wife, recurrently disrespected and diminished by her husband. In the course of the telenovela, she discovers the existence of her husband’s second family and goes through a journey of self-discovery and empowerment that propels her out of submission and transforms her life.

Some narrative situations of Maria’s trajectory were mentioned in journalistic contents found, such as: when she discovers Tenório’s other family and has clashes with her husband, initiating her awakening; when she kisses farm worker Alcides after discovering her husband’s betrayal; when Tenório expels her from home; her divorce process. Several articles raised reflections on the representation of the character in a social context in which real women have trajectories similar to Maria’s, cloistered in abusive relationships, and could see encouragement in this story of liberation. We emphasize that some of the journalistic contents brought as sources agents such as psychologists and lawyers, showing that the agenda mobilized different spheres.

This subject and the character also mobilized speeches from social agents, which reverberated in the political arena. We highlight the comments of President Lula, at the time a presidential candidate, who cited the telenovela based on the situation of Maria and Tenório. Some articles that emerged in this research stated that Lula used the example of the telenovela as a warning and nod to the female agenda, based on lines such as:

¹⁵ Original text: “‘Pantanal’: as lições de Guta para quem é machista e ainda não notou.”

¹⁶ Original text: “A incoerência feminista que incomoda em ‘Pantanal’”

I told Janja today that when I talk about women's freedom, I'm going to say that people have to look at Bruaca. You can't be submissive like her. Women have to raise their heads and speak on equal terms with their partners¹⁷ (Vasques, 2022).

The second theme with the greatest repercussion was “Homophobia,” being the most recurrent among the contents about the telenovela, with 90 pertinent entries. Among them, 80 mention the character Zaqueiu, indicating his centrality in the narrative, being the one who most intensely personified the debate on prejudice and inclusion. The development of the arc of the butler who becomes a farm worker is significant, as it explores from the suffering caused by homophobia to the symbolic repair of the characters and the plot. The construction of the arc involves the pain of prejudice, the need for understanding and, finally, the celebration of love.

We consider that Zaqueiu's trajectory is carefully presented at key moments in the narrative. One of them occurs when, after suffering homophobia from the farm workers, he decides to leave. This point is mentioned in 13% of the materials and comprises a series of narratively articulated actions: Zaqueiu leaves a letter to Mariana and leaves the farm; when reading the letter, Mariana and Irma have a pedagogical conversation about homophobia with José Leôncio; he dialogues with the farm workers to correct their posture. José Leôncio's speech, stating that what was done was not a joke but a crime, was one of the most cited moments in the articles that bring the repercussion of the public on social media.

The sequence of his departure was described in detail in several articles, which reported the repercussion both in the narrative and on social media. The article by Amorim (2022) from Na Telinha, for example, illustrated how the audience's reaction was significant, even surpassing the impact of the romantic scene between Juma and Jove. These scenes were praised by the public as fundamental to raise awareness about the impacts of prejudice.

The crowning of Zaqueiu's arc came in the final chapter, with the kiss between him and farm worker Zoinho, mentioned explicitly in 21% of the journalistic content. According to the materials found, this outcome, although initially not foreseen in the script,

17 Original text: “Eu falei pra Janja hoje que, quando for falar de liberdade de mulher, vou falar que as pessoas têm que olhar a Bruaca. Não dá para ser submissa como ela. Mulher tem que levantar o pescoço e falar em igualdade de condições com seu companheiro.”

was a decision of the direction of the telenovela, with the active participation of actors Silvero Pereira (Zaquieu) and Thommy Schiavo (Zoinho). The scene was widely celebrated on social media and in the news, with outlets such as *Veja* magazine highlighting the historical impact of the kiss, comparing it to the censorship of homoaffective kisses in telenovelas of the past.

For the press, the decision to include the scene represented a symbolic victory in a context in which expressions of LGBTQIAPN+ affection on commercial broadcasting TV still face resistance. As reported in the article “Gay kiss in Pantanal was not in the script and goes against the idea of telenovela’s author”¹⁸ (Pazin, 2022), the direction of the telenovela opted for a bolder and more inclusive ending, transforming what would be a simple exchange of looks into a significant act of love. The artistic direction’s decision to display the kiss was considered bold and innovative, especially on commercial broadcasting TV, and was pointed out as an important contribution to broadening the public debate on inclusion and diversity.

In the context of the theme, it is important to highlight the relevance of actor Silvero Pereira in the face of public discussions about LGBTQIAPN+ visibility. In addition to the narrative itself, 13% of the content highlights the choice of this actor, openly a member of the LGBTQIAPN+ community, to play Zaquieu. The choice reinforces the importance of representation in the audiovisual industry, considering Pereira’s background in relevant roles for this community.

From the analysis of these contents, we observed that Zaquieu’s trajectory in *Pantanal* was a significant milestone in both narrative and social representation. The telenovela was able to explore the impact of homophobia not only as an individual conflict, but also as a collective issue that requires reflection and a change of attitude.

8 Final considerations

Throughout this study, we examined how different digital journalism organizations reacted to the remake of the telenovela *Pantanal* in the public discussion about three social themes of public interest addressed in the production — “Environment,” “Homophobia,” and “Female Freedom”. More than that, we emphasize

¹⁸ Original text: “Beijo gay em Pantanal não estava no roteiro e contraria ideia de autor da novela.”

the extent to which these repercussions on online journalism have increased the media visibility of progressive liberal forces that, in public discussion, position themselves in defense of access to rights and citizenship.

The effort to classify the journalistic outlets of our research universe evidenced the changes in this environment, while elucidating the importance of further studies on the current modes of circulation in journalism of the themes addressed by telenovelas.

From the results found, the essential role of digital arenas in the composition of the public sphere drew attention, as they have the power to influence and guide commercial journalism, either by the discussions for which they serve as a stage, or by the interference of the algorithm in the circulation and consumption of news content produced by companies and agents.

The research outlined so far showed that the themes represented in *Pantanal* that most resonated in the press focused on traditional and specialized organizations and were mostly positive, that is, they were aligned with progressive liberal positions that defended access to fundamental rights and the necessary formation of a citizen's imagination. This is an important aspect that deserves mention considering we are in a political scenario of rapid growth of the forces of the extreme right.

Another relevant point was the difference between the high volume of entries during the telenovela's exhibition period and the lower volume during the pre- and post-exhibition periods. These data lead us to reaffirm the importance of the effect of live broadcast on the media event as a tool to guide public discussion through digital arenas and journalism.

The examination of these data also allowed us to deepen the function of the positions of the TV networks and author-creators on the themes represented in this telenovela, an open production that is aired daily. This is because, if they are promoted by media organizations, it is assumed that coherence is sought between the approach to themes and the image of companies.

In addition, the *Pantanal* remake dealt with the challenges of updating the themes already portrayed in the original version, some of which were criticized. What we observed, however, was that, in general, the management of social themes by the company, as well as the ability of the head screenwriter to conduct melodramatic features in the narrative, directly impacted the repercussion of the themes.

The plots of the characters Maria Bruaca and Zaquieu, associated with “Female Freedom” and “Homophobia”, illustrate this assertion, as they promoted expressive repercussion in the online public discussion. This fact shows that the themes of individual rights, when well woven into the trajectories of the characters, tend to provide greater visibility and public discussion. Especially when, in the case of Globo, these dramaturgical resources are in tune with the orchestration of a brand that, for decades, has sought to align social themes in telenovelas with the issue of citizenship.

The results of our investigation leave new questions and show an open field of research that deserves to explore these links between public discussions about rights and citizenship promoted by telenovelas that reverberate in journalism. But we wish to emphasize one of them, namely: the relations between political positions of telenovela-producing media organizations in the model that simulates live broadcast and the promotion of public discussion about rights and citizenship. We argue that this approach can broaden the understanding of the functions that these conglomerates exercise as mediators in the arena of public deliberations, especially in a political context that denotes the progressive advance of conservative forces that deny the collective principles of citizen imagination by exacerbating individual rights and freedoms.

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PART THREE

Sustainability and Socio-Environmental Citizenship

Socio-environmental sustainability in the remake of the telenovela *Pantanal* (2022)

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1 Introduction

When dealing with Brazilian culture, it is important to discuss the role of the telenovela in broadcast television, as it is a cultural aesthetic product with a strong impact on the representation of a plural imaginary of “Brazilianness.” According to Lopes (2009, p. 22), the Brazilian telenovela would be a communicative resource that creates a dialogue between the archaic and the modern through its storylines, having its history marked “by the dialectic of nationality–mediatization” with representations that tend to act “for social inclusion, environmental responsibility, respect for difference, the construction of citizenship.”¹

Even at a time of expansion and consolidation of streaming, with the popularization of foreign series and services, television and telenovelas show remarkable resilience. In Brazil, total video consumption is mostly carried out by linear TV, whose averages 5 hours and 17 minutes of daily viewing (78.7%), whereas streaming accounts for 21.3% (Kantar IBOPE Media, 2023). Regarding reach, TV covers 91% of the Brazilian population in a month (Kantar Ibope Media, 2023), which demonstrates

1 Original text: “‘pela dialética nacionalidade-mediatização’ com representações que tendem a atuar ‘para a inclusão social, a responsabilidade ambiental, o respeito à diferença, a construção da cidadania.’”

the power of this medium, even in a period of streaming expansion. Among its main products, the telenovela captures 18% of daily screen time (Kantar IBOPE Media, 2023).

Consequently, television retains significant potential to signify and re-signify the cultural imaginary of societies, fostering the civic formation of viewers. This capacity is underscored by data revealing a significant correlation between audiovisual content and quality of life indicators, such as education, culture, urban development, and public safety (Catela *et al.*, 2021).

Lopes (2009) argues that the telenovela exemplifies television's role as a protagonist in the emergence of a peculiar public space, placing itself as an alternative for social inclusion, that is, as a new form of citizenship. In this view, the telenovela can problematize the forms of life² in a context of intense transformations. As analyzed below, this capacity is adapted to the streaming era, adding themes and agendas that traverse the global landscape. Moreover, it more emphatically links art to socio-environmental sustainability and citizenship in its plots — a background that illustrates an imaginary about the markers of “Brazilianness” present, above all, in Globo Group's telenovelas, which highlight both cultural and environmental plurality, amid social contrasts.

The telenovela *Pantanal* (2022) serves as an object of study that demonstrates this modernization of the mark of Brazilianness by representing different forms of life, while debating sustainable development and incorporating “green” production procedures from the Globo Group. Thus, this chapter addresses the following question: how is the idea of sustainability appropriated and presented in *Pantanal*, in order to build and/or resignify the cultural imaginary of citizenship in the Brazilian telenovela during the streaming era?

To answer this question, we conducted a study of *Pantanal*, assuming that sustainability and citizenship are used as markers of the telenovela's Brazilianness in the streaming era. In this context, this chapter focuses on the dimension of socio-environmental sustainability in *Pantanal*, complementing a preliminary study in which audiovisual sustainability was investigated in the context of telenovela production, in the article “O impacto ambiental da telenovela *Pantanal*: um estudo sobre indicadores de sustentabilidade audiovisual” (The Environmental Impact of the Telenovela *Pantanal*:

2 The notion of forms of life is adopted here from the perspective of Fontanille (1993), referring to the different ways in which human subjects conceive, organize, and attribute meaning to their experiences through symbolic systems, such as language.

A Study on Audiovisual Sustainability Indicators) (Massarolo; Mesquita, 2023).

To address this topic, the chapter first addresses the correlation between markers of 'Brazilianness,' cultural imaginary, ways of life, and citizenship in the telenovela. Then, the notion of sustainable development is discussed through the lens of different authors (Boff, 2013; Elkington, 1997; Sartori; Latrônico; Campos, 2014; Veiga, 2022), exploring how the Globo Group has been applying sustainability practices in its audiovisual productions.

Finally, the socio-environmental themes addressed in the network's telenovelas are analyzed, especially those of Benedito Ruy Barbosa, to enable a study of *Pantanal* (2022) can be carried out. This analysis is framed by the narrative arc of the relationship between the characters Jove (Jesuíta Barbosa) and José Leôncio (Renato Góes/Marcos Palmeira), father and son, representing the relationship between tradition and innovation, from an aesthetic and narrative point of view. At the end, this chapter presents the research results, especially analyzing the correlation between audiovisual and civic forms of life, from the perspective of sustainability.

2 Markers of brazilianness and citizenship in the telenovela

The marker of Brazilianness can be understood as a form of cultural activation, determined by the "presence of local descriptive elements such as differential trait and value criterion"³ (Candido, 2007, p. 30). This marker distributed across networks, due to the multiplicity of "Brazils" it reaches, brings together different visions of Brazilian daily life and its cultures within a set of "discourses to build an idea of what it is to be Brazilian"⁴ (Varoni, 2008, p. 29).

In Brazilian telenovelas, for example, this network has evolved over the years, "under conditions of increasing interculturality combined with the renewal of differences and collective identities"⁵ (Lopes, 2004, p. 126). In the 1960s, the stories produced by TV Tupi, Excelsior, and Globo were similar to those of other Latin American countries, such as Cuba and Argentina, in which the "swashbuckler" style predominated, being set in other countries and in remote times (Ribeiro; Sacramento, 2010).

3 Original text: "presença de elementos descritivos locais como traço diferencial e critério de valor."

4 Original text: "discursos de construção de uma ideia do que é ser brasileiro."

5 Original text: "dentro de condições de crescente interculturalidade aliada à renovação das diferenças e das identidades coletivas."

This format began to change in 1968, when TV Tupi aired the telenovela *Beto Rockfeller*, by Bráulio Pedroso, representing a story closer to Brazilian reality. Regarding *Vêu de noiva* (Globo, 1969-1970), by Janete Clair and directed by Daniel Filho, Ribeiro and Sacramento (2010, p. 124) state that TV Globo began to improve realism in Brazilian television drama, addressing urban themes and producing colloquial dialogues. This consolidated what the authors call the “Brazilianization of the telenovela,” which became a hallmark of the telenovela, characterized by the “nationalization of scripts, themes and procedures of television language”⁶ (Ribeiro; Sacramento, 2010, p. 124).

Lopes (2009) and Hamburger (2005) emphasize how telenovelas between 1970 and 1980 presented themes echoing a national identity, but with a critical approach to society and politics, such as *O bem-amado* (TV Globo, 1973) and *Vale tudo* (TV Globo, 1988). During this period, productions featured plots organized “around dramatic oppositions between poor and rich characters, from the big city and the ‘countryside’, men and women of different generations”⁷ (Hamburger, 2011, p. 78), and, ultimately, between the traditional and the modern.

From the 1990s onward, Hamburger (2005) and Lopes (2009) state that telenovelas assumed a character of social intervention, addressing social themes such as sexuality, drugs, violence, in addition to representing landscapes of the countryside. The plots began to present a pedagogical tone, aiming to promote civic values and ethical principles, thus stimulating civic attitudes regarding matters of public interest (Lopes, 2009). It was during this period that the notion of *social merchandising* in telenovelas became popular, the objective of which is to employ “socio-educational measures that allow the audience to extract teachings and reflections capable of positively changing their knowledge, values, attitudes, and practices”⁸ (Lopes, 2009, p. 153).

It can be stated that, in recent years, telenovelas have entered a new phase, marked by the search for greater representation of different forms of life and the presence of socio-environmental agendas. This inclusive representation aims to highlight the resignification of citizenship in contemporary times, in telenovelas

6 Original text: “nacionalização dos textos, das temáticas e dos procedimentos de linguagem televisiva.”

7 Original text: “em torno de oposições dramáticas entre personagens pobres e ricos, da cidade grande e do ‘interior’, homens e mulheres de gerações diferentes.”

8 Original text: “socioeducativas que permitem à audiência extrair ensinamentos e reflexões capazes de mudar positivamente seus conhecimentos, valores, atitudes e práticas.”

such as *Velho Chico* (TV Globo, 2016)⁹, *Amor de mãe* (TV Globo, 2019-2020),¹⁰ and *Renascer* (TV Globo, 2024).¹¹ The new version of *Pantanal* (2022) exemplifies this phase, for resignifying the original plot with reflections on the current social, environmental, and cultural dynamics. This reconfiguration of the notion of citizenship circulates through a global imaginary, represented by contents of a transnational flow, supported by streaming platforms. The prominence of inclusive and environmental agendas stems from a transnational production planning, aimed at different cultures, which streaming platforms, such as Netflix, use to meet “demands for diversity and representativeness of minority groups [...], in line with a certain perceived mobility of such groups in various spheres of society”¹² (Bianchini; Camirim, 2019, p. 156).

Since the 1970s, mainly, the imaginary of Brazilianness has been configured in the telenovela as a hallmark of the national television industry, containing narratives capable of representing the various realities of Brazil. This imaginary around the marker of Brazilianness is endowed with a cultural dimension, as Durant (1997) puts it, constituted by the set of beliefs, values and symbols that are shared in a culture. For the author, the imaginary is like the “museum of all past, possible, produced and to be produced images”¹³ (Durant, 1997, p. 15). From this perspective, the imaginary is constituted by a rational configuration of images, resulting from experiences and lived realities. According to Durand (1997), the imaginary is figurativized in the symbolic representations found in different languages and social institutions (church, school, family, etc.). In short, it guides the construction of individual and collective perceptions of the world in a given historical and cultural context.

Consequently, the imaginary present in society interacts with television production, through a process of constant feedback, in which television, in addition to being a reflection of the cultural imaginary, also influences and modifies it. Therefore, the telenovela, by presenting images and stories that reflect/re-signify the social imaginary, contributes to the construction of the reality we perceive.

9 The telenovela presented discussions around environmental preservation, with the São Francisco River as the main backdrop and protagonist of the plot.

10 The telenovela addressed, in its plot, the pollution of Guanabara Bay, discussing the clandestine activities of companies and the neglect of the government with illegal environmental actions.

11 A remake of the homonymous telenovela exhibited in 1993, it addressed environmental issues more emphatically, such as the importance of preserving nature and the impacts of pollution and deforestation.

12 Original text: “demandas por diversidade e representatividade de grupos minoritários [...], em sintonia com certa mobilidade percebida de tais grupos em diversos âmbitos da sociedade.”

13 Original text: “museu de todas as imagens passadas, possíveis, produzidas e a serem produzidas.”

Bucci (2004, p. 22) states: “TV managed to produce the imaginary unity where there were only material disparities. Without such unity, Brazil would not recognize itself as Brazil. Or, at least, it would not recognize itself as the Brazil that it has been.”¹⁴ The imaginary around the mark of Brazilianness in telenovelas thus becomes a process of rediscovery of different “Brazils,” in their diversity of life forms and landscapes, organized in an idea of citizenship – of cultural belonging and social and political engagement.

Traditionally, citizenship is understood through the political, civil, and social rights constituted by the State, which regards everyone as equal (Silva, 2010), in a conception linked to the idea of belonging to a nation, and which aims at the common good – a positioning thematically established by the first telenovelas.

This understanding, however, has been reassessed in Brazil since the 1990s, after the redemocratization process, with the end of the Military Regime and the establishment of the Constitution of 1988. From this period, citizenship came to be understood as a process of political-social construction between different forms of life that coexist in society, in a logic contrary to the idealization of citizenship as something stable and equal for all through the constituent rights (Silva, 2010). Thus, citizenship would be an action (a citizen action) “in which diverse social actors build disparate normative projects and clash around the reconfiguration of the normative order”¹⁵ (Tavolaro, 2009, p. 97). In certain instances, these actors do not even seek to formalize norms, but only attempt to be perceived or represented as subjects with their own forms of citizen life.

This contemporary perspective can be found in telenovela themes from the 1990s, which aim to raise public awareness of their rights and guide social struggles of groups seeking recognition and social justice (better working conditions, criminalization of race and gender prejudice, among others). This process has intensified, such that the works began to increasingly embrace the agenda of diversity and inclusion at dramaturgical and production levels, with themes and work teams¹⁶ that seek to achieve greater representation. As Martín-Barbero (2009) observes:

14 Original text: “A TV conseguiu produzir a unidade imaginária onde só havia disparidades materiais. Sem tal unidade, o Brasil não se reconheceria Brasil. Ou, pelo menos, não se reconheceria como o Brasil que tem sido.”

15 Original text: “em que atores sociais diversos constroem projetos normativos dispares e embatem-se em torno da reconfiguração da ordem normativa.”

16 Since 2022, Globo Group, for example, has had a Diversity and Content Innovation Board. The group, in turn, is in line with its ESG objectives regarding the social impact of their productions and the promotion of diversity in their teams (After [...], 2022).

What the new ethnic, gender, lesbian and gay, religious or ecological social movements require is not so much to be partisan or ideologically represented, but to be socially and culturally recognized, that is, to make themselves “citizenly” visible in their difference; which gives way to a new way of exercising their rights politically, as the new visibility catalyzes the emergence of new political individuals.¹⁷

The new political individuals mentioned can be seen as the new forms of citizen life, which, as Di Felice argues (2021, p. 87), are members of “a complex ecological network” — that is, a network of relationships no longer centered on the human subject or on formal political platforms (parties, governments, etc.), but rather based on interactions between individuals, as well as on biodiversity, technology and territories. It relies on processes of interdependence between members, constituted “continuously by the management of the flow of data”¹⁸ (Di Felice, 2021, p. 87).

From this perspective, the concept of citizenship encompasses the subjects and the ecosystem as a whole, incorporating concerns about the environment and socio-environmental sustainability. This theme has been gaining prominence on the global agenda since the covid-19 pandemic, reinforced by extreme weather events, such as the floods in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in 2024. Thus, the agenda of contemporary citizenship comprises a complex network of environmental and social struggles that are related to the organization of economic, socio-environmental, and political-cultural factors.

In this context, the cultural imaginary represented emerges as an important element of awareness. This is reflected in *Pantanal*, whose marker of Brazilianness is linked to a sustainable socio-environmental vision. From this perspective, the notion of sustainable development becomes a key element to understand productions like this, not only because it is inserted thematically in its narrative, but also because it is present in its production logic.

17 Original text: “O que os novos movimentos sociais étnicos, de gênero, lésbicos e gays, religiosos ou ecológicos requerem não é tanto serem partidários ou ideologicamente representados, mas serem socioculturalmente reconhecidos, isto é, fazerem-se “cidadaneamente” visíveis em sua diferença; o que dá espaço a um modo novo de exercer politicamente seus direitos, pois a nova visibilidade catalisa o surgimento de novos indivíduos políticos.”

18 Original text: “continuamente pela administração do fluxo de dados.”

3 Considerations on the notion of sustainable development

The term *sustainable development* was first used at the 1972 World Environment Conference in Sweden, organized by the United Nations (UN). The definition was presented in 1987, by the UN, in the report *Our Common Future*. In this document, sustainable development is defined as “that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”¹⁹ (UN, 1991, p. 46).

It is important to emphasize that *sustainability* and *sustainable development* are not synonymous, but elements of a chain of practices to defining a purpose. Thus, sustainability would be a process to achieve sustainable development, that is, “economically viable, socially fair, and environmentally correct”²⁰ (Boff, 2013, p. 43). This perspective became known through Elkington (1997), a business consultant who coined the term TBL – *Triple Bottom Line: Profits, People, Planet*, based on the tripod of economic prosperity, social justice, and environmental quality.

Regarding criticisms of the concept of sustainable development, seen as irreconcilable by some authors (Veiga, 2022), Boff (2013) comments that other academic models have been proposed, such as *natural capitalism*, *green economy*, *solidarity economy*, among others. Additionally, there is a proliferation of other terminologies related to the field, used as a *slogan* for strategic actions of companies, such as *eco-efficiency*, *environmental management*, *industrial ecology*, *eco-design*, *zero waste*, among many others (Sartori; Latrônico; Campos, 2014). Due to this inconsistency in the interpretation of sustainable development and due to its conceptual ambiguity, Sartori, Latrônico, and Campos (2014) state that the term has gained popular market value without a more critical problematization of the topic with the general public.

Although Veiga (2022) shares the concern of the use of the word in a popular manner in the market, the author understands that the difficulty of interpretation comes from the fact that the term is not merely a concept. The author proposes that the incorporation of the term “sustainability” is the creation of a new value, equivalent to the consolidated ideals of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. It can be seen that there is an unprecedented adoption of the term Sustainability as

19 Original text: “aquele que atende às necessidades do presente sem comprometer a possibilidade de as gerações futuras atenderem suas próprias necessidades.”

20 Original text: “economicamente viável, socialmente justo e ambientalmente correto.”

a value of concern for future generations and diversity. It is possible to think of this perspective as a cultural innovation.

In response to the growing debate on the intersection of sustainability and citizenship practices, it is imperative to consider the integration of Nature-Based Solutions, ancestral knowledge (Krenak, 2022), and popular knowledge as fundamental pillars for sustainable development. These approaches represent a rich tapestry of practices that, when aligned with the TBL model (Elkington, 1997), emphasize not only economic prosperity but also social justice and environmental integrity. The transition to sustainability requires the recognition that practical and substantial changes in organizational structures, culture, and socio-technical systems are vital to address complex challenges (Friedrich; Feser, 2024).

It is through the materialization of holistic approach processes that sustainability can be achieved and sustained as a practice of citizenship, reinforcing the importance of including the voices of all social strata in the construction of sustainable futures. Thus, sustainable development is not limited to the implementation of green technologies or environmental policies, but encompasses, above all, a broader spectrum of both cultural and social innovation, essential for the creation of a truly sustainable society. In this scenario, television media should not only be understood by its separate technological and cultural capabilities, which are inherent to it – as posited by Williams (2016) – but also through the interplay between industrial practices, cultural understandings and textual characteristics related to sustainability.

Regarding sustainability in the economic and productive field, currently the main keywords are related to the ESG acronym for the words *environmental*, *social*, and *corporate governance*, which guide business strategies for environmental, social, and governance responsibility, in line with the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) formulated by the United Nations (UN) to be implemented by 2030. ESG indicators have become a label for the corporate world, with a direct impact on the valuation of companies by investment funds, stock exchanges around the world and consumers.

A survey conducted by the FSB Research Institute (Beon, 2022) points out that, out of a sample of 400 medium and large Brazilian companies, only 12% of them have more mature Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) strategies, while 40% adopt good practices based only on legal requirements. In this scenario, the Globo Group stands out as one of the main media conglomerates

in Brazil for disseminating socio-environmental justice agendas through its serial narratives – particularly telenovelas. Moreover, it was a pioneer in establishing a comprehensive ESG strategy.

4 Practices of environmental sustainable development at Globo

The Globo Group has long been involved in and has promoted sustainability initiatives within its network. According to its 2021 *Report – ESG Journey* (Globo, 2022), since 2015 the *Menos é Mais* (Less is More) platform has been used to coordinate social mobilizations on sustainability and conscious consumption. Through advertising campaigns, news reports and entertainment programs, the platform encourages reflection and debate on the impact of human beings on natural resources for the next generations. One of the most recent campaigns conducted by the platform was *Menos Lixo, Mais Futuro* (Less Waste, More Future) (Globo, 2017), in 2020, on the reuse and disposal of recyclable materials. Thus, in recent years, Globo Group has added the content of socio-environmental impact to its objectives, presenting themes discussed at the national level and transversally integrated into programming, such as telenovelas, major reports, variety programs and independent series, such as *Aruanas*²¹ (Globoplay, 2019-2021) (Massarolo et al., 2021).

In 2018, the company's *Environmental Policy* was published (Globo, 2018), which established a sector for detailing an *Environmental Master Plan*. Through this initiative, Globo Group regulated the commitments to sustainability in the operations and facilities of its different companies, seeking to operationalize more efficient actions and aiming at the continuous reduction of environmental impact.

The *Green Productions Booklet* initiative was established in 2022, involving the development of a guide that describes the best sustainability practices in the field of production, with the aim of reducing impacts on the environment to the greatest extent possible. The initiative includes workshops for production teams, in which the guide is disseminated, along with support materials and a list of sustainable suppliers (Globo, 2022).

21 The sustainability goals achieved in the first season of the series were: recycling 90% of the costumes; and, in addition to the cast and director, 47% of the production team was composed of women; of the cast, between appearances and figuration, 33.8% of the people hired lived in the Amazon Forest region.

Globo's ESG strategy establishes environmental actions structured in six pillars: circular economy, climate change, biodiversity, natural resources, environmental culture and legal compliance. The document also presents some results of actions such as reducing carbon emissions by investing in renewable energy, with 97% of the energy used coming from renewable sources. In 2024, according to internal sources, the rate of 99.5% of renewable-based energy has already been reached.

Throughout the production process, data is collected to track key performance indicators, thus maintaining internal benchmarks within the company's own operations. However, it is important to note that Globo's ESG guidelines are not coercive or overly prescriptive. The strategy entails a gradual incorporation and training plan, both for the company's direct employees and for suppliers.

5 The theme of sustainability in Globo group telenovelas

The theme of the environment was part of Globo Group before the popularization of terms such as sustainability or ESG. Generally in a didactic way, subjects related to the field of ecology could already be found as early as the 1970s. *Meu pedacinho de chão* (1971) was released as an educational and ecological telenovela. Aired in the six o'clock time slot, it was Benedito Ruy Barbosa's first work on TV Globo.

Fifty years ago, Dias Gomes's *O espigão* (1974) innovated by criticizing the advance of real estate speculation and the destruction of the environment, as well as *Fogo sobre terra* (1974) and *Sinal de alerta* (1978) – the latter even addressed pollution in large cities, having an oxygen mask as part of its logo. In the 2000s, the telenovela *Coração de estudante* (2002), by Emanuel Jacobina, presented strong environmental appeal with the struggle of the protagonists to prevent the construction of a hydroelectric plant in a forest reserve area, as well as *Velho Chico* (2016), created by Benedito Ruy Barbosa, which dealt with the importance of preserving the São Francisco River.

Specifically in the case of Ruy Barbosa, there is a reliance within Globo for his works in order to address issues more focused on the environment. A selection (Figure 1) of socio-environmental themes addressed by TV Globo demonstrates the significance of the author's telenovelas.

Figure 1 – Telenovelas by Benedito Ruy Barbosa with socio-environmental and/or rural themes on Globo



*Telenovela originally aired at 6 p.m.

**Telenovela originally aired at 9 p.m.

Source: The authors (2025).

The telenovela *Pantanal* (2022), set in the nature of the Brazilian Pantanal region, offered a platform for Globo Group to explore and promote environmental awareness, through a contemporary perspective and the creation of a Brazilian identity positioned through a marketing message. To highlight this aspect and reinforce the ecological message of the plot, the network was able to leverage and expand some initiatives already implemented in other productions, adapting them to this specific context.

First, the use of protocols and green technology in production stands out. The network emphasized its commitment to sustainable practices in the production of the telenovela, applying the actions of the company's *Green Productions Booklet*. The material involved research and mapping of the environmental impacts of filming in the Pantanal region, in addition to the use of renewable energy sources and environmentally friendly equipment – such as drones for aerial filming – as well as the reuse of disposable materials, the reuse of sets, and the social commitment to hire local labor.

In 2022, the booklet was in an experimentation phase, being used in certain projects. As of 2023, the document was renamed *Green Production Guide* (Globo, 2023b), being incorporated into all the company's productions (Globo, 2023a).

As stated by Luciana Monteiro, producer at Globo Studios, in an article about the guide (Globo 2023a), in *Pantanal*, the teams filled out forms that helped to measure the impacts of the actions, serving as the database to create a “tool to monitor how and which sustainability actions are implemented in the production of each product of Globo Studios”²² (Globo, 2023a). The company expects all of this environmental impact information to be aggregated and automated, helping to achieve goals to achieve the green label, given to ecologically responsible companies.

This reinforces the production strategies carried out with the help of Globo Group's technological apparatus as a mediatech, a media company that applies different technologies in its production and distribution. This panorama of green technology in the Globo Group is discussed by Massarolo and Mesquita (2023), who also highlight other actions associated with the dissemination of the telenovela and its environmental agendas on social networks and other platforms.

From a narrative perspective, *Pantanal* integrates discourses of environmental awareness into its plot, in which conflicting

22 Original text: “ferramenta para acompanhar como e quais ações de sustentabilidade são implementadas na produção de cada produto dos Estúdios Globo.”

forms of civic life are brought into dialogue, expressed especially in the relationship between the characters Jove and José Leôncio, as will be seen below.

6 “Our children’s children will see”: narrative and social disputes through the lens of generational confrontation in the remake of *Pantanal* (2022)

The story of the telenovela *Pantanal* can be organized between the axes: nature and culture, tradition and innovation. These dichotomies are manifested in the storyline, cinematography and plot, but most prominently in the central characters: the members of José Leôncio’s family. Consequently, *Pantanal* is based on oppositions of different dimensions, discussing above all the environmental impacts that progress can cause to the Pantanal biome, either by damaging it or by helping in sustainable development.

The opposition between tradition and innovation, in the remake of *Pantanal* (2022), is already marked in the opening song of the homonymous telenovela, composed by Marcus Viana and re-recorded by Maria Bethânia. Although the choice was to use the same excerpt from the song used in the opening of the Manchete version (Abertura [...], 2008), in the Globo production, there is one more stanza of the song: “The children of the children of the children of our children will see.”²³ This excerpt is representative in addressing a generational pact, the basis for the notion of sustainability, in which it is necessary to preserve the environment for future generations. This detail is also an indication that the great clashes of the telenovela permeate the perspective of the father *versus* son relationship, having as major exponents José Leôncio and his heir, Jove.

A central theme, the story of the son who did not know about his father’s existence and who discovers him as an adult manifests the conflicts and reconciliations between different forms of civic life. Urban and rebellious, the young man finds a father steeped in tradition and happy to find his heir and teach him the secrets of the land. The son of a farmer who became rich by raising cattle, Jove is a vegan, which leaves his father in a state of shock after the young man refuses to eat the barbecue of the party prepared by José Leôncio for his arrival.

Throughout the plot, it is evident that both approach the sustainable relationship with animal life differently. As early as in

23 Original citation: “Os filhos dos filhos dos filhos dos nossos filhos verão.”

the first chapters, José Leôncio shows that the animals on his farm are raised with a “life as dignified” as anyone who lives there. He explains the importance of castration as a way of preventing fights among the oxen, saving them from death, rather than out of cruelty. He also praises the almost ritualistic way of consuming animal protein: “And it is out of respect for these lives that we take, that we eat everything, from head to tail. We take from these animals our livelihood, our survival. And, for this, you can be sure that we have not mistreated them once”²⁴ (Pantanal, 2022, chap. 8).²⁵

This same difficulty in reconciling father and son symbolizes part of the conflict between nature and culture, as well as the dimension of opposition between tradition and innovation. Both cherish the preservation of nature and are fascinated by the microuniverse of the Pantanal; however, they have different civic approaches to sustainability, which are gradually reconciled.

These civic approaches can be identified when related to the sustainability issues of the Pantanal biome, such as, for example, in the scene in which the father explains to the son that no animal in the Pantanal is mistreated or hunted, such as jaguars and anacondas: “We only slaughter an animal if it has a greater purpose,” emphasizes the rancher, who, when confronted by the son about what justifies the death of an ox at slaughter, answers: “The life (sustenance) of so many others”²⁶ (Pantanal, 2022, chap. 18). The environmental side of the telenovela is highlighted in moments such as this dialogue, in a didactic tone, demonstrating that the Pantanal is not only the setting, but a central character in the plot.

Among the discursive environmental protection strategies adopted by the telenovela, Leôncio’s approach to cattle handling is notable (“An animal like this you do not catch with a lasso”²⁷ – Pantanal, 2022, chap. 1). Rich in great springs, the biome’s waters are constantly celebrated: “The waters reign here. They go, they come, making everything bend to their strength, their whims, their wills. [...] As long as this Pantanal has water, man’s greed has no place,”²⁸ states Eugênio (Almir Sater) in the third chapter (Pantanal, 2022).

24 Original citation: “E é em respeito a essas vidas que nós tiramos, que nós comemos tudo, de cabo a rabo. Nós tiramos desses bichos nosso sustento, nossa sobrevivência. E, pra isso, você pode ter certeza que nós não maltratamos nenhuma vez.”

25 Chapter 8 of the new version of *Pantanal* aired on April 5, 2022.

26 Original text: “A gente só abate um animal se tiver um propósito maior.”; “A vida (sustento) de tantos outros.”

27 Original text: “Bicho como esse não se pega no laço.”

28 Original text: “Quem reina aqui são as águas. Elas vão, vêm, fazendo tudo se dobrar à sua força, seus caprichos, suas vontades. [...] Enquanto esse Pantanal tiver água, a cobiça do homem não tem vez.”

José Leôncio frequently reiterates his attachment to the land: “My heart is buried here on this farm. In this one I have pleasure, in the others I do business”²⁹ (Pantanal, 2022, chap. 13).

The nature-culture dichotomy is metaphorically expressed when Zé Leôncio falls in love with Madeleine (Bruna Linzmeyer/Karine Teles), Jove’s mother – from the initial shock of the clothes, when Zé Leôncio arrives at the bar where he meets her, to the habits, reinforcing, throughout the narrative, the antagonisms between the two forms of life. Pampered and raised in Rio de Janeiro, the young woman falls madly in love with the rancher Leôncio and leaves the life of privileges to live in the Pantanal, an environment that, for her, is unknown, quickly becoming also inhospitable. The couple’s relationship cannot withstand the cultural divide. Still in the story’s first phase, in chapter 8, when she arrives in the Pantanal, Madeleine is overwhelmed by its immensity and exclaims, “My God, this is the end of the world,” to which Eugênio, her boatman in the *chalana* (transport vessel), replies, “On the contrary, ma’am. This is the beginning of it” (Pantanal, 2022).³⁰

Pantanal is configured as a telenovela that uses visual language of wide shots to establish the Pantanal landscape as an omnipresent character. Here, the concept of landscape can be understood “as a unity between people and the world, as a space, lived and shared by people, and, at the same time, marked by a pictorial specificity and an intricate and complex materiality,”³¹ as conceptualized by Pryston (2018, p. 70), who places the landscape beyond the function of scenic ornament. In the telenovela, the Pantanal landscape is rationalized through a perspective that seeks to naturalize it in its cultural, social, and mythical aspects.

Directed by Rogério Gomes, in its first 60 chapters, and Gustavo Fernandez, in the rest of its 167 chapters, the telenovela uses its cameras to take the viewer inside the Pantanal biome. In several scenes, the “gaze” follows the course of the river, almost entering the waters or moving through the vegetation. The relationship between humans and wild animals is another highlighted point in the cinematography and characterization of the plot. The peak of this movement is in the characters Maria Marruá (Juliana Paes)

29 Original text: “Meu coração tá enterrado aqui nessa fazenda. Nessa aqui eu tenho prazer, nas outras eu faço negócio.”

30 Original text: “Meu Deus, aqui é o fim do mundo.”; “Ao contrário, dona. Aqui é o começo dele.”

31 Original text: “como uma unidade entre pessoas e o mundo, como um espaço, vivido e compartilhado por gente, e, ao mesmo tempo, marcado por uma especificidade pictórica e uma materialidade intrincada e complexa.”

and her daughter Juma Marruá (Alanis Guillen), who turn into a jaguar, a high point of the production's fantastic realism tone. The transmutation of the woman into jaguar, even if obviously using graphic effects, is displayed in a very natural way – as well as that of the character Velho do Rio (Osmar Prado), who “transmutes” into an *anaconda*.

With mystical characteristics, of a Pantanal as a “treasure lost to us,” as the opening song sings, the biome is the great protagonist of the telenovela. Nature imposes itself in all chapters, either through images or through characters. This is seen in the first chapter, in the meeting of Joventino (Irândhir Santos), father of José Leôncio, with the place where he would establish a herd and build his farm. The discovery brings wonder and respect for nature: “In God's Pantanal, we know nothing around here [...]. Nature here speaks and speaks louder than men”³² (Pantanal, 2022, chap. 1) – an exaltation of its importance and beauty, which contrasts with the reality faced by the biome, which risks disappearing in the next 70 years, according to scientific research, given its growing degradation and ongoing climate change (Andrade, 2021).

As explained, Jove's arrival on the farm creates a struggle between maintenance and change among the different perspectives, in a tension between the environment and urban ways of life that are constantly being debated to represent a new understanding of citizenship – plural, diverse, and sustainable. Even with this bridge of dialogues present in the storyline, it is not possible to deny the contradictions that exist around the telenovela's protagonist family. After all, at the same time that they assume for themselves a role as defenders of the Pantanal biome in different ways, they utilize it for agribusiness, within a discourse of sustainable development which, in practice, has become unfeasible for the region. This is because it is due to the expansion of agribusiness that the region suffers from the loss of its native vegetation. In 1990, when the original telenovela was recorded, farms represented 7.3% of the biome; in 2020, however, this number jumped to 16.2%, when 23,000 km² of vegetation cover were devastated, ten times more than in the period between 2000 and 2018, according to data from the NGO SOS Pantanal (Capuano, 2022).

The dialogue between the human characters takes place, but with the main character, the Pantanal itself, it is developed in a

32 Original text: “Nesse Pantanal de meu Deus, não conhecemos nada por esses lados [...]. A natureza aqui fala e fala mais alto que os homens.”

biased way, with shots that represent its beauty, but that hide a glaring reality of degradation that has lasted for decades. The telenovela, in this way, displays a fantastic microuniverse, which criticizes socio-environmental exploitation, but which, in itself, is insufficient to understand a complex reality in which economic, political and social agents act in the biome's exploration.

7 Final considerations

This chapter sought to understand how the idea of sustainability is appropriated and presented in *Pantanal* (2022) to build and/or resignify the cultural imaginary regarding citizenship in the Brazilian telenovela during the streaming era and contribute to the marker of Brazilianness. With the establishment of a consolidated global imaginary through productions distributed by streaming platforms, agendas on diversity and environmental issues became more evident.

Thus, in this work, the idea of sustainability was discussed especially by the notion of sustainable development, which seeks to reconcile social, economic, environmental, and cultural issues. Consequently, sustainability can be achieved and sustained as a practice of citizenship, reinforcing the reconciliation of different ways of life in the construction of sustainable futures.

Based on this understanding, the marker of Brazilianness expressed by *Pantanal* (2022) is representative, in its productive and narrative dimensions, of the correlation between sustainability and citizenship. The Pantanal biome emerges as an omnipresent and symbolic character representing something that needs to be maintained for future generations, serving as the backdrop of clashes aimed at a common and sustainable good.

As demonstrated, Jove's arrival on the farm establishes a struggle between maintenance and change among the different, in a tension between the environment and the forms of life that represent a new understanding of citizenship — plural, diverse, and sustainable. On the other hand, José Leôncio can be seen as a point of contradiction on sustainable development, adding to his figure a successful farmer through the exploration of nature, while facing the Pantanal with spirituality.

The telenovela then gives a vision that maintains tradition and innovation as two important poles, initially distinct, but merging in the end: father in the world of the son, and son in the world of

the father. This mixture promotes points of view on the Pantanal and civic modes of action in the face of the urgent need to act in a sustainable way in the socio-environmental sphere. Thus, the telenovela explores a conception of sustainability in which tradition must join innovation to save the biome, in a fundamental movement of generational reconciliation.

Although the approach was limited to the telenovela *Pantanal*, it is important to indicate that this is a small sample of how Brazilian telenovelas help to constitute the cultural imaginary of different “Braziliannesses” within their respective productive context. Between the elements of the narrative lines and the representations of different landscapes, each telenovela builds its own world, which, regardless of what historical period or how fantastical its focus is, is aligned with the historical context of its audience at the time of its production.

This dialogue with the public is what helps to establish minimum parameters of a citizen action between fiction and daily life, feeding back the imaginary about citizenship. This occurs in a contract that goes beyond belief in the represented world, critically interconnecting agendas and mutual interests between subjects and characters — a mirror game of reflected civic forms of life that break with a bureaucratic and political notion of citizenship, to constitute conciliatory and imaginary affectivities of possible futures. In a reality in which the future is shaped by ecological disasters and political polarities that divide families, telenovelas can serve as a reflection to expand the view on new social, political, and environmental possibilities, outside the traditional paths of citizen action, in the search for new futures and new markers of Brazilianness.

Thus, the issues raised here represent only a segment of *Pantanal* (2022), which can be expanded to other perspectives and productions by Globo, especially those that adopt on the *Green Productions Guide*. In addition, it is necessary to monitor the implementation of the network’s ESG strategies as a national model of sustainable audiovisual productions that can be replicated.

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Audiovisual quality and citizenship: creation, circulation, and aesthetic experience in the analysis of the character *Velho do rio* in the telenovela *Pantanal*

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1 Introduction

This research aims to analyze the narrative arc of *Velho do Rio* and the transmedia actions developed for the dissemination of the telenovela with regard to the relationship between the character and environmental themes, in order to understand how these points inserted in the plot are reverberated by the public and if, in any way, they promote the development of media literacy (Livingstone, 2007; Livingstone; Lunt, 1994; Orozco, 2021).

The analysis covers the discussion about the quality of the work's creation, the circulation of content provided by transmedia actions, and the aesthetic experience of interacting viewers generated by network conversation, according to previous studies developed at the Audiovisual Quality Observatory (Borges et al., 2022). This research aims to study how the remake of *Pantanal* addresses and explores environmental issues in a context of ongoing

environmental degradation during its broadcast. It also intends to discuss the spontaneous pedagogical potential of fiction (Lopes, 2009), in order to promote environmental responsibility and, more broadly, citizenship education, based on actions that, even implied in the enjoyment of the audiovisual work, foster relevant discussions and promote the development of media literacy in society.

2 The fictional universe of *Pantanal* and the methodological approach of the study

Between the years 1990 and 2010, Benedito Ruy Barbosa's television drama was known for working on issues related to the land, such as in the telenovelas *O Rei do Gado* (Globo, 1996), *Terra Nostra* (Globo, 1999), *Cabocla* (Globo, 2004), and *Sinhá Moça* (Globo, 2006). In addition to anchoring in the rural theme, audiovisual experimentation also became a characteristic trait of the author (Jacob, 2004; Pereira, 2018). This approach to nature, present in Benedito's stories, is translated by scenography and, in *Pantanal* (2022), plays a central role.

Becker (2018) states that the popularity and the importance of the plot for national serial fiction are configured from two central points: the political context of the time and the renewal of the language proposed by the telenovela. In the opening month of *Pantanal*, Brazilians had their savings accounts confiscated by the government of former President Fernando Collor, which made the consumption dreams of many of them unfeasible. Thus, by exploring a universe distant from modernity and urban life, *Pantanal* (1990) offered the public a world in which material assets occupied another *status*.

By referring to magical realism, the attraction of TV Manchete also met an emerging discussion in the early 1990s, since it aired in the International Year of the Environment, anticipating issues such as ecology, environmental preservation, and sustainable development, which would later be dealt with in the context of the World Conference on Environment and Development, Eco-92 (Machado; Becker, 2008).

Inspired by the universe created by Benedito Ruy Barbosa, the remake of *Pantanal* (2022) premiered in March 2022, at 9 p.m. It was written by Benedito's grandson, Bruno Luperi, who made a series of changes to the original plot. Such changes encompass both the creation of new narrative arcs, exploring contemporary issues, such as exhibitionism in social networks, and the reformulation of the way

in which subjects such as male chauvinism and homophobia were addressed in 1990. In addition, the historical context in which the remake aired, marked by the exacerbation of conservatism, political polarization, and neglect of the environment, is also important to understand how the themes dealt with in the new version were updated in order to dialogue with contemporary society.

The characters play a fundamental role in the materialization of these themes, and the appeal to magical realism occurs in an approximation of the people and phenomena present in the fictional universe with Brazilian tradition and folklore. As Chiampi (1980) points out, magical realism uses the natural and the supernatural in a non-disjunctive relationship of isotopies. Thus, characters such as Juma (Alanis Guillen) and Velho do Rio (Osmar Prado) are built as extraordinary entities that protect the forest and animals, but that are still credible in fictional reality.

The remake revisits the character Velho do Rio and the actor of the original version, Cláudio Marzo, in a scene that uses excerpts from images from the 1990s, bringing an affective memory to the public and an idea of continuity in the mission of preserving the Pantanal region and its biodiversity. Another interesting use of images is made with real scenes of the devastation that occurred in the Brazilian Pantanal region in 2019 and 2020. According to Moreira (2022), in the G1 article: “Images of fires in ‘Pantanal’ are real and show impacts on the biome,”¹ the biome was hit by the greatest tragedy in its recent history, with fires that destroyed about four million hectares, which corresponds to 26% of its area, causing the death of ten million animals (Moreira, 2022). The actual images were included in a chapter in which a fire destroys the forest and several species. Understanding the potential of the telenovela as a communicative resource for the construction of citizenship (Lopes, 2009), the use of such images, as well as other strategies adopted, highlight the changes that have occurred in the Brazilian Pantanal and serve as a warning for current environmental policies.

As part of the strategies that have been adopted by Globo Group, the chapters of *Pantanal* were made available on Globoplay after the broadcast on TV. To engage viewers, the Globo Group created several transmediation actions. The telenovela’s website on GShow brought together summaries of the main narrative arcs of the plot, content detailing the creative process, and explanatory videos about the change of phase in the story. On X (formerly Twitter),

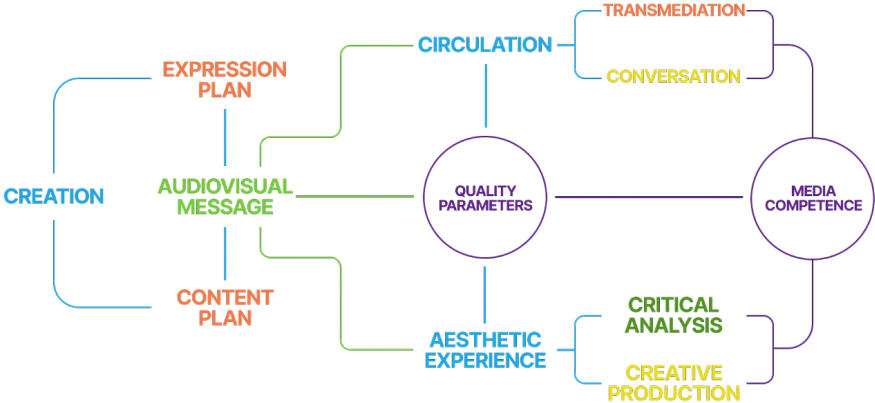
1 Original headline: “Imagens de queimadas em ‘Pantanal’ são reais e mostram impactos no bioma.”

the network also developed targeted strategies for social TV. As the chapters aired, the @tvglobo profile on the microblog reinforced appointment television², highlighting important plot points and reframing them with memes and GIFs.

Therefore, this study proposes to analyze the actions of the Globo Group related to the treatment of environmental issues, focusing on the narrative arc of the character Velho do Rio. The research covers the circulation of content on Globoplay, the network’s websites, and digital social networks. Inspired by the universe created by Benedito Ruy Barbosa, the study seeks to investigate whether the culture and biodiversity of the Brazilian Pantanal are used as a resource to address issues related to citizenship and favor the development of media literacy, through spontaneous pedagogy promoted by fiction (Lopes, 2009).

Based on the methodological proposal developed by Borges *et al.* (2022) at the Audiovisual Quality Observatory, the analysis covers the stages of the work’s creation, circulation and aesthetic experience, taking into account both the elements that make up the audiovisual production and its dissemination, as well as the public’s perspective in relation to the representation of the nature employed by the telenovela in the context of the ongoing environmental degradation during the exhibition of the remake.

Figure 1 – Theoretical-methodological model of analysis of fictional series



Source: Adapted from Borges *et al.* (2022, p. 14).

2 Appointment television, to watch the show at its original viewing time.

In the proposed model, it is possible to observe the relationship between audiovisual quality and the development of media competence, taking into account the creation and circulation of the work, as well as the role of the public. With regard to creation, the works are analyzed based on their constituent aesthetic elements and the production of meaning they generate. At the content level, the narrative and characters are examined; at the level of expression, stylistic elements are analyzed, including soundscape, cinematography, setting, and editing; and at the level of the audiovisual message, quality parameters of fiction are considered, such as opportunity, the expansion of the audience's horizons, diversity, originality, among others. These quality parameters are related to media competence through the circulation of content on networks and the public's aesthetic experience. In terms of circulation, we analyze the transmedia strategies employed by media companies and the aesthetic experience of interacting audiences, as evidenced by the networked conversations generated through comments on digital social networks. The circulation quality parameters include dialogue across platforms in the dissemination of an audiovisual product, the clarity of the transmedia proposal, the encouragement of active audience participation, and the expansion of narrative universes through transmedia actions. These aspects enable reflection on how the "public has access to, is interested in, and engages with the content made available, in order to ask to what extent it is being summoned and provoked to react in a way that may or may not stimulate media competence"³ (Borges et al., 2022, p. 26).

3 Analysis of the audiovisual creation

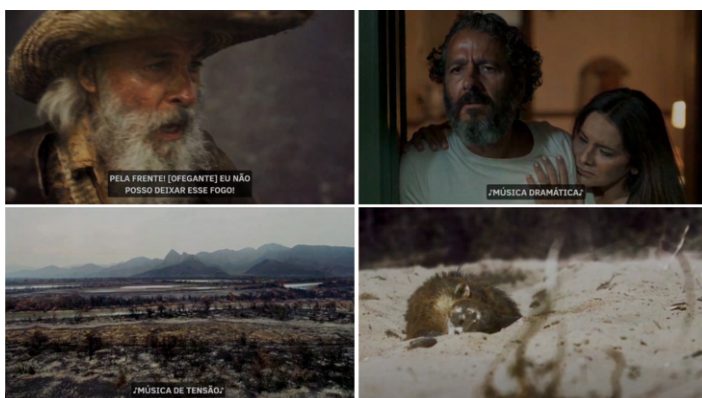
The analysis of the audiovisual creation is carried out through the selection of two chapters that highlight the narrative arc of the character Velho do Rio. The first sequence of analysis refers to a fire in the plot that used real images of fires that occurred in the Brazilian Pantanal. Chapter 80, which portrays this fire, was the most commented on by critics, the press, and interacting viewers. The second sequence of analysis was extracted from chapter 167, which closes the telenovela, and shows the passage of the figure of Velho do Rio from father to son, with a long-awaited reunion between the two in a dreamlike and symbolic environment.

3 Original text: "*público tem acesso, se interessa e se engaja com os conteúdos disponibilizados, a fim de indagar em que medida está sendo convocado e provocado a reagir de um modo que possa estimular, ou não, a competência midiática.*"

Chapter 80 aired on June 28, 2022, and brought as its main event a fire that affected large extensions of the Pantanal biome. From the audiovisual analysis of the scenes, we can verify some formal rules that the telenovela uses to encourage the viewer to reflect on the themes presented. The sequence is divided into two distinct parts, with commercial breaks and other scenes interspersed between them. In the first section, we see Velho do Rio walking through the woods just as the fire begins to spread. He shows a desperate and moved countenance, as well as saying that he needs to stop the flames at all costs. At a later moment, when the scene is resumed in its second part, it is preceded by another scene, this time with Zé Leônicio (Marcos Palmeira), who looks out the window saying he had a feeling that something bad was about to happen.

In this first section, we can verify the use of a recurring aspect to the melodrama present in telenovelas, which is the focus on the relationships between characters and their reactions to the events of the plot, with emphasis given, for example, to their facial expressions (Gledhill; Williams, 2018). The countenances and lines of both characters prepare the viewer to watch something that is already known to be negative. The speech of Velho do Rio even points out several arguments about the way that a fire like that affects local fauna and flora. In this way, they anticipate the tone of the scene and indicate to the audience a way to watch it, announcing the extent of the destruction represented by the fire that would be shown after.

Figure 2 – Documentary images used in the fire of chapter 80⁴



Source: Screenshots of *Pantanal* (2022).

4 Caption: “Out the front! [out of breath] I can’t allow this fire!; Dramatic music; Tension music.”

The second part of the sequence features the scenes of the fire. Thus, we highlight the audiovisual experimentation by using documentary and journalistic scenes of fires that happened in the Brazilian Pantanal in previous years. The remake of *Pantanal*, as well as the original work of the 1990s, subverts narrative conventions that are characteristic of telenovelas and innovates in the elaboration of audiovisual language, achieving an artistic quality that stands out in television programming. This construction with real images merged with fictional images is an experimentation that happens in a timely manner in the telenovela, only in this chapter and for this specific purpose. As it is configured as a narrative climax, as well as being the most powerful sequence with regard to the environmental issue and awareness of the preservation of the biome, the entire excerpt acquires a decoupage and editing with a specific rhythm that differs from the audiovisual grammar expected by the public for this type of work.

The shock of the real images, which mix open general shots – giving the dimension of the size of the destruction – with closed shots, which individually detail the plants and animals affected by the fire, draws the viewer's attention to the importance of what is being shown. The sound construction also creates a tone that generates commotion and then culminates in silence when images of the day after the fire are displayed, with dead animals and entire landscapes consumed. This is followed by a succession of images paced by a funeral drum, which brings the idea of mourning and is maintained until the telenovela's opening bumper indicates the commercial break.

This type of scene, which falls outside the usual telenovela pattern, also occurs at other points in the storyline, such as when Velho do Rio passes his mission on to his son, Zé Leôncio, who, from that moment on, takes his place. The meeting takes place in the closing chapter of *Pantanal*. Set in a dreamlike and symbolic environment, the scene features yellowish and orange tones, like those of a sunset, to create a sacred and mystical atmosphere. The character's position and the way he speaks to his father evoke a dialogue between the human and the divine. The presence of water, the tree, and the reflection of the landscape in the river help to compose an aesthetically elaborate picture that highlights the beauty and strength of nature.

Figure 3 – Symbolic visual composition in chapter 167⁵



Source: Screenshots of *Pantanal* (2022).

The characters are framed in shots that do not capture entire bodies, but backlit silhouettes, which blend with shadows illuminated by the golden light of the sun. The dialogue is fragmented, with long pauses between the lines. The pace of the scene is slower than that practiced in the other scenes of the production. The dialogue between father and son works as a message of wisdom from the mystical figure of Velho do Rio to the public. It conveys an idea of the coexistence of society and the environment, with mutual respect and shared responsibility among all to preserve the planet and its biodiversity. At the end of the scene, Velho do Rio disappears into the waters, becoming one with them and symbolizing the communion between man and nature.

The highlighted chapters, as they are key moments of the plot, present a way of narrating that highlights the experimental character of the work and offer the public a more elaborate television drama, which demands attention to details and changes in the grammar used to understand the meanings. In addition to such characteristics, we can point out the use of the natural beauties of the Pantanal biome, highlighting its forests, rivers, and animals

5 Caption: "Dramatic music; Crying."

throughout the narrative. The telenovela inscribes the nature of the region not only as a setting and background, but as a presence that dialogues with the others through the figure of Velho do Rio and the images of nature that carry a symbolic weight through the editing.

The aspects considered in the content plan aim to analyze the dramaturgy, including both the composition of the characters and the construction of the narrative. The development of the narrative arc of Velho do Rio presents two phases, the first integrates the opening chapter and extends to the ninth. In the plot, we follow the childhood of Zé Leônicio with his father, Joventino (Irandhir Santos). The chapters explore the dynamics of the characters' relationship and the cultural aspects that surround the Pantanal region. In the second phase, after establishing himself as a major breeder of Pantanal cattle and passing on his main teachings to his son, Joventino renounces material possessions and goes to live in nature, severing all ties with the life as a cattleman.

As detailed below, despite being composed of distinct narrative intentions, Joventino and Velho do Rio present similarities that act as flashy arrows for the viewer. That is, the change of character from the first to the second phase of the telenovela is not configured as an interpretative gap, on the contrary, the interrelationship between Joventino and Velho do Rio is didactically signaled to the public from some points, covering everything from the visuals such as the beard, the hat and the mannerisms, to the character's profile. In the first phase of *Pantanal*, Joventino represents a kind of moral guide for those who integrate their daily lives; the character always leads, advises, and reinforces the importance of having a respectful relationship with nature. Changing to the second phase, these characteristics gain new interpretive layers, making the character construction denser.

What is observed throughout the chapters is the shift from the mundane figure represented by Joventino to a mystical being, who maintains a symbiotic connection with the ecosystem of which he is part. As the chapters air — especially those that make up the sample of this work —, the character is established as one of the main communicative resources of the plot (Lopes, 2009), representing not only the message of environmental preservation, but also expanding the production of meaning of other resources of the fictional world. Among them, the opening song, performed by Maria Bethânia, stands out, which says: “People who understand and speak the language of plants, of animals. People who know the way of the waters, the lands,

the sky”⁶ (Pantanal, 2022), and the final section of the attraction, in which Benedito Ruy Barbosa, in a voice-over, reads the following text: “Man is the only animal that spits in the water he drinks. Man is the only animal that kills not to eat. Man is the only animal that cuts down the tree that gives him shade and fruit. That’s why mankind is convicting itself to death...”⁷ (Pantanal, 2022). In this context, Velho do Rio becomes one of the main reading keys for understanding the environmental discussions proposed by the telenovela.

The parameters of the audiovisual message highlighted in this analysis — originality/experimentation, opportunity, and expansion of the audience’s horizons — seek to reflect on the extent to which audiovisual creation drives, or not, attentive reading and critical reflection on the part of the viewer. The issue of originality can be discussed from the aesthetic proposal that stimulates a contemplative and reflective look on the part of the public from scenes and dialogues of longer duration, slower pace, and elaborate visual compositions. We can identify the opportunity parameter, since the work was released at a time when the Brazilian Pantanal region was suffering from fires and deforestation, along with neglect and denial by the federal government and the Ministry of the Environment. By accessing the memory and nostalgia of the public that watched the original version of the 1990s, the remake proposes a comparison between the state of preservation of the biome over three decades. This aspect was worked through narrative arcs and through the very representation of the current state of the local vegetation.

In addition to other social issues, such as the discussion of male chauvinism and homophobia, a criticism of the predatory use of land and the presentation of sustainable alternatives constitute attempts to broaden the horizon of the public’s understanding in relation to environmental issues. In this case, the figure of Velho do Rio works as a mentor who brings guidance to the characters of the plot, validates their actions, corrects them when necessary and passes on a message of love for the land and conscious use of its resources. The spontaneous pedagogical potential of fiction (Lopes, 2009) is explored in two ways. First, from the teachings of some characters, especially Velho do Rio, who uses catchphrases and popular sayings to convey messages of care for the environment.

6 Original text: “Gente que entende e que fala a língua das plantas, dos bichos. Gente que sabe o caminho das águas, das terras, do céu.”

7 Original text: “O homem é o único animal que cospe na água que bebe. O homem é o único animal que mata para não comer. O homem é o único animal que derruba a árvore que lhe dá sombra e fruto. Por isso, está se condenando à morte...”

In addition to being established as a folkloric, respectable, and wise figure, he acts as a moral guide for the characters on their journeys of personal growth and learning.

The second way covers extensive dialogues, the symbology of the aesthetic elements of the scene, and therefore demands a more attentive reading of the interacting viewers. This point can be observed in the final sequence (chapter 167) of *Velho do Rio*, in which the character and Zé Leôncio have a long conversation. The scene explores frameworks guided by contrast, highlighting the father/son and divine/human relationships, as well as the connection that both have with the Pantanal. However, to understand the production of meaning of the sequence, the viewer has to activate their media repertoire and, mainly, the rules and codes of the plot.

4 Transmediation analysis

The protocol of approach, monitoring, extraction, and coding of the transmediation actions carried out by the Globo Group during the *Pantanal* exhibition covered the social networks Instagram⁸, TikTok⁹, YouTube¹⁰, and X¹¹, in addition to the content published on the GShow website¹². Monitoring began on December 29, 2021 and lasted until October 8, 2022. The data collected during the pre-test were also considered,¹³ that is, publications that preceded the premiere of the telenovela.

The extraction of data and metadata was guided by the latest versions of the APIs (*Application Programming Interface*) of social networks and by the specificities of the informational architecture of Globo.com.¹⁴ Subsequently, we manually coded only the contents related to the narrative arc and the theme of the environment. For this, we delimited primary search terms (“Telenovela Pantanal”

8 TV Globo (@tvglobo), GShow (@gshow), and Globoplay (@globoplay).

9 TV Globo (@tvglobo) and Globoplay (@globoplay). The GShow profile (@gshow) was created in April 2023 and there are no publications about the telenovela.

10 TV Globo (@tvglobo) and Globoplay (@globoplay).

11 GShow (@gshow), TV Globo (@tvglobo), and Globoplay (@globoplay).

12 For this investigation, we did not consider Facebook, because we understand that, in most cases, specific content is not produced for the network, with reposts of content published on Instagram and X.

13 Carried out between November 2021 and February 2024.

14 We filtered the results according to the telenovela's broadcast period and sorted them using the “most relevant” option. Although the search engine of the GShow portal was used, posts from other Globo Group portals also appeared in the results; therefore, a prior selection of posts was necessary considering only the publications of the website about the story and GShow.

“Bruno Luperi,” and “Velho do Rio”) and secondary search terms (“Deforestation,” “Preservation,” and “Environment”). Finally, the publications were analyzed based on the theoretical-methodological proposal of Fechine *et al.* (2013). According to the authors, transmediation actions encompass two broad categories: propagation, guided by the feedback and resonance of the contents, and expansion, in which the narrative layers complete and/or unfold the central story on different platforms.

4.1 Instagram and TikTok

The analysis of Globo Group’s profiles on the social network Instagram reveals different strategies for promoting the telenovela, demonstrating specific approaches combined with the communication style of each platform. However, on the social network TikTok, we observe that no transmedia strategy was developed beyond reformatted content; for the most part, the videos posted were identical to those shared on Instagram profiles.

The @tvglobo profile on Instagram was the main platform of promotion on the social network, concentrating the largest number of publications in different formats, focusing on actors, characters, and striking scenes, throughout the exhibition period, including months before the premiere. In the @gshow profile, we observed humorous and interactive content, stimulating the engagement of the interactants during the period of exhibition of *Pantanal*. However, in the @globoplay profile, we found only publications about the telenovela in the final days of airing, announcing the availability of the complete work in the online streaming catalog.

The first post on @tvglobo’s Instagram profile featuring the character of Velho do Rio was made on January 13, 2022, two months before the premiere of the telenovela. Its focus is on the character and the anticipation of his role in the narrative: the guardian of the Pantanal; it also announces actor Osmar Prado as the actor in the remake version. In the same period, we found other publications related to Velho do Rio, highlighting one that expands the fictional universe of the story with the animation “Legends of the Pantanal,” presenting the story of the character and his relationship with nature.

For the promotion of chapter 80, the @tvglobo Instagram profile used the photo carousel feature as a strategy to promote the images that mix fiction and the reality of the fire in the Pantanal, with Velho do Rio amid flames. The sequence did not directly request

the participation of the public, but it motivated the interactant to comment, with reports of sadness, reflections on the use of the real scenes, and congratulations to the network. In addition, comments related to politics and environmental crimes caused in the region were observed, evidencing the public's understanding of the importance of narrative on broadcast television (Figure 4). In the @gshow and @tvglobo Instagram profiles, however, we did not identify content related to chapter 80. The same occurred in the TikTok profiles, there are no publications related to the chapter, but it has other content that addresses topics such as deforestation, preservation, and the environment. These publications, although without direct actions for the active involvement of the public, generated comments on the subject, as well as on Instagram.

Figure 4 – Comments on the @tvglobo Instagram profile about the fire in the Pantanal¹⁵



Source: Instagram (2024).

15 Comments translations: “Wow, I got chills from this scene, nature screams for protection, congratulations Globo Network for this message”; “Whoever wishes to see the Pantanal and other biomes be taken care properly must, necessarily, vote against the current president, for this government attacks all environment with the slogan ‘to let the cattle go through’”; “#SavePantanal”; “What a wonderful actor, what a beautiful scene. Let’s protect our Pantanal. Congratulations to the entire cast of this wonderful telenovela *Pantanal*”; “So sad to see a situation like this with no control. It is a pity that it is only a few who empathize with this”; “Osmar Prado (icon)”; “People may say whatever, but it is undeniable that Globo is by far the best network of the country”; “Incredible scene. Amazing approach on the environment destruction. May many other scenes like this come, to bring awareness to the people on the atrocities that happen to our biomes. For more scenes like this.”

In contrast, chapter 167 had a wider promotion, mainly in the @tvglobo profile on Instagram, with the predominant use of the video and/or reel format, with excerpts of the scenes being shared with the public. The scene of the passage of the figure of Velho do Rio was highlighted in the profiles @tvglobo and @globoplay on Instagram in two distinct excerpts: one of them presents the characters diving into the river, while the other promotes the dialogue before the passing of the mission from father to son. On TikTok, the @globoplay profile reposted a video that was published on the @globoplay profile on Instagram. Also in the promotion of chapter 167, we verified another repost action in the @tvglobo profiles between the social networks Instagram and TikTok. The video publication refers to the final segment of the telenovela, featuring Benedito Ruy Barbosa's words on screen and his voice-over reading the text.

In general, we identified that the @tvglobo and @gshow Instagram profiles used scenes that illustrate the character's narrative arc, highlighting his lines and presenting Velho do Rio as a sage who offers advice on life, feelings, and man's relationship with nature. The @tvglobo profile on Instagram used a promotional approach to the telenovela, while @gshow presented a humorous proposal, often with memetic aesthetics, demonstrating not only the dialogue between platforms, but also clarity in the proposal in the transmedia actions of the telenovela according to each promoting profile. We also observed that, in some publications, the Instagram collab resource was used to promote the telenovela. The tool allows the same publication to be made by more than one profile; in this case, we check publications between the Group's profiles and actors and/or actresses. In contrast, when analyzing Globo Group's profiles on TikTok for the promotion of *Pantanal*, we identified reformatted content, that is, content that does not add new interpretative layers, limiting itself only to content reposts.

4.2 YouTube

Of the six results that make up the sample, five come from television programming: two interviews with cast members (*Encontro*), two summaries/reproduction of scenes, and a report on tourism in the Pantanal (*Mais Você*). In addition, there was also an animation about the character Velho do Rio that was not originally aired on TV.

Two videos are reformatted content (Fechine et al., 2013). These are television promos for *Pantanal* aired during the network's commercial breaks, which either recap past events or build

anticipation for upcoming chapters. Both bring scenes of a fire that threatens the biodiversity of the biome and the communities that live in it, and were published on June 28 and 29, 2022. The first of these, titled “Velho do Rio risks his life trying to prevent the fire”¹⁶ (2022), is a 30-second promo to chapter 80 and shows the character trying to put an end to the fire. The second is a summary of the same chapter with the title “Velho do Rio tries to prevent fire from spreading through the Pantanal and more!”¹⁷ (2022). The focus is on the character and his attempts to contain the fires while reflecting on the dangers they pose to biodiversity.

Other three pieces of contents used in the television program were interviews with the cast and a report about a supposed real-life Velho do Rio. In the case of the interviews (Karine [...], 2022; Renato [...], 2022), both bring cast members commenting on their narrative arcs and the experience of filming in the Pantanal. In one of them, an environmental manager joins the conversation. However, the discussion only touches on the margins of ecological themes, with greater focus given to aspects of the plot and behind-the-scenes curiosities. So much so that, on an occasion when actress Karine Teles talks about the need to preserve the biome in a more forceful way, the host changes the subject and redirects the conversation.

The article titled “Pantanal: Velho do Rio existed in real life!”¹⁸ (2022), is five minutes long and visits the city of Cáceres, in Mato Grosso, to deal with the landscapes and vessels seen in the telenovela. The *chalana* (river boat) is presented and related to the characters and scenes of fiction, as well as to tourism and the economy of the Mato Grosso region. For the last forty seconds, the reporter calls the viewer to visit the alleged house of Velho do Rio, comparing a local figure to the character. The article is a piece that refers to aspects of diegesis to present the scenarios of the region and the real characters who live there.

Finally, the animation *Enchanted being? Understand the legend of Velho do Rio* (2022) is the only video that does not bring aspects of television programming, configuring itself as narrative expansion content (Fechine et al., 2013). Lasting a minute and a half and narrated by Osmar Prado, it was published a few days before the premiere of the telenovela, as a kind of teaser. The same video was also posted on Instagram (profile @tvglobos). Velho do Rio is described as an entity that protects the woods and possesses magical powers. An

16 Original headline: “Velho do Rio arrisca a vida para tentar evitar incêndio.”

17 Original headline: “Velho do Rio tenta impedir que fogo se espalhe pelo Pantanal e mais!”

18 Original headline: “Pantanal: Velho do Rio existiu na vida real!”

animation was also made that talks about the legend of Juma Marruá, the woman who turns into a jaguar. These videos bring these figures closer to the public's imagination, preparing or rescuing a repertoire for the beginning of the plot.

Although he is a character who represents environmental justice and care for nature, the highlights given by Globo to Velho do Rio are more focused on the narrative and relationships between the characters than on the themes of environmental preservation. Even the contents made specifically about him build more of a mystical aura than a reflection on threats to the environment.

It was in the publication referring to the scene with real images of fires in the Pantanal that the comments were more in-depth, highlighting the telenovela's initiative in relation to the theme, in addition to identifying the link between the use of such images with the emotions elicited by the chapter.

4.3 GShow

From the analysis of the data, it was possible to perceive that the GShow portal uses, mostly, the contents and sources of TV Globo itself to prepare the publications, with little space for the expansion of discussions about the telenovela. In this sense, themes such as environmental preservation and deforestation remain only within the scope of the *Pantanal* narrative.

In one of the articles, GShow comments on an astrology podcast produced by the portal itself, which talks about *Pantanal* in one of the chapters. And, although the publication contains the word "environment," it features only the statement that the telenovela touches on this issue. This could be observed in articles focused on the *Pantanal* actors. They comment especially on the main characteristics of their characters and on the experience of making the plot, addressing subjects such as the relationship with co-workers and with the actors of the first version. When they are linked to a character's narrative arc, such as Érica (Marcela Fetter), who investigates deforestation in the Pantanal region, the environmental issues addressed by the telenovela come into focus. However, as observed in the analyses of the other platforms, these issues are only referenced, without further exploration of their underlying causes.

The highlights were some of the publications that brought more information about the scenes with the animals, such as the jaguars Gaia and Matí, and expanded the discussion about environmental

preservation beyond the *Pantanal* narrative. These articles demonstrate Globo's concern to show that, behind the scenes, all the guidelines of the environmental organizations were followed, without any harm to the animals involved in the recordings. In addition, they provide information on associations and institutions that seek to conserve the environment, such as Nex Institute and Mata Ciliar Association.

Using X posts, GShow also shows the repercussion of the scene in which Velho do Rio tries to fight the fire in the Pantanal. The comments of the public, which emphasize more strongly the importance of environmental preservation and the approach to these issues throughout the work, extend the environmental discussions portrayed in *Pantanal* to the Brazilian reality, demonstrating how the plot can dialogue with important issues for the country. However, if on the one hand the viewer makes this importance explicit, GShow keeps the discussion within the narrative of the telenovela.

4.4. X

In order to promote the productions of GShow, which hosts the website of the telenovela *Pantanal*, the tweets published by the @gshow profile presented some recurring elements, such as the use of multimodal resources like promotional photos and emojis, the telenovela's general hashtag (#Pantanal), and hyperlinks that direct users to the content of the portal.

Figure 5 – Recurring elements in GShow tweets¹⁹



Source: The authors (2025).

¹⁹ Tweet translation: “‘What we have to understand is our place in the world’ #Pantanal is also self-help: advice from Velho do Rio stands out in the story and makes us think.”

The engagement actions developed by GShow's profile on X covered several sections of the portal, disseminating not only the content produced specifically for the narrative developments of *Pantanal*, but also the insertion of the plot in other shows by TV Globo and the repercussion of the public on the social network. Thus, it is possible to observe that the tweets, in addition to directing the interacting viewer to the website, prolonged the conversation around the telenovela, since the contents were published throughout the week and not only while the plot was on the air.

Regarding the scenes referring to chapters 80 and 167, the profile anticipated the narrative events involving Velho do Rio. The tweets promoted the *Chapter Summary* section of the *Pantanal* website, and when clicking on the hyperlink, the interacting viewer was directed to a multimedia page. The content not only detailed the next developments of the character's arc, but also provided an excerpt of the sequence that would air later on TV. The publication also explored promotional photos and videos that helped the public understand the diegetic context in which the scene was inserted.

The engagement actions developed by the @tvglobo profile on X had the objective of stimulating appointment television and network conversation during the telenovela's broadcast. As we have discussed in other works, the persona adopted by the profile represents the avid viewer. Thus, the publications are first-person, with an informal tone, and incorporate memes and trends (Sigiliano; Borges, 2023). The contents involving Velho do Rio were mostly published as the scenes aired in linear programming. The posts presented some recurring elements, such as the use of plot indexing, the video with the sequence and a brief text signaling some specific part of the scene. By exploring textual limitation, the @tvglobo profile not only reinforced X's informational architecture, but also enhanced social TV dynamics. That is, by sharing content that did not require the interacting viewer a lot of time to associate what it was about, the tweet could be consumed simultaneously with the telenovela, without disrupting the TV experience.

Figure 6 – Recurring elements of the “Scene highlight” category²⁰



Source: The authors (2025).

The profile highlighted the events involving the sequence of the vegetation burning and the final scene of the character synchronously to the exhibitions of the respective chapters. However, despite stimulating backchannel,²¹ the tweets were not intended to help the public understand the fictional universe of *Pantanal*. The excerpts highlighted by the network's page on X did not necessarily highlight the key point in understanding the narrative arc of Velho do Rio and/or in the discussion about the environmental preservation proposed by the character. During the telenovela's broadcast, the @globoplay profile published only four tweets related to Velho do Rio. As discussed in other works, the profile is the one that invests most in participatory actions, which require some form of interaction on the part of followers (Borges et al., 2022). In this context, the profile is close to the engagement strategies of other streaming platforms, such as Netflix and Max. That is, the posts are guided by a lighthearted tone, reproducing memes and trends, and partly respond to the interactions of the public on X (Sigiliano; Borges, 2023). Thus, the actions focused on the scenes of chapters 80 and 167 explored the two modes of interaction proposed by Primo (2008). The reactive interaction is in operation in the tweet in which the page, when announcing the release of the *Chocolate com pimenta* (TV Globo, 2003) rerun on the platform during the display of the burning scene, asks the interacting viewers to like or retweet (RT) the publication. The interaction proposed by @globoplay was limited only to the process of stimulus and response, engendering the grammatization of the action, but did not foster any reflection

²⁰ Tweet translation: “Velho do Rio became a snake! #Pantanal”

²¹ Secondary channel for content sharing created during the exhibition period of a show.

on the environmental issue that permeated the entire sequence that was in the air. The other tweet published by the page is guided by mutual interaction, characterized by interdependent relationships and negotiation processes (Primo, 2008). Based on a question related to the future of Velho do Rio, the public was encouraged to produce content. However, it is important to emphasize that even providing the collaboration of the interacting viewers, the action did not continue the creative production of the audience, that is, the replays were not somehow incorporated into the strategies of the profile.

Based on the analysis of the engagement actions developed by the pages managed by Globo on X, we conclude that the tweets related to the narrative arc of Velho do Rio reinforce the developments involving the character. The publications systematize the chapters that had already been shown by TV Globo, stimulate appointment television and backchannel, indicate the events of the next chapters, and tease excerpts from scenes involving Velho do Rio. However, the strategies do not explore unpublished and/or important content for the understanding and deepening of the fictional universe of *Pantanal*. In this sense, no stimulus to reflect on the environmental guidelines that were part of the character's diegesis was observed.

Based on the analysis of the transmedia processes in social networks, it can be argued that Globo invests, mostly, on promotion strategies, seeking to stimulate interest in the telenovela through resources such as anticipation of the next chapters, recovery of scenes, interviews with actors, and behind-the-scenes content. Thus, reformatted and informative content predominate, while there is no notable presence of textual and playful extensions, which could, for example, offer new narrative developments. Again, it was possible to observe that important discussions addressed in the *Pantanal* storyline, such as the environmental issue, were reverberated by the public, but were not deepened by Globo's profiles.

4.5 Backchannel

For the backchannel analysis, we adopted the approach protocol developed within the scope of the Audiovisual Quality Observatory, which is structured based on three stages: 1) filtering parameters; 2) monitoring and extraction; and 3) coding and visualization (Borges *et al.*, 2022). The first step consisted of delimiting the backchannel filtering parameters that would be extracted from the X Streaming API. Thus, we delimited the keywords and indexes related to the title of the telenovela and the characters. In the second stage, we performed

the monitoring and extraction of the *Pantanal* backchannel. The collection covered the period from March 28, 2022 to October 7, 2022, totaling 351,000 tweets. To extract the tweets, we adopted the Python programming language, in addition to prompts from the Pandas, Tweepy, and NLTK packages and libraries. In the third and last stage, the data were identified, described, and categorized individually in the Atlas.ti software, selecting only the tweets directly related to the narrative arc of Velho do Rio. Due to the volume and complexity of the tweets, the encoding of the 58,510 thousand publications referring to the character was divided into two phases: macrocoding (central theme of the publication) and microcoding (specificities of the publications).

Figure 7 – In the coding of the Velho do Rio backchannel, 12 conversational contexts were identified in the macrocoding and 14 in the microcoding



Source: The authors (2025).

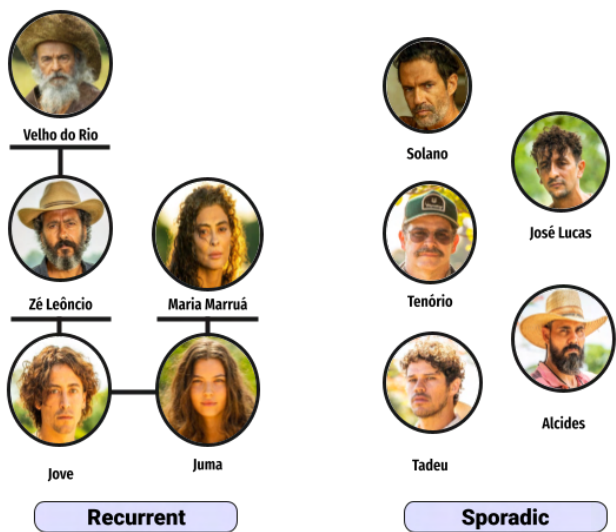
Before delving into the backchannel around the narrative arc of Velho do Rio, and specifically its correlation with environmental preservation, it is important to highlight the social network of characters who were associated with him on X. As explored in the plot, the tweets echoed two groups of characters: those who were

somehow linked to Velho do Rio, whether from kinship and/or friendship, and those who were, even indirectly and sporadically, in opposition to him.

Thus, the publications repeatedly reinforced the character’s fraternal and protective connection with Zé Leôncio, Maria Marruá (Juliana Paes), Jove (Jesuíta Barbosa), and Juma. The character’s relationship with the recurring core highlights the role that the Velho do Rio plays in other narrative arcs, that is, serving as support for the unfolding of plots and subplots, and also for the interpretative contexts associated with it by the public.

The second group of characters, associated by the interacting viewers on the backchannel, was referred to, even if punctually, as the “enemy” of Velho do Rio. In this sense, the tweets demanded some kind of attitude from the character to prevent the actions of Solano (Rafa Sieg), José Lucas (Irândhir Santos), Tenório (Murilo Benício), Alcides (Juliano Cazarrê), and Tadeu (José Loreto). The behavior of the opposing group was not restricted only to predatory activities linked to the preservation of nature, but also to moral conduct, such as betrayal, disrespect, intolerance, etc. In this way, Velho do Rio functioned as a kind of vigilante, preventing injustices from being committed.

Figure 8 – The tweets about the Velho do Rio referred to two groups of characters



Source: The authors (2025).

Throughout the *Pantanal* exhibition, six interpretative contexts linked to the character were observed. In other words, as they echoed the narrative arc of Velho do Rio, the interacting viewers associated the character's profile with the role of protector of nature, prophet, vigilante, mystic, elder, and counselor. The words reflect, in a way, the way the character was developed in the plot and the role he plays in other plots.

Figure 9 – Interpretative contexts associated with Velho do Rio



Source: The authors (2025).

The memes produced by the public were ironic about the fact that Velho do Rio was always in the role of advisor, acting as a moral guide for the characters. The publications also inserted Velho do Rio in current trends, such as the cover of Anitta's album *Girl From Rio*, in which the singer appears in front of a bus. The media repertoire of the public was observed in the memes that correlated the attitudes of Velho do Rio to those of other audiovisual characters, such as the Dungeon Master, from *Dungeons & Dragons* (1983-1985), and Master Miyagi, from *The Karate Kid* franchise.

During the exhibition of the sequence of the fires, the public reflected on the interrelationship of fiction with reality, not only highlighting the similarities between the scopes, but also the importance of a telenovela addressing this theme in the prime-time slot of TV Globo. The conversational contexts identified in the backchannel while the scene was in the air highlighted the relevance of the discussions brought by Velho do Rio and the

relevance of his speeches to the scenario of deforestation and fires in Brazil. From multimodal resources such as videos, promotional photos and GIFs, the interacting viewers also correlated excerpts of the plot with headlines about the environmental management of the government of former President Jair Bolsonaro. Marked by denialism, the management of the Ministry of the Environment, led by Ricardo Salles and, later, Joaquim Leite, ended beating records of forest destruction and a 59.9% increase in deforestation compared to the previous four years (Vick, 2022).

However, part of the interacting viewers pointed out that, despite the relevance of the discussion proposed by the plot, the network displayed, in the commercial breaks, advertising pieces that promoted the benefits of agribusiness – one of the main responsible actors for deforestation in the Pantanal. The interacting viewers pointed out the inconsistency of the channel that, while maintaining its social merchandising strategies, ran the commercial with the slogan “Agribusiness is pop, agribusiness is tech, agribusiness is everything!”²²

Figure 10 – The public responded to the sequence of the fire and criticized the airing of the advertisement about agribusiness²³



Source: X (2024).

22 Original text: “Agro é pop, agro é tech, agro é tudo!”

23 Tweets translations: “I’m shocked with these images of the wildfires in #Pantanal. Osmar Prado’s acting as Velho do Rio is also flawless. It is excellent that they approached these criminal fires in Mato Grosso do Sul”; “I love to remember Globo adding a wildfire in *Pantanal* and not being able to advocate against agribusiness, so the solution was to give Velho do Rio one line: wildfires are wrong. There it is, social merchandizing complete. So camp.”

The tweets shared by the public during the exhibition of the final scene, referring to chapter 167, reflected the need to preserve the environment and respect the ecosystem. The posts highlighted, in a nostalgic tone, the trajectory of Velho do Rio and praised the performance of actors Osmar Prado and Marcos Palmeira. In this way, the tweets reinforced the affective relationship of the interacting viewers with the telenovela. Excerpts from the dialogues were also transcribed for the social network, based on lines in which the public reaffirmed the importance of the ethical values raised by Velho do Rio.

Based on the analysis of the backchannel generated during the exhibition of the narrative arc of Velho do Rio in *Pantanal*, we conclude that, in addition to exploring and understanding the specifics of X's informational architecture, the interacting viewers broadened and deepened the discussions proposed by the story. Thus, the public used their media repertoire to reinforce the interpretative contexts associated with the character and establish a correlation between the themes related to the preservation of nature and the contemporary environmental scenario, reflecting not only the role of the telenovela in addressing important themes, but also the insertion of these debates in the commercial context of the Globo Group.

Although the public was active on X and demonstrated the ability to reflect critically on *Pantanal*'s agendas, Globo's transmedia strategies do not seem to be the catalyst for these discussions. Even though it has profiles on various social networks, the dialogue with/between platforms does not stand out, and the contents are often replicated, without the expansion of universes in the transmediation actions. The request for active participation of the public is also not an element of relevance, as there is no adoption of specific strategies that encourage more direct actions of the user interacting with the content. Transmediation actions, therefore, do not indicate clarity of the communicative proposal.

5 Final considerations

This research was developed to understand the narrative arc of Velho do Rio and the transmediation actions adopted by the Globo Group in the promotion of *Pantanal*, in order to inquire whether the discussion about the environment operated by the telenovela contributed to the scheduling and deepening of the theme by

the interacting viewers. We understand that the discussion about quality involves the entire communicative process of the telenovela, which includes the audiovisual work's creation, the circulation of content on the networks and the aesthetic experience of the audience. Within the scope of audiovisual creation, different quality parameters were identified that stimulate critical reflection by viewers. More than just retelling the story of the characters, the remake updates the story to portray contemporary social issues. It demands attention and denaturalizes the eyes of interacting viewers by presenting new points of view and intertextual relationships and using an unconventional audiovisual grammar for telenovelas.

In this sense, we observed that the rigor involved in the creation of the fictional universe does not unfold in the circulation processes. The contents are dispersed, reused in different social networks, and create a flow of interest that leads back to the storyline. The themes about the environment are addressed in a secondary way in the transmedia actions and do not take advantage of the potential of the narrative to expand them and generate reflection.

As for the aesthetic experience, the analysis of *Pantanal's* backchannel shows that, even without receiving more direct or intentional stimuli from the broadcaster's actions on social networks, the aesthetic quality of the telenovela stimulated part of the public to analyze the message and creatively produce from the narrative, both in the sense of discussing or corroborating what is said in the telenovela, as well as in that of opposing, bringing new reflections and intertextual connections. We observed that, in this sense, fiction has an important pedagogical action, since, through its aesthetic and narrative elements, it stimulates not only interest, but also reflection on the part of the public. Creative production on social networks points to an essential aspect in the process of developing the media literacy of the public, as it suggests that, by being attentive and commenting or unfolding the narrative in different ways, the public also reflects on what it is consuming. Thus, even if the broadcaster did not deepen the discussion on topics related to environmental preservation in the social networks, the public understood its relevance through the role of the character of Velho do Rio in the construction of the narrative.

Faced with the lack of a clear transmedia proposal, viewers acted as mediators of the reading of the telenovela by sharing their opinions on social networks and adding new layers of interpretation to the canonical text, and demonstrated, from the enjoyment and

engagement with the production, skills related to citizenship, which are fundamental for the development of media literacy.

Pantanal thus plays a pedagogical function that is central to Brazilian television, by promoting the critical reading of the public through its narrative and its open work format. By updating debates on the environmental issue and rescuing the affective memory of interacting viewers, the narrative arc of *Velho do Rio* materializes the role of quality serial fiction as a pedagogical vector. The character mobilized the public on social networks not only around the narrative developments, but also in expanding the discussions proposed by the story into broader spheres. It is concluded, therefore, that the pedagogical potential of fiction, although not fully exploited in transmedia actions, was appropriated by viewers through social network conversations, promoting the exercise of citizenship and media literacy.

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PART FOUR

Audiences, Reception and Citizen Engagement

***Pantanal*, over: social uses of the telenovela as a resource for the promotion of citizenship**

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1 Introduction

The telenovela *Pantanal* was first shown in 1990 by TV Manchete and re-aired by the network in 1991. In 2008, it was reproduced by SBT and, finally, in 2022, it got a remake by TV Globo, adapted by Bruno Luperi, grandson of author Benedito Ruy Barbosa. *Pantanal* became the first telenovela fully produced post-pandemic to return to the 9 p.m. slot as an “open work”; however, it was not restricted to prime time, as it was a topic on TV Globo’s morning schedule, with *Mais Você*, *Encontro*, and, on weekends, with *É de Casa*, becoming part of the broadcaster’s content distribution and self-reference agenda. The telenovela gained prominence with good ratings and engagement of viewers on social networks. In empirical observation,¹ the creation of memes, comments on each chapter, trending topics, and even the appropriation of companies that used characters as a hook for marketing actions were remarkable.

The intertwining between the social uses of the media and the construction of the meanings of communicative citizenship (Mata, 2006) is a focus of our attention, such as the inequality of access

1 Observation made and shared by the researchers from the experience of media consumption.

to education, when the character Juma Marruá (Alanis Guillen) is taught to read and write by Jove/Joventino (Jesuíta Barbosa); the LGBTQIAPN+ themes and women's rights, present in the remake, which moved the debate in communication vehicles and the audience on social networks through the trajectories of Zaquieu (Silvero Pereira) and Maria Bruaca (Isabel Teixeira), respectively. The adaptation of the *Pantanal* proved to be attentive not only to gender issues, but also to the environment and technologies, reviving the conflicts between the rural and the urban. Thus, the fictional text is linked to the real world, enforcing aspects of verisimilitude, even though it sometimes resorts to the supernatural and the playful.

We understand, therefore, that the spaces through which *Pantanal* circulated were vast and attested to the reach that the telenovela had. Even in the face of the wide offer of audiovisual content by streaming platforms, *Pantanal* found its way to become a new milestone in television drama, as a *media event* (Lopes; Abrão, 2023). According to Lopes (2014, p. 117),

[...] not all telenovelas reach this level, but in those that get there, we have some empirical indicators [...]: being the subject of the cover of prestigious magazines of great circulation, the subject of discussion in newspaper editorials, and the agenda of conversations in the most varied media and environments.²

Currently, these empirical indicators of success are related to the construction of the sense of popularity (Thompson, 2018), immersed in the convergence of media (Jenkins, 2009). Lopes and Munglioli (2013) propose that the volume of content generated by viewers and propagated on social networks, in addition to the contagion between the network's programs, serves as an indication to consider the telenovela as a *media phenomenon*.

Thus, we articulate the rituals of assistance to the ways of reading the telenovela *Pantanal* by a young audience, connected and attentive to social themes and the promotion of citizenship. The notion that the telenovela functions as a *communicative resource* (Lopes, 2009, 2014) for citizenship is associated with the cultural importance of the telenovela, insofar as it concerns themes that are relevant to a society at a given time. Therefore, the general objective of this work is to

2 Original text: "[...] não são todas as novelas que atingem esse patamar, mas nas que chegam lá, temos alguns indicadores empíricos [...]: ser tema de capa de revistas de prestígio de grande circulação, assunto de discussão em editoriais de jornais e pauta de conversas nos mais variados meios e ambientes."

investigate the ways of seeing and reading the telenovela *Pantanal* (2022) by young university students, based on themes that promote citizenship, such as gender relations, sustainability, tradition vs. modernity, and social and racial issues. Our specific objectives are: a) to observe the circulation of *Pantanal* in an online environment, to map themes of interest in the reception and the forms of appropriation of the plot; b) to identify the consumption practices and viewing rituals of *Pantanal* by young university students; c) to deepen the ways of reading of *Pantanal* viewers; d) to study how the telenovela becomes a *communicative resource* for the construction of citizenship in themes that are dear to young people.

As a theoretical basis, we start from the contributions of Martín-Barbero (2003) and his *Map of the Communicative Mediations of Culture*, mainly through the mediations of sociality and rituality, since both are on the axis of reception and refer to the social context of the subjects and the consumption of the telenovela. We also dialogue with García Canclini (1999) and Mata (2006) on the relations between media and citizenship, since, in globalized and multicultural societies in Latin America, the media offer tools to promote citizenship. Also supported by García Canclini's vision, we understand that the discussion of themes such as gender, racial, and social relations, that is, themes about representation and identity in a relative and diverse way, is one of the ways in which we defend the exercise of citizenship. According to the author, by consuming these themes through media texts such as the telenovela, the social meaning is also thought and re-elaborated, constituting a new way of being a citizen. Thus comes the concept central to this research: Cultural Citizenship, in which "being a citizen is not only about the rights recognized by state institutions for those born in a given territory, but also about the social and cultural practices that produce a sense of belonging."³ (García Canclini, 1999, p. 46).

From this perspective, we understand that the telenovela is a medium, a form of mediation for the promotion of citizenship. The notion that the telenovela functions as a communicative resource (Lopes, 2009, 2014) for citizenship is associated with the cultural importance of the telenovela, insofar as it concerns themes that are relevant to a society at a given time. In agreement with Lopes (2014, p. 120), we consider that the telenovela

3 Original text: "ser cidadão não tem a ver apenas com direitos reconhecidos pelos aparelhos estatais para os que nasceram em um território, mas também com práticas sociais e culturais que dão sentido de pertencimento."

[...]presents itself as a *communicative resource*, as a lever that, once activated, makes available to society themes, issues, and topics for public policies and inclusion policies. And this lever is activated daily, feeding the agenda of debates. We should not be misunderstood, as we do not affirm here that the telenovela will make public policies, but as a *communicative resource*, it is already there.⁴

Theoretically, we also approach studies on the reception of television fiction in transmedia times (Lopes; Castilho, 2018; Lopes; Lemos, 2019; Pereira, 2020) and gender studies (Connell, 2003; Scott, 1995). The construction of meanings by the reception/consumption of telenovelas, in relation to digital environments, is already an object of traditional investigation of our group. In previous biennia, the group dedicated itself to the study of fan activism, as a way to bring the logics of political participation closer to the cultural dynamics of *fandoms* (Ronsini et al., 2015); to the reflection on the instance of consumption of fashion products in the experience of the telenovela fan (Ronsini et al., 2017); to the articulations between the narrative of the telenovela and the negotiations of meanings of reception in an online environment in the construction of the world of motherhood (Ronsini et al., 2019); and to the impacts of the covid-19 pandemic on the production of television narratives and on the reconfiguration of viewing rituals in the daily lives of audiences (Depexe et al., 2021).

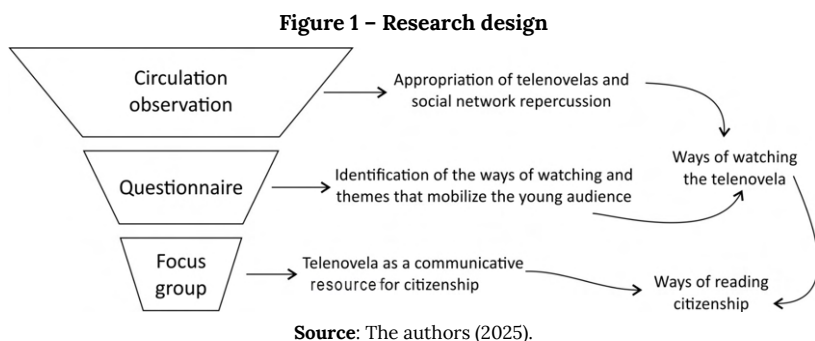
We understand that the continuity of the study on the viewing rituals of fictional narratives by young people is timely. In addition, we consider it pertinent to visualize, from sociality, how the telenovela *Pantanal* becomes a *communicative resource* for the construction of citizenship, especially with themes such as gender relations, sustainability, and racial issues, which appear as the most cited in the exploratory stage of this research and can offer clues to the success of the telenovela *Pantanal* with this audience.⁵

4 Original text: “[...] se apresenta como um recurso comunicativo, como uma alavanca que, uma vez acionada, coloca à disposição da sociedade temas, questões, assuntos para políticas públicas, para políticas de inclusão. E essa alavanca é acionada cotidianamente, alimentando a agenda de debates. Não devemos ser mal-entendidos, pois não afirmamos aqui que a telenovela vai fazer políticas públicas, mas como recurso comunicativo, ela já está lá.”

5 Several articles in the media signal *Pantanal* as a phenomenon of audience with young people. For example, in: Gaúcha ZH, O Globo, IG Gente, Folha de São Paulo, Portal PopLine, and Veja.

2 Methodological paths

We built a multimethodological strategy (Lopes; Borelli; Resende, 2002), focusing on the qualitative approach, structured in a three-phase path that gradually seeks to provide clues about the ways of seeing and reading the telenovela *Pantanal*, the first two being exploratory, as shown in Figure 1.



Initially, we observed the circulation of *Pantanal*, at the time of transmission, on social networks through organic navigation⁶ of the researchers themselves on Twitter⁷ (current X), Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, to list prominent themes of the telenovela, as well as to perceive the forms of appropriation of the plot. As a form of registration, during the last chapter, aired on October 7, 2022, we collected 56,553 tweets with the hashtag #*Pantanal*, supported by the NCapture extension of the NVivo software,⁸ which, after eliminating duplicates and retweets, resulted in 16,198 messages.

In the second phase, we sought to understand the viewing rituals of the telenovela and to verify which themes, perceived in the first phase of observation, mobilized the receivers. To this end, we conducted online questionnaires (Flick, 2009) via Google Forms, published on the researchers' personal profiles on digital social networks, using a non-probabilistic sample for convenience. The questionnaire was available between October 11 and 22, 2022,

6 Research strategy that aims to observe the contents that appear organically in the timeline, without performing searches and avoiding influencing the algorithm to display a given subject.

7 We chose to keep the reference to the name Twitter, since the data predates the acquisition of the social network by Elon Musk and the change of the name and domain to X, in July 2023.

8 Available at: <https://lumivero.com/products/nvivo/>. Accessed on: 18 jun. 2025.

and we obtained 60 responses. Although *Pantanal* was a success, we recognize that this survey being carried out after the end of its exhibition is a limitation, which may have contributed to a lower audience engagement. Most respondents live in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, with a predominance of subjects identified as female (78.3%), following a pattern already found in previous research of the group (Depexe *et al.*, 2021; Ronsini *et al.*, 2017, 2019), and prevalence of respondents who are undergraduate or graduate students, with ages ranging from 18 to 29.

Based on the exploratory stage, we defined research clippings as the themes of gender relations, sustainability, tradition *vs.* modernity and racial issues. These themes, it is worth noting, drew the audience's attention, as evidenced by the data collected on Twitter and by the open-ended responses in the questionnaire.⁹ These data were processed in the NVivo software for the generation of word clouds and in the Iramuteq¹⁰ and Gephi software¹¹ for the creation of similarity networks, thus allowing the researchers to compare the two exploratory phases of the research in order to reveal, or not, their congruence.

In the third phase, with a qualitative approach, we conducted a focus group¹² to deepen our understanding of the audience's ways of reading, as well as the telenovela's potential as a communicative resource for citizenship. We recognize as a limitation the temporal distance between the exhibition of *Pantanal* (in 2022) and the present time (2024), which may have affected the mobilization of participants and the memory of the reception about the narrative. Therefore, the choice of the focus group aimed at research with sound and image is due to the possibility of group interaction based on the testimony of a common event among the sample, such as listening to a radio program, watching a movie or, in the case of this research, watching a telenovela, even after its exhibition

9 The questions asked the participant to comment on themes and characters that drew attention in *Pantanal*, as well as whether the participant considered *Pantanal* different from other telenovelas.

10 Available at: <http://www.iramuteq.org/telechargement/download-and-installation>. Accessed on: 18 jun. 2025.

11 Available at: <https://gephi.org/>. Accessed on: 18 jun. 2025.

12 The focus group is characterized by the formation of a discussion group to dialogue about a specific theme, in this case, the ways of reading the themes: race relations, ecology and sustainability, sexuality and masculinities, domestic violence, and adult literacy present in *Pantanal*. Group interaction, through the focus group, allows the opinion of a participant to encourage others to position themselves, agreeing or disagreeing, which contributes to the mapping of consensus and opposing points, as well as to the scope of the discussion on the subject (Abreu; Baldanza; Gondim, 2009).

(Gomes, 2005). In order to carry out a network-based study, that is, with researchers residing in different locations in the country, we used the online focus group technique, which originates from in-person group interviews and is “enhanced by the diffusion of new technologies, which enabled their use in the virtual environment”¹³ (Abreu; Baldanza; Gondim, 2009, p. 8). The online focus group is a method of collecting information similar to the in-person focus group, but it does not require the physical presence of participants for interaction and, consequently, communication to occur among them. Of the caveats compared to the in-person technique, the vigilance regarding the role of the observer stands out, which changes in the absence of eye contact with the group members. We followed the recommendations of Abreu, Baldanza, and Gondim (2009) and recorded records of message exchanges and the dynamics of the discussion process during its execution.

The use of the focus group allowed the display of six pre-selected *Pantanal* scenes, accompanied by an interview guide mediated by a moderator/observer, in order to facilitate the debate and lead the group to discussions, favoring exchanges, discoveries and more relaxed participation of the members (Gomes, 2005) and allowing group interaction. This allowed the participants to discuss and express their opinions “bringing up a range of data (produced by the interaction)”¹⁴ (Abreu; Baldanza; Gondim, 2009, p. 8) that revealed fundamental points to answer the research questions (Gondim, 2002).

The six scenes chosen to foster dialogue with the themes: race relations, ecology and sustainability, sexuality and masculinities, domestic violence and adult literacy were chosen through the curatorship of the research team itself. We opted for scenes that, in addition to being representative of the treatment given by the telenovela to such themes, were able to foster discussions with the group. The participating university students, four women (Olívia, Carla, Regina, and Lívia) and one man (Rafael), were selected through the snowball strategy.¹⁵ Two were residents of Rio Grande do Sul and three of Paraná, and they were students at the Federal University of

13 Original text: “potencializada a partir da difusão das novas tecnologias, que viabilizaram seu uso no meio virtual.”

14 Original text: “trazendo à tona uma gama de dados (produzidos pela interação).”

15 The snowball sampling technique is a non-probabilistic method that uses reference networks to recruit participants for a survey, regardless of the sample number to be reached. We followed the steps pointed out by Bockorni and Gomes (2021): the initial intermediary, also called the seed, which was one of the researchers in the group, located/pointed out some people with the necessary profile for the research to be carried out, who indicated more people, reaching the final sample of 8 students. On the day of the focus group, only 5 of the 8 were present.

Santa Maria (UFSM) and the Federal University for Latin American Integration (UNILA), respectively. Two watched the telenovela by streaming, three on open television, and one remembered the rerun of *Pantanal* on SBT. The discussion session was held online, via Google Meet, on December 16, 2024, lasting one and a half hours, recorded and transcribed, with mediation and observation of members of the Obitel UFSM/UNILA group. The participants signed an Informed Consent Form, and their identities were preserved in the research, using fictitious names to mention them, in accordance with the guidelines of the General Law for the Protection of Personal Data (Brazil, 2018). We believe that this methodological strategy allows us to approach the information saturation point (Martino, 2018).

3 Ways of seeing and reading *Pantanal*

As mentioned above, we start from Martín-Barbero's contributions and his *Map of the Communicative Mediations of Culture* (2003), mainly through the mediations of sociality, worked on as the "everyday relationships on which the various forms of interaction of the subjects and the constitution of their identities are based"¹⁶ (Ronsini, 2011, p. 9), and rituality, understood as the "way of seeing and reading texts in direct relation to a textual matrix and in the unfolding of reading in other media and contexts"¹⁷ (Ronsini, 2011, p. 9). Empirically, rituality will be approached in two ways: through the ways of seeing (general consumption of fictional audiovisual media and the viewing rituals of *Pantanal* by young people) and the ways of reading (interpreting and reappropriating) social themes present in *Pantanal*, with a view to reflecting on the promotion of citizenship from the telenovela in a way intertwined with the daily life of these receptor subjects, that is, of sociality.

3.1 Ways of seeing *Pantanal*

The understanding of *Pantanal* as a contemporary media event is crossed by the culture of convergence (Jenkins, 2009) and, particularly, by the way interactions mediated by digital social networks contribute to the dynamics of popularity, elevating

¹⁶ Original text: "relações cotidianas nas quais se baseiam as diversas formas de interação dos sujeitos e a constituição de suas identidades."

¹⁷ Original text: "modo de ver e de ler os textos na relação direta com uma matriz textual e nos desdobramentos de leitura em outras mídias e contextos."

products to cultural phenomena (Thompson, 2018). Although the general trend is a drop in television audience, the average audience index of the telenovela (28.9 points) was the highest in 2022 and 2023, being lower than *Amor de Mãe* (30.9 points) in 2021 (Lopes; Abrão, 2023; Lopes; Moura, 2024). The habits of fictional watching inherited from the pandemic period, especially the search for streaming (Depexe *et al.*, 2021), may have impacted these indices, however the success of *Pantanal* signals the existence of an audience, coming from the platforms, that escapes these numbers.

The majority (83.6%) of the respondents to the exploratory questionnaire said they had watched the telenovela on broadcast television, and a portion did so through streaming (20%) and with the practice of “marathon” watching, common for the series (5.5%). Still 41.8% indicated that they use social networks or specific groups to comment on telenovelas, with the telenovela being the topic of conversation with family (74.5%) and friends (58.2%).¹⁸ The telenovela continues to mobilize watching in groups, and the repercussion of the chapters is indicative of sociality, either in person or virtually, as already pointed out in previous research (Depexe *et al.*, 2021; Lopes; Borelli; Resende, 2002; Pereira, 2020; Ronsini *et al.*, 2017, 2019).

Although the questionnaire data represent a small sample,¹⁹ we consider it valid to reaffirm that “the audiences followed the new paradigm marked by the coexistence of analog and digital culture, watching TV on multiple platforms, in a collectively socialized way”²⁰ (Lopes; Castilho, 2018, p. 50). In the focus group, held with university students, the streaming audience was also endorsed, as a way to complement the watching by broadcast TV or as the main means of watching the telenovela, since it allows the choice of time and how many chapters to watch sequentially. Likewise, the habit of keeping up with the telenovela through comments on Twitter and other social networks was mentioned, even serving as a stimulus to look for an unwatched chapter on the streaming platform.

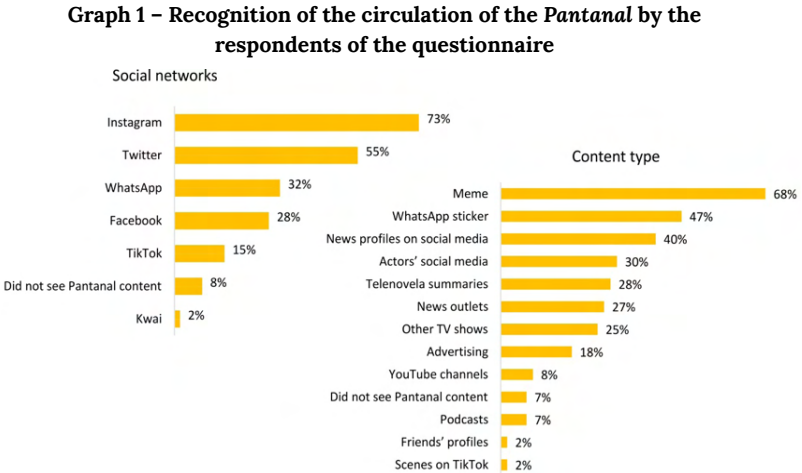
The understanding of *Pantanal* as a media event, as we discussed previously with Lopes (2014) and Lopes and Abrão (2023), is related to the broad repercussion of the telenovela and

18 Participants could check more than one option.

19 In qualitative research, the sample does not have the statistical sense, but the “cases must be able to represent the relevance of the phenomenon [...] in terms of participants’ experiences and involvement” (Flick, 2009, p. 47). Original text: “casos devem ser capazes de representar a relevância do fenômeno [...] em termos de experiências e envolvimento dos participantes.”

20 Original text: “as audiências acompanharam o novo paradigma marcado pela convivência da cultura analógica com a digital, assistindo à TV em múltiplas plataformas, de maneira coletivamente socializada.”

the active interactivity of its audience (Lopes; Moura, 2024). In the questionnaire, we verified the permeability of content about the telenovela recognized by the respondents on several social networks, the majority found on Instagram (73%). It is interesting to note that the *ways of watching* telenovelas are redesigned with the possibilities of creating and consuming content on social networks. If in the past the content on fictional narratives was disseminated in newspapers and magazines, based on the summary of the chapters, information, and speculations on the development of the plots and personal lives of the actors, there is currently a proliferation of comments, remixes, adaptations and montages, ranging from clips of scenes as a background to bring up the debate on social issues to the inventiveness of memes, stickers, intertwined with the narration of personal impressions at the time of viewing, which alludes to the “role of young people as social actors, capable of conducting, creating and modifying languages, forms and communication strategies”²¹ (Pereira, 2022, p. 21).



Source: The authors (2025).

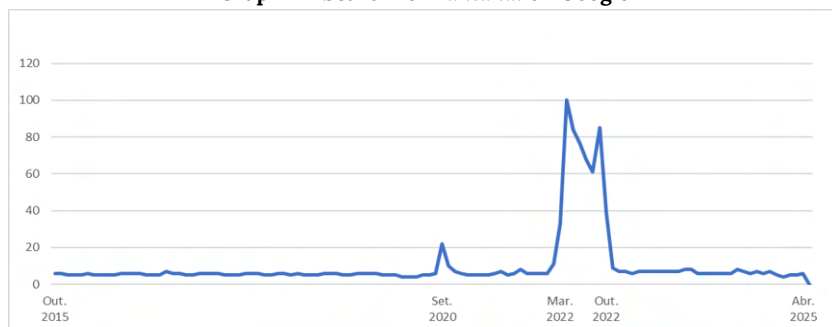
According to Thompson (2018), the transmission power is affected by the abundance of exposure channels, so that the more

21 Original text: “papel dos jovens como atores sociais, capazes de conduzir, criar e modificar linguagens, formas e estratégias comunicacionais.”

channels compete for attention, the more diluted the dissemination and audience of a content becomes. However, the formation of a *hit*, a cultural phenomenon, occurs through several sharing strategies, that is, many channels exposing the same theme. For the author, the perceived popularity of a product causes more people to seek to know it and consume it to participate in a popular conversation, such as “entering a crowded club simply because it is already crowded”²² (Thompson, 2018, p. 233). The data obtained through the questionnaire show that the notoriety of *Pantanal*, in part fostered by the connected and engaged audience itself, made the telenovela a distinct product.

However, the difficulty in measuring the scope of *Pantanal* circulation follows the context of concentration of power over the flow of information, the lack of transparency and the constant changes in the modes of operation of digital platforms (Poell; Nieborg; Van Dijck, 2020), as well as the absence of more detailed information about streaming audiences, which are disclosed in reports by the platforms themselves. In any case, we used the historical Google Trends graph as an indicator of interest in the telenovela, whose hype follows the period of the show’s broadcast on free-to-air TV, as shown in Graph 2.

Graph 2 – Search for *Pantanal* on Google



Source: Data extracted from Google Trends (2015-2025).

Another example that helps the configuration of *Pantanal* as a *media event* is in the flow of messages on Twitter, that is, in the *way of seeing*, sharing impressions in real time on the internet. According to a

22 Original text: “entrar em um clube lotado simplesmente por já estar lotado.”

report by Estadão (“Pantanal” [...], 2022), during the exhibition period, more than three million tweets were made about the telenovela, and, on the night of the last chapter (October 7, 2022), more than 277 thousand messages were recorded, mainly using the hashtags #*pantanal* and #*pantanar*. The latter, alluding to the accent of the characters, was also appropriated by the viewers in jargon and linguistic expressions, such as “ara”, “reiva”, and “ocê.” On that date, we observed that, of the 29 subjects listed by the trending topics, only 5 had no relation to the plot.

Figure 2 - Twitter similarity network: 16,198 tweets referring to the last chapter

Source: Research data (2025).

In Figure 3, we indicate the word clouds that demonstrate the terms in evidence about *Pantanal*. On the left are of all the tweets collected in the sample of the exhibition of the last chapter, and, on the right, the answers to the open questions about the telenovela from the questionnaire. We note that there is a certain correlation between the featured characters, who were at the forefront of the topics dear to the construction of citizenship, such as literacy, gender, and race issues, and understanding the preservation of nature.

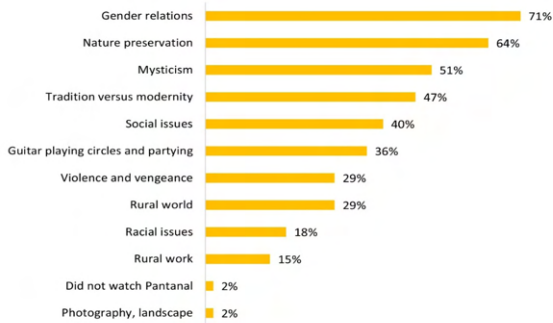
Figure 3 – Word clouds



Source: Research data (2025).

We noticed, in the sample of respondents to the questionnaire, coherence between what we observed in an organic way in circulation on social networks and the themes of interest to the reception, associated with political-social themes, such as gender issues, concern with nature, and the tension between tradition and modernity, in addition to mysticism (Graph 3).

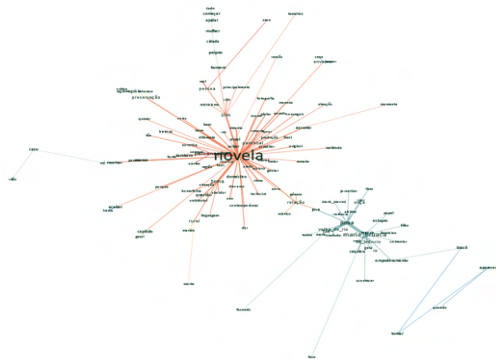
Graph 3 – Topics of interest in the exploratory questionnaire



Source: Research data (2025).

The *ways of viewing* the telenovela, with marks of media consumption on the platforms, in the case of this chapter, observed through Twitter and the questionnaire, are indicative of the *ways of reading Pantanal*. It seems to us representative and suggestive of the social role of the telenovela as a *communicative resource* (Lopes, 2009) to trigger the comparison via data visualization. In Figure 4, we illustrate the thematic cores highlighted in the open-ended responses of the questionnaire about *Pantanal*, which served to support the focus group discussion with university students, as we will detail below.

Figure 4 – Questionnaire similarity network



Source: Research data (2025).

Therefore, we seek to dialogue with the findings of the previous biennium, keeping the university audience on the horizon for the constructions of a sense of *cultural citizenship* (García Canclini, 1999), permeated by themes such as gender relations, sustainability, tradition vs. modernity as important in the public sphere and as possible promoters of citizenship. Finally, we perceive the telenovela *Pantanal* as opportune to guide interpretations of the countryside and the city, given the scarcity of representations of the rural in telenovelas in contexts that are not of the time, as verified by Pereira Filho (2020).

3.2 Ways of reading *Pantanal*

As a research problem, we were interested in understanding how the audience not only consumes television fiction – through the watching rituals – but also how it articulates the reading of rural and urban, gender, social, racial and sustainability relations in their daily life, from the telenovela.

Through the focus group, we emphasize the recipients' *ways of reading* and deepen the understanding of how the telenovela serves to talk about what is silenced and think about what is experienced, as states Martín-Barbero (2017, p. 20):

*[...] because it begins by telling what happened in the telenovela, but what happened in the narrated chapter very quickly blends with what happens to people in their own lives, in such an inextricable way that the telenovela ends up becoming the pretext for people to tell us about their lives.*²³

The discussion highlighted how the representation of characters and situations in the telenovela can influence public perception of contemporary social issues. The group also considered how telenovelas can serve as awareness and education tools on complex social topics.

Of the topics addressed in *Pantanal*, those that deal with masculinity, femininity, and gender relations were among those pointed out by the respondents as the ones that caught their attention the most. In line with these data, the character Maria (Isabel

²³ Original text: “[...] pues se empieza contando lo que pasó en la telenovela pero muy pronto lo que pasó en el capítulo narrado se mezcla con lo que le pasa a la gente en su vida, tan inextricablemente que la telenovela acaba siendo el pre-texto para que la gente nos cuente su vida.”

Teixeira) – a wife constantly mistreated by her husband, Tenório (Murilo Benício), who calls her Bruaca (similar to “hag”), marking the lack of appreciation and respect she has for her partner²⁴ – was the most commented among the informants during the exploratory research, being the character that most caught the attention of 64% of the respondents to the questionnaire.

When asked about the most commented subjects during the exhibition of *Pantanal*, more than 50% of the respondents to the questionnaire point to Maria’s trajectory of violence and overcoming, either because of the constant abuse she suffered from her husband, Tenório, who “caused a lot of discomfort in the rooms of Brazilian houses”²⁵ (Ana),²⁶ or because of her “turnaround and empowerment”²⁷ (Mariane) throughout the narrative. Research dedicated to the *Pantanal* and its circulation on social networks also point out that scenes involving the character Maria Bruaca emerge as the most prominent, mainly because they address social themes that permeate the public sphere in a more present way, such as the theme of violence against women (Scabin; Ferraraz; Nabeiro, 2023) and the “conflicts that reflect the violence of a patriarchal system on the character and that lead her to take rebellious and fighting attitudes towards this same system”²⁸ (Arab; Mungioli; Domingues, 2022, p. 5).

As Ronsini (2016, p. 48) points out, Brazilian telenovelas have been presented over the years as spaces for the discussion of social and identity themes through “gaps” found in the “dominant discourse,” and, among these themes, he mentions the multiple forms of sexuality, “respect for gender differences, the denunciation of domestic violence [...] among other issues involving women’s rights.”²⁹

To deepen the theme in the third phase of the research, we chose an excerpt from *Pantanal* to be displayed in the focus group that reflects this aspect pointed out by Ronsini. In the scene,³⁰ a family law specialist is called to José Leôncio’s farm to explain to Maria Bruaca that she suffered several acts of violence in her marriage to Tenório – not only physical, but also moral, psychological, sexual, and even patrimonial, the latter defined by

24 Definition of the character according to the profile on Globo’s website dedicated to *Pantanal* (2022).

25 Original text: “provocaram muito mal-estar nas salas das casas brasileiras.”

26 Fictitious names of the respondents to the questionnaires and the focus group are indicated.

27 Original text: “reviravolta e empoderamento.”

28 Original text: “conflitos que refletem a violência de um sistema patriarcal sobre a personagem e que a levam a tomar atitudes de rebeldia e de luta em relação a esse mesmo sistema.”

29 Original text: “respeito às diferenças de gênero, a denúncia da violência doméstica [...] entre outras questões que envolvem os direitos da mulher.”

30 Available at: <https://globoplay.globo.com/v/10890111/>. Accessed on: 17 jun. 2025.

the Maria da Penha Law n. 11,340 (Brazil, 2006) as any conduct that subtracts or destroys the victim's assets, work instruments, personal documents, or economic resources.

This example is in line with what is called the “pedagogical action” of the telenovela (Lopes, 2009), perceived among the recipients participating in the research, who highlight that domestic violence and the abuses suffered by Maria are “contemporary agendas”³¹ (Carla) and were approached in order to make “the viewer reflect”³² (Livia) and become aware of the different forms of violence, relationships and gender roles. Others highlight the important role of the telenovela in “dialoguing with the public”³³ (Rafael) from the presence of specialists addressing topics such as domestic violence, thus “enriching the narrative”³⁴ (Rafael), and using resources, such as the fact that Zé Leôncio “translates” the specialist’s speech “in a more accessible language, thus touching mainly people who have a great affinity for the affected character.”³⁵

There is also a consensus that the telenovela avoided caricatured scenes, humanizing the approach and promoting empathy for Maria’s struggle, who had a gradual understanding of her condition as a victim of the most diverse violence by her husband (Olivia). For the respondents, the fact that certain social agendas were present in a telenovela with *Pantanal*’s audience impact reflected in a “greater awareness of different forms of abuse”³⁶ (Olivia) by the audience.

Another social theme that generated discussions among our sample was the issue of hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 2003) vs. dissident masculinities (Mascarello, 2022), through the clashes between José Leôncio (Marcos Palmeira) and his son Jove (Jesuíta Barbosa) — defined by the broadcaster itself as “the antithesis of his farmhand father.” According to Connell (2003), masculinity, that is, this place in gender relations and in the practices that men and women occupy, is social and also bodily, performed through postures, physical skills, movements, and certain behaviors.

In the excerpt³⁷ chosen to be watched with the focus group sample, there is a fight between Jove and Alcides — the first, provoked by the second, acts differently from the conciliatory behavior he

31 Original text: “pautas contemporâneas.”

32 Original text: “o telespectador refletir.”

33 Original text: “dialogar com o público.”

34 Original text: “narrativa mais rica.”

35 Original text: “em uma linguagem mais acessível, tocando assim principalmente as pessoas que têm grande afinidade pela personagem afetada.”

36 Original text: “maior conscientização sobre diferentes formas de abuso.”

37 Available at: <https://globoplay.globo.com/v/10781152/>. Accessed on: 17 jun. 2025.

assumed throughout the plot, changing the way of dealing with conflicts and acting violently. The fact that Jove physically assaulted Alcides – who constantly used weapons as a form of defense of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2003) – is celebrated by his father, Leôncio, who is surprised by his son's attitude, but in a positive tone: "I didn't expect this one, son, you did good, not bad (Pantanal, 2022)."³⁸

The selection of this scene is justified by the confrontations between the ways of being, behaving, and experiencing masculinities between farmhands and Jove, mainly as a way of reflecting on physical violence being normalized within hegemonic male behavior. Among the informants, the discomfort caused by the character's attitude stands out: "although Jove tries to be different from his father, the final narrative reinforces the traditional masculinity pattern, by showing a fight that symbolized 'becoming a man' in the eyes of Zé Leôncio"³⁹ (Regina). Others criticized "the persistence of sexist clichés in rural plots,"⁴⁰ mainly because it could end up suggesting to the public that "violence can be the solution"⁴¹ to their problems (Rafael).

On the other hand, some other behaviors of Jove were raised throughout the narrative, who assumed for a long time the discourse of "deconstructed man," but never did any housework throughout the plot, naturally reproducing the behavior of his father, Zé Leôncio, who had a farm with numerous farmhands, but who took care of everything inside the house was his companion, Filó. This reinforces, even in a character who suffered criticism regarding his sexuality and non-hegemonic masculinity throughout the plot (Alves, 2023), that, in telenovelas, women are constantly separated from men by the "division of universes of domination"⁴² (Mattos, 2006, p. 11): men, the public domain; and women, the private domain of domestic care.

Alongside the themes of masculinities, violence against women and access to education, which are highlighted among our sample and also among *Pantanal* viewers, according to other research (Alves, 2023; Arab; Mungilioli; Domingues, 2022; Scabin; Ferraraz; Nabeiro, 2023), the theme of homophobia was also one of those that moved discussions and activated correspondences between the "*habitus* of the narrated world"⁴³ and the "*habitus* lived by the viewers"⁴⁴ (Lopes,

38 Original text: "por essa eu não esperava, filho, você mandou bem, nada mau."

39 Original text: "apesar de Jove tentar ser diferente do pai, a narrativa final reforça o padrão de masculinidade tradicional, ao mostrar uma briga que simbolizava 'virar homem' no olhar do Zé Leôncio"

40 Original text: "a persistência de clichês machistas nas tramas rurais."

41 Original text: "a violência pode ser a solução."

42 Original text: "divisão de universos de domínio."

43 Original text: "habitus do mundo narrado."

44 Original text: "habitus vivido pelos receptores."

2009, p. 33), mainly through various situations experienced by the character Zaquieu (Silvero Pereira). The character was defined by the network as “the *très chic* butler of Mariana (Selma Egri), [...] carved to hide the scars of a life suffered behind his irreverent way of being, which is so comic it even borders on a caricature”⁴⁵ (GShow, 2022, p. 1). Upon leaving Rio de Janeiro and living in the Pantanal with his boss, José Leônicio’s former mother-in-law, Zaquieu ends up suffering discrimination from farmhands for being homosexual.

In a scene debated in the group,⁴⁶ Zaquieu is leaving the Pantanal region and, through a letter left to his boss, vents about not bearing the jokes about his sexuality and warns that he is tired of the lack of dignity with which he was treated by some farmhands. In the excerpt in which the boss reads the letter to José Leônicio, he tries to minimize Zaquieu’s suffering by saying that his behavior is “weak,” and is warned by Irma (Camila Morgado) about homophobia being a crime, again a pedagogical movement on the part of the telenovela, when warning about Law no. 10,948/2001 (São Paulo, 2001), which guarantees the right to punishment for all discrimination practiced against homosexual, bisexual, or transsexual individuals. In these cases, we perceive the notion of communicative citizenship, which exceeds the legal dimension and alludes to practical awareness and the possibility of action (Mata, 2006).

Zaquieu’s trajectory, despite being widely commented on among the informants, caused divergent readings. Rafael highlights discomfort with the stereotypical way in which the character was represented:

[...] although he had beautiful speeches, the character ended up kissing the most homophobic supporting character of the telenovela, during the final chapter, OUT OF NOWHERE, just so that he had a happy ending. But the character himself performed the comic gay, where, although he had important lines about his sexual orientation, he always returned to “funny” scenes and mannerisms. My homophobic family members loved him, precisely because he played this role.⁴⁷

45 Original text: “o mordomo *très chic* de Mariana (Selma Egri), [...] talhado a esconder as cicatrizes de uma vida sofrida atrás do seu jeito irreverente de ser, que, de tão cômico, chega a beirar o caricato.”

46 Available at: <https://globoplay.globo.com/v/10727853/>. Accessed on: 18 jun. 2025.

47 Original text: “[...] embora teve discursos bonitos, o personagem acabou dando um beijo no personagem coadjuvante mais homofóbico da novela, durante o capítulo final, DO NADA, tudo para que tivesse um final feliz. Mas o próprio personagem performava o gay cômico, onde, embora tivesse falas importantes sobre sua orientação sexual, sempre retornava a cenas e trejeitos “engraçados”. Meus familiares homofóbicos adoravam ele, justamente por representar esse papel.”

The understanding of the viewer echoes the research of Silva (2015), who points out that the stereotype of the “fun homosexual,” common in the plots of Globo TV network mainly until the 2010s, no longer pleases an audience that is now more aware of the agendas on sexual diversity.

Other readings about the same character go in the direction of a “humanization” of Zaquieu, which contrasted with exaggerated stereotypes, such as those of TV programs like *Zorra Total*, for example. For Regina and Lívia, the telenovela has a “pedagogical role in normalizing plurality”⁴⁸ and reaching “audiences without direct contact with diversity,”⁴⁹ having an important role in the presentation of “new perspectives on different realities.”⁵⁰ The viewers cited other positive examples of previous plots, such as the “Ivana/Ivan narrative in *A Força do Querer* (TV Globo, 2017), which led mothers of a Facebook group to reflect on ‘what if it was my son?’”⁵¹ (Rafael).

Carla, also a participant in the focus group, echoes and highlights that the “subtle representation contributes to deconstructing stereotypes, showing that LGBT people have different personalities.”⁵² According to her, there have been many advances in LGBTQIAPN+ representations in recent years, as Silva (2015) also points out about a current trend of telenovelas to represent gender dissidence in complex and contradictory ways, thus building multiple meanings on the theme, as well as several possible readings by the reception, as observed in this field research.

Another social theme brought to *Pantanal* were racial issues: the network made some changes in the adaptation of the script of the telenovela and in the choice of casting and brought black actors to some character groups that did not exist in the previous version. An example is the character Zuleica (Aline Borges) and her three extramarital children with Tenório. In a scene where Zuleica confronts Tenório about the difference in treatment between his three children with him and the daughter of his marriage with Maria, she suggests that this difference would have to do with the fact that his children are black (like Zuleica), while Guta is white.⁵³

48 Original text: “papel pedagógico em normalizar a pluralidade.”

49 Original text: “públicos sem contato direto com a diversidade.”

50 Original text: “novos olhares sobre realidades distintas.”

51 Original text: “narrativa de Ivana/Ivan em *A Força do Querer*, que levou mães de um grupo de Facebook a refletirem sobre ‘e se fosse o meu filho?’”

52 Original text: “representatividade sutil contribui para desconstruir estereótipos, mostrando que pessoas LGBT têm diversas personalidades.”

53 Available at: <https://globoplay.globo.com/v/10875906/>. Accessed on: 17 jun. 2025.

Based on this, during the focus group, the research participants were instigated to debate the following question: “How do you think telenovelas can address topics such as racism and racial inequality in order to promote changes in society?”. Two informants pointed out how this difference was clear from the construction of the narrative, from the level of life that both Tenório’s families led. For Carla, the construction of the character as antagonist of the plot, and the daily exposure of his reprehensible attitudes, is fundamental to the public’s recognition of it.

I believe that showing through him contributes to people noticing attitudes that are often in our daily lives that are wrong that deserve a new reflection like this for you to rethink, right? Especially in the case of people who cultivate these prejudices, whether on a larger or smaller scale.⁵⁴

Tenório’s second family being black is one of the differences between the first version of *Pantanal* and the new version, adding a layer of complexity to the plot. This difference and the approach to racism (even if worked in a subtle way), showing how it can work within families, are mentioned by Rafael, who recalls a telenovela in which a white man rejects the pregnancy of his black wife and even attacks her, until the birth of the child, with white features. The husband’s racism, then, is simply forgotten, and the couple gets back together. The telenovela mentioned is *Por Amor* (written by Manoel Carlos), which originally aired between 1997 and 1998, and this plot exposes the refusal and historical inability of Brazilian television to deal with racism and the ethnic composition of the population.

Although the black population is still very underrepresented in the national television media, the growth of this representation has been gradual, especially since the mid-1990s (Araújo, 2004). In recent years, with the increase in discussion around racial issues in Brazilian society and the consequent pressure for the inclusion of stories that portray it better, a significant increase in black characters and plots involving the experience of black people in Brazil can be observed. Thus, the inclusion of the racial factor in the plot of *Zuleica* and Tenório’s family already presents this advance

54 Original text: “Acredito que mostrar através dele contribui para que as pessoas reparem atitudes que muitas vezes estão no nosso dia a dia que estão equivocadas que merecem uma nova reflexão assim para você repensar, né? Principalmente no caso de pessoas que cultivam esses preconceitos, sejam em maior ou menor escala.”

in terms of representation and, according to the informants, the approach to the racial issue presented is positive and has merits in treating intrafamily racism adequately.

Cultural proximity as a factor that captivates the audience is highlighted by Straubahaar et al. (2022) to explain why the telenovela remains, even in times of streaming, with a loyal Latin American audience. We interpret that *Pantanal* synthesizes “the modern Brazilian tradition,”⁵⁵ to use, with certain freedom, the expression of Renato Ortiz (2015). In a period of environmental and social catastrophes in the country, *Pantanal* resumes the coziness and flavors of the rural, the intact nature and threat of agribusiness, gender conservatism in rural areas, etc. Our problem turns to the asymmetry in which these differences manifest themselves. The telenovela *Pantanal* explains Brazilian cultural diversity, which does not synthesize it (Ortiz, 2015), but separates diversity, combining two realities that can explain the audience’s interest: conflict and reconciliation between rural and urban, between nature and technologies.

One of these conflicting realities occurs in the field of education, one of the principles of citizen construction. The telenovela exposes not only Juma’s illiteracy, but also the absence of a rural school capable of serving children and bringing education to young people and adults. Tadeu (José Loreto), among other characters, often verbalized his lack of study and compared his situation as inferior to Jove or Guta, coming from the city and having attended higher education. At the other end, the telenovela endorsed reading, as the company of books and comments on literary works is part of some scenes in the urban core.

In the perspective of the focus group participants Carla and Regina, the scenes⁵⁶ in which Jove teaches Juma to read are made with delicacy and had positive repercussions on social networks. Both emphasize that Juma learning to read and write helped in her socialization with the other characters on the farm, making the character’s sense of inclusion: to be seen as a human being and not an “animal,” as the narrative emphasized. Rafael recalled other telenovelas such as *O Bem-Amado* (TV Globo, 1973), *O Salvador da Pátria* (TV Globo, 1989), and *Cabocla* (TV Globo, 2004), in which the rural and urban conflict emerges to the differences of class and conditions of attending school, being based on the oldest plots in

⁵⁵ Original text: “a moderna tradição brasileira.”

⁵⁶ Available at: <https://globoplay.globo.com/v/10576557/>. Accessed on: 17 jun. 2025.

which the importance of literacy was around being able to vote or be elected, constituting another relevant element of citizenship. On Twitter, we noticed that the implementation of a school, in the final chapters, was celebrated by the public, expressing support for Juma's desire to study.

Unlike other themes, especially those related to representativeness, in which informants consider relatively optimistically the possibilities of the media to promote cultural changes, when questioning the prospect of a union between agribusiness and sustainability, the participants were very skeptical.⁵⁷ The informants highlighted a clear limit to the possibilities of awareness and promotion of change that the telenovela could have in this case, only at the individual level, emphasizing the difficulty of connecting the public to the resolution of structural problems, such as fires. On Twitter, we found criticism about the telenovela showing sustainable alternatives to agribusiness that, in turn, contradicted the commercial appeal of the advertisements aired in commercial breaks.

The perception of the informants is corroborated by indicators that demonstrate the impact on the natural landscape of the Pantanal biome. Since the first exhibition of the telenovela, in 1980, the biome has been the most affected by deforestation (Filippe, 2022). An analysis produced by the MapBiomias Brazil platform (2020)⁵⁸ recorded an impact of 12% on the loss of native vegetation cover in the last three decades. Pantanal also appears as the biome that burned the most in 36 years in Brazil, with Mato Grosso do Sul being one of the states with the highest occurrence of fire. Based on the results provided by the mapping, as a way to reduce the negative impacts on the region and aiming at greater ecological preservation of the space, Globo launched the *Green Productions Guide*,⁵⁹ a document with actions to be adopted by production teams.

In another aspect, when discussing the theme of agribusiness vs. environmentalism in the plot, there are also some considerations to be noticed. The Mato Grosso do Sul region has a direct participation of agribusiness, being one of the main factors of the economic development of the region. Becker and Machado (2008, p. 11) note that, in relation to the first version of the telenovela, there was already an ecological approach, but restricted to the background:

57 Available at: <https://globoplay.globo.com/v/10689482/>. Accessed on: 17 jun. 2025.

58 Available at: <https://brasil.mapbiomas.org/>. Accessed on: 18 jun. 2025.

59 Available at: <https://somos.globo.com/novidades/noticia/globo-lanca-guia-de-producoes-verdes.ghtml>. Accessed on: 18 jun. 2025.

“The fauna and flora are there, but the plot is restricted to human problems, as in any other telenovela.”⁶⁰ This more superficial approach is maintained in the most recent version; according to Valverde *et al.* (2023, p. 330), “it is observed that the conservationist discourse is carefully inserted in the chapters, but it does not thoroughly discuss socio-environmental problems.”⁶¹

For Regina, despite bringing criticism of the agribusiness model, the sustainability message of the plot does not reach those who have the power to make decisions, and may, at most, increase the pressure for greater supervision and stricter legislation.

I thought they were even crossing the line [...] to say that it was wrong. But they showed those huge herds like that, that extensive livestock that is very harmful, we know. But it will not reach who does, who actually performs these actions.⁶²

However, the telenovela does not totally abandon the cause and demonstrates some effort in addressing the importance of topics such as the preservation of natural areas, the balance of the ecosystem and the quality of life in natural environments. This duality is evidenced in the course of the telenovela, represented through dialogues between the characters, almost always in relation to the more environmentalist position of Jove, Juma, and Guta, in contrast to the other characters. The figure of Velho do Rio also represents mysticism, being an immutable entity of the region; he occupies the role of guardian of the Pantanal and serves as a comparative vision between the past and present of the Pantanal region, witnessing the changes that have occurred in the scenery of the region over the years.

The critical look present in the exhibition of scenes that emerge from the current context experienced by the Pantanal biome is seen in several discourses between the characters. Speeches that show sustainable business possibilities can also be observed. A fact given

60 Original text: “A fauna e a flora estão lá, mas a trama se restringe mesmo aos problemas humanos, como em qualquer outra telenovela.”

61 Original text: “observa-se que o discurso conservacionista é cuidadosamente inserido nos capítulos, mas não discute a fundo os problemas socioambientais.”

62 Original text: “Eu achava que eles estavam até passando assim do limite [...] de falar que tava errado. Mas eles mostravam aqueles rebanhos enormes assim, aquela pecuária extensiva que é muito prejudicial a gente sabe. Mas não vai chegar em quem faz em quem executa mesmo essas ações.”

by the presence of the human who knows and lives in the region, the intrinsic understanding between the elements and the recognition of their importance [...]
(Valverde *et al.*, 2023, p. 331).⁶³

However, for our informants, despite the effort made, there is a lack of depth in these debates focused on ecology.

4 Final considerations

The present investigation sought to offer evidence on the new ways of seeing *Pantanal* and to what extent ways of reading are associated with youth-related concerns, at a time when audiovisual media, including telenovelas, instigate discussions on political and social issues.

From the investigation focused on the ways of seeing and reading *Pantanal* by an audience of university students, we found questioning subjects about the gender relations presented in the telenovela – especially from the concepts of traditional and dissident masculinities and femininities, the defense of homoaffectivity, the criticism of clichés in the ways of (under)representing non-hegemonic identities, added to violence against women, access to education and sustainability. Agendas that are present in the different screens and conversation circles among young university students and which, we believe, may have been key to understanding the particular interest of this public in the telenovela *Pantanal*.

Understanding the contemporary scenario of media consumption immersed in the logic of platforms and media convergence requires care for epistemological surveillance, both on the opacity of the functioning of algorithms and the data processing work required by qualitative research methods, aided by software. Although the question about the sociality and rituality of telenovela viewing has already been based on our research horizon since previous biennia (Depexe *et al.*, 2021; Ronsini *et al.*, 2017, 2019), *Pantanal* seems to be a special case, in which the meanings of viewing shared by social networks boosted audience engagement, especially as the telenovela was configured as a media event capable of establishing dialogue with various aspects of citizenship.

63 Original text: “O olhar crítico presente na exibição de cenas que emergem do contexto atual vivido pelo bioma pantaneiro é visto em diversos discursos entre os personagens. Também podem ser observadas falas que evidenciam possibilidades sustentáveis de negócios em meio ao local. Fato dado pela presença do humano que conhece e vive na região, da compreensão intrínseca entre os elementos e o reconhecimento da sua importância.”

It seems reasonable to borrow Thompson's (2018) statements about the emergence of *hits*, in which a successful media product is usually in the articulation between novelty and what is familiar. *Pantanal*, as we indicated at the beginning of this chapter, was already a plot known to the public and gains airs of novelty with its remake. The fact that the new version was written by Benedito Ruy Barbosa's grandson could even add a layer of meaning between maintaining and respecting the originality of the text and its adaptations for the present time, in a context that balances innovation with the family bond. In the comments on Twitter, which we collected in the last chapter, there are several compliments to Bruno Luperi, in particular, for having kept character lines and paid homage to his grandfather at the end of the chapter. On the other hand, familiarity aligns with the recognition of important themes and issues that were addressed in a more appropriate and contemporary manner, as acknowledged by the audience, such as gender-based violence, racism, and environmental concerns, although the latter was criticized by viewers and questioned in light of Globo's commercial ties with its sponsors. In summary, *Pantanal* articulated the mediations of sociality and rituality, being a communicative resource for the exercise of cultural (García Canclini, 1999) and communicative (Mata, 2006) citizenship.

It should be noted that the surveyed viewers mobilized and debated mainly social themes related to gender, sexuality, race, and agendas that relate to the search for citizenship, dialoguing with the trend pointed out by Almeida (2001), that the greater the cultural capital, the more critical and socially conscious the viewer is. Based on the understanding that the telenovela offers tools to promote citizenship, we agree that, by consuming and debating social issues through media texts such as *Pantanal*, social meaning is also thought and re-elaborated, constituting a new way of being a citizen.

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Between fiction and public debate: citizenship in *Pantanal*

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1 Introduction

Since 2010, the research carried out by the Obitel team from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) has been dedicated to the analysis of the convergence processes in the production, circulation, and reception of prime-time telenovelas. For this, theoretical-methodological approaches were developed that allowed to compare and critically monitor the relationship between production and audience on multiple platforms. In the 2020-2021 biennium (Sifuentes *et al.*, 2021), in the midst of the pandemic, we analyzed how viewers interpreted central themes of Brazilian society – gender and sexuality, race and social inequality – from the reception of the telenovela *Laços de Família* (TV Globo, 2001), originally exhibited as an “8 p.m. telenovela” and, later, in *Vale a Pena Ver de Novo* (a time slot dedicated to telenovela reruns), twenty years after its premiere.

In this context, research on *Pantanal* (2022) expands and deepens reflections on the relationship between television fiction and citizenship, with an emphasis on reception – our main interest. Although aspects of citizenship have been identified in previous studies (Jacks *et al.*, 2009, 2019; Sifuentes *et al.*, 2021), both in the narratives investigated and in the repercussion of *on* and *offline* telenovelas, they have never been the central axis of research. For more than a decade, our focus has been to understand how changes in production and circulation processes impact audience reception, with special attention to TV Globo productions.

The remake of *Pantanal* (2022) exemplifies a narrative overflow, which expanded to other platforms of the network and to digital social media (Recuero, 2019), becoming a media event (Couldry; Hepp, 2010) of great impact on the critics and audience. Thus, this research directly connects with the trajectory and identity of the investigations developed by the group in the Obitel Brasil network. Over the years, we have followed the changes in reception practices in the face of multi-platform audiovisual consumption, and the uniqueness of this research study lies in the analysis of the public debate generated by the themes of citizenship present in the story.

The involvement of the public with the telenovela is evident in reports such as the one described in an article published in the newspaper *O Globo*, in May 2022:

At 9:30 p.m., the cell phone of Glória Carvalho, 26, a resident of Teresina, Piauí, begins to beep. It is the jaguar passing in the WhatsApp group “*Pantanal* Stickers,” alerting that it is time for the telenovela. The same happens on the device of 80 other people who are in the group chat, including Geovana Gomes, 19, from Sapiiranga, in Rio Grande do Sul. Separated by 3,700 kilometers, the two young women find themselves obsessed with the remake of Benedito Ruy Barbosa’s telenovela, originally exhibited by TV Manchete in 1990¹ (Duvanel, 2022).

¹ Original text: “Às 21h30, o celular de Glória Carvalho, de 26 anos, moradora de Teresina, no Piauí, começa a apitar. É a onça passando no grupo de WhatsApp “Figurinhas *Pantanal*”, avisando que chegou a hora da novela. O mesmo acontece no aparelho de outras 80 pessoas que estão no chat, entre elas Geovana Gomes, 19 anos, de Sapiiranga, no Rio Grande do Sul. Separadas por 3,7 mil quilômetros, as duas jovens se encontram na obsessão pelo remake da novela de Benedito Ruy Barbosa, originalmente exibida na TV Manchete em 1990.”

The adaptation, signed by Bruno Luperi and broadcast by TV Globo, recovered a classic of Brazilian television drama in a context of post-pandemic and political polarization in the country. For the viewers, the telenovela rescued the image of rural and deep Brazil, functioning, according to an interviewee of our study, as a narrative capable of dialoguing with an audience that was not interested in certain topics, such as gender.

In an interview with Rosane Svartman (2023), Eneida Nogueira, director of research at TV Globo, reinforces that the telenovelas of the 9 p.m. slot have, for at least 20 years, had the vocation of discussing major themes of society. This perception corroborates the notion of telenovela as a communicative resource (Lopes, 2009), according to which a narrative incorporates pedagogical actions, implicit or deliberate, institutionalizing itself as part of the country's communication and culture policies. Also in the interview, Nogueira points out that prime-time telenovelas offer a moment of reflection and identification for the female audience: "It is the first moment when she sits down and can afford to think [about] something for herself. Learn, reflect, live something"² (Svartman, 2023, p. 106).

Journalist and TV critic Maurício Stycer (2022) points out that *Pantanal* questions male chauvinism, homophobia and the environmental impacts of rampant land exploitation. However, according to him, these themes rarely gain depth in the story, as Luperi (author of the remake) opts for a more subtle approach: "He gives lessons without having to speak or 'editorialize' the narrative. Based on repetition rather than emphasis, the viewer would be able to grasp the subtext of criticism"³ (Stycer, 2022). In this context, the main motivation of this study is to investigate whether this subtext reverberated in reception and, more specifically, how citizenship agendas emerged in public interpretation.

In addition, *Pantanal* (2022) is part of what Ribeiro et al. (2021) call the "logic of revival," which includes remakes, reruns, reboots, and prequels — a trend that has shaped the audiovisual landscape for at least two decades. For the authors, this wave of nostalgia goes beyond a simple trend, as it reflects contemporary ways of dealing with time, reinterpreting the past and projecting the future: "it relates to a way of living, imagining, exploring, and (re)inventing the past, present and future"⁴ (Ribeiro et al., 2021, p. 170).

2 Original text: "é o primeiro momento em que ela se senta e pode se dar ao luxo de pensar [em] alguma coisa para ela mesma. Aprender, refletir, viver alguma coisa."

3 Original text: "Ele dá lições sem precisar falar ou 'editorializar' a narrativa. Com base na repetição, e não na ênfase, o espectador seria capaz de apreender o subtexto da crítica."

4 Original text: "relaciona-se com uma forma de viver, imaginar, explorar e (re)inventar o passado, o presente e o futuro."

Our focus, therefore, is on mapping how the great issues of Brazilian society were perceived by the public through the plot of *Pantanal*. We seek to understand what reflections were provoked by the themes addressed and how these perceptions are expressed in relation to the “social markers of difference” (Botelho; Schwarcz, 2011). This category includes aspects such as inequality, diversity, racism, gender, and aging, which structure contemporary debates on citizenship. As will be detailed in the methodological section, the study involved the mapping of citizenship themes in the plot, followed by the analysis of reception on social networks and interviews conducted specifically for this investigation. Before presenting these procedures and the main results, it is necessary to reflect on the concept of citizenship and its relationship with Brazilian television drama.

2 Telenovela and citizenship: television narratives as a space for reflection and social debate

Citizenship is in a constant process of reconstruction. The history of citizenship is also often confused with the history of human rights because it is linked to social and class struggles in the search for equal rights. Peruzzo (2009, p. 34) points out that the qualitative leaps in this story only occur through collective pressure:

As can be seen, the status of citizenship changes, as it is built throughout history. Citizenship is historical: it advances in its quality, since rights are improved or expanded. The understanding of what constitutes a right — of an individual, of human groups, of animals, among others — varies over time and space. It tends to advance in quality, depending on the degree of organization and the mobilizing force of civil society to push for its legitimation and achievement through the power of the State, the Legislative Branch, and capital.⁵

5 Original text: “Como se pode observar, o status da cidadania se modifica, pois ela é construída ao longo da história. A cidadania é histórica: avança em sua qualidade, uma vez que os direitos se aperfeiçoam ou são ampliados. A percepção do que vem a ser um direito – da pessoa, de grupos humanos, dos animais, entre outros –, varia no tempo e no espaço. Tende a avançar em qualidade, dependendo do grau de organização e da força mobilizadora da sociedade civil para forçar sua legitimação e consecução por meio do poder do Estado, do Poder Legislativo e do capital.”

In line with this perspective, Carvalho (2011) understands that, concomitantly with the appreciation of rights, the belief that the way to achieve them is through public mobilization must be developed. Thus, the author points to spaces of sociability as continuous passages from the condition of individual to that of citizen, insofar as issues from the private sphere – which, due to their relevance and frequency, come to be debated in the public sphere – can influence the political system to turn them into matters of general interest and, ultimately, into codified rights. Thus, “recognizing the centrality that the debate on rights has assumed helps to understand the current omnipresence of the word citizenship”⁶ (Carvalho, 2011, p. 105).

Hannah Arendt (2016) deepens the concept of citizenship linked to the idea of active participation in society, public and political life, since it goes beyond legal rights and involves the ability to position oneself in the public space, revealing commitment to the community and responsibility. However, the author also recalls that mass society has lost its power to gather, separate, and relate people. Therefore, for the existence of a common world, there cannot be only one perspective, but human plurality must be taken into account, rejecting the artificial conformism of mass society:

[...] reality is not guaranteed primarily by the “common nature” of all the men who constitute it, but rather by the fact that, despite differences in position and the resulting variety of perspectives, everyone is always interested in the same object⁷ (Arendt, 2016, p. 71).

Canclini (1995) presents us with the concept of “cultural citizenship” by arguing that being a citizen is not only related to the rights arising from the state apparatuses of a given territory, but also to social and cultural practices that give a sense of belonging to those who share them. For the author, these practices permeate the logics of consumption, especially audiovisual electronic media, which began to establish other ways of getting information, understanding the communities to which one belongs, and, consequently, other ways of conceiving and exercising rights (Canclini, 1995). Thus, “disillusioned with state, party, and union bureaucracies, the public

6 Original text: “reconhecer a centralidade que assumiu o debate sobre direitos ajuda a entender a atual onipresença da palavra cidadania.”

7 Original text: “a realidade não é garantida primordialmente pela “natureza comum” de todos os homens que o constituem, mas antes pelo fato de que, a despeito das diferenças de posição e da resultante variedade de perspectivas, todos estão sempre interessados no mesmo objeto.”

resorts to radio and television to achieve what citizen institutions do not provide: services, justice, reparations, or simple attention”⁸ (Canclini, 1995, p. 26).

In this sense, we believe that the telenovela – as a communicative resource for citizenship (Lopes, 2009) – can be an important tool for public mobilization, information about rights and space for reflection on the most diverse themes of sociability, citizenship, and civil rights. Through its narratives, the telenovela becomes a space for collective reflection, expanding access to themes that directly impact society and encouraging the participation of viewers in the construction of public debate. Although this television product is aimed at entertainment, due to the scope of its audience, it can also provoke discussions in the social, political and cultural spheres by stimulating reflection and discussion on topics such as social inequality, racism, gender, and human rights. Thus, it is able to promote political engagement by encouraging people’s effective participation in social demands, as well as presenting models of behavior through characters who fight for justice, equality, and social change. Thus, the Brazilian telenovela can be understood as

[...] a unique example of how a television media system can be one of the factors contributing to the emergence of a peculiar public space that, in current years, presents itself as a new form of construction of citizenship⁹ (Lopes, 2009, p. 32).

Anchoring our reflections in *Pantanal*, we have characters who, through their trajectories and experiences, reflect issues of society, such as gender and power relations in social and family structures, which are directly linked to citizenship and individual rights. The character Bruaca (Isabel Teixeira), for example, emphasizes the representation of the female struggle in a patriarchal context, competing symbolically with prejudices based on the legacies of local culture, tradition, and challenges of cultural diversity, ultimately serving as an example of resilience in the search for change and in the very action of breaking bonds and seeking justice and equality. Zaqueiu (Silvero Pereira), in turn, represents social tensions in his

8 Original text: “desiludido com as burocracias estatais, partidárias e sindicais, o público recorre à rádio e à televisão para conseguir o que as instituições cidadãs não fornecem: serviços, justiça, reparações ou simples atenção.”

9 Original text: “um exemplo único de como um sistema de mídia televisiva pode ser um dos fatores a contribuir para a emergência de um espaço público peculiar que, nos anos atuais, se apresenta como uma nova forma de construção de cidadania.”

relations of interaction and conflict with other characters, bringing to light the importance of respect for sexual diversity within family and society.

Thus, we note that the theme of citizenship approached on a telenovela can, at the same time, be intransitive – when it capitalizes on issues inherent to everyday life, reducing or remedying the processes of exclusion, such as environmental problems, which did not have great depth in the plot –, and transitive – when it promotes debates in networks with the possibility of including or modifying previously defined scripts, sometimes loaded with preconceptions and prejudices already introjected into society, such as gender issues. It is an interesting debate regarding citizenship, as it is consistent with a more humanizing communication process when seeking to understand the communicating meanings of the message in a more horizontal way.

As Alves (2021) states, linking citizenship to the exercise of social communication is one of the few ways to lead the signs that signify it and move it to the condition of a culture of the common good in increasingly plural and internationalized societies. It is therefore urgent “to scrutinize the communicational movements and the meanings carried by them to find clarity and adherence to the humanization project, the only gateway to the various forms of citizenship”¹⁰ (Alves, 2021, p. 43).

In this context, Grimson (2007) recalls that “contact” is a situation of interaction, since there is circulation of signifiers, either in person or virtually. However, this alone does not guarantee that there is a full understanding of the meanings in process. Each person who interacts with the means of communication belongs to a certain symbolic universe and, even though they are unaware of the topic being addressed, there is contact, since the subject has been published. However, there is no understanding of the message, or perhaps there may be a misunderstanding, generating uncertainties. It is necessary to know in order to understand, in order to generate horizons of predictability.

Thus, it can be observed that the telenovela *Pantanal* proposed subjects involving citizenship issues and provided an important space for knowledge of this topic. Grimson (2007) points out that, as we live in an intercultural world, communication must be thought

10 Original text: “perscrutar os movimentos comunicacionais e as significações carregadas por eles para encontrar clareza e aderência ao projeto de humanização, única porta de entrada para as várias formas de cidadania.”

of as a cross between different symbolic universes, for reasons of gender, class, generation, ethnicity, and nation. The telenovela's reach across different audiences made it possible to give visibility to issues central to citizenship, enabling discussions in a wide range of face-to-face and media-based interaction environments.

3 Methodological procedures

The methodological procedures of this research study replicate and update practices already adopted in previous studies (Jacks *et al.*, 2019; Sifuentes *et al.*, 2021), considering the transformations of platforms and data collection and analysis instruments. Within the scope of the Pro-Humanities project of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (*Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* – CNPq), which analyzes the remake of *Pantanal* (2022), it was necessary to adapt the methodology due to the interval between the investigation and the period of exhibition of the telenovela.

The research was structured in two main dimensions: 1) Mapping the production and identification of citizenship themes; 2) Analysis of the repercussion on social networks. To analyze the production of the telenovela, we initially explored TV Globo's digital social networks, including GShow's profiles on Instagram and X (formerly Twitter), in search of content related to citizenship. However, due to the elapsed time since the exhibition, this approach proved to be limited. Alternatively, we used the summary of the chapters available on GShow, identifying citizenship themes addressed in the plot and associating them with the exhibition dates. This strategy allowed us to cross the themes with the repercussion on social networks. During this phase, we analyzed the daily summaries of all chapters of the telenovela, mapping the following themes of citizenship: violence against women (harassment, repression of female empowerment, femicide); women's rights (access to justice, family law); male chauvinism; homophobia (belonging, inclusion, prejudice); agrarian and land-related issues; health (difficulty in accessing medical services); education (lack of access to education); digital exclusion (lack of access to technology); right to civil identity; labor relations (exploitation of labor); environment; right to property; politics and public policies. It is important to mention that the theme of gender stood out in the mapping of the summaries of the chapters of the telenovela.

In addition to the themes, we identified the characters most involved in these discussions within the plot. From the intersection of the themes with the dates of the chapters, we conducted searches on social networks X, YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook to observe how these issues were debated by the public. The choice of these platforms was due to their scope and flexibility in collecting data on the circulation of citizenship themes. Unlike previous studies, which analyzed the first week, the middle, and the end of the telenovela, this investigation focused on the public response to the citizenship-related themes on the specific dates they appeared in the storyline.

In the mapping phase, we identified sets of chapters that address gender issues, divided into three themes: violence against women, women’s rights, and homophobia. These themes and their sub-themes were organized according to Table 1, presented below:

Table 1 – Gender themes and sub-themes in the telenovela *Pantanal*

GENERAL THEME	SUBTHEMES
Violence against women	harassment; repression of female empowerment; feminicide
Women's rights	access to justice; family law;
Homophobia	feeling of belonging; inclusion; inclusion of a minority group; prejudice.

Source: The authors (2025).

After mapping the themes of citizenship in the telenovela, we analyzed its repercussion on social networks. The debates on these issues were not very expressive, and when they arose, they focused on discussions about gender, especially involving the characters

Maria Bruaca and Zaquieu. Therefore, we decided to deepen the analysis of gender issues¹¹ in the interview stage.

In the third phase of the study, we conducted 23 interviews, divided as follows: five men and eight women born before 1984, an audience that possibly watched the original version of *Pantanal* (1990), shown by TV Manchete; five men and five women born after 1984, who only followed the 2022 remake. Although the research study did not have as a main objective to compare the two versions, we considered it useful to include interviewees with different profiles, allowing a comparison between the two productions. The sample was defined by convenience.

We used semi-structured interviews, allowing us to capture opinions, subjective interpretations and reflections of the recipients on the approach to citizenship in the telenovela. As Duarte (2005) points out, this technique enables a critical and reflective dialogue between researcher and interviewee, allowing the interpretative reconstruction of information.

The interview script included the following topics: identification of the interviewee (age, gender, education); experience with the telenovela, including whether they watched the 1990 version and whether there are differences between the adaptations; themes addressed in the plot, capturing the main themes remembered by the interviewee; representation and relevance of the themes, exploring how the audience evaluates the telenovela's approach to gender and citizenship; opinions on specific characters, such as Juma (Alanis Guillen), Maria Bruaca, Zaquieu, and Tenório (Murilo Benício), and identification with their stories; discussion and repercussion, verifying whether the themes of the telenovela generated debates among friends, family or on social networks; impact on the perception of viewers, investigating whether the telenovela influenced changes in opinion on themes of citizenship and social rights; comparison between the 1990 and 2022 versions, in the case of the interviewees who watched both productions; general evaluation, including the

11 In this study, we use the concept of gender in a general sense, understanding it as a social and cultural construction that guides expectations, norms and behaviors attributed to masculinities and femininities in different historical contexts. This approach allows us to include, in the scope of gender analysis, not only issues related to inequality between men and women, but also other forms of oppression linked to deviation from dominant social norms, such as homophobia. Although homophobia is directly linked to sexual orientation, its social manifestation is rooted in normative conceptions of gender. Thus, we consider that homophobia constitutes a gender issue insofar as it penalizes expressions of identity and desire that challenge binarism and traditional gender roles. The representation of characters such as Zaquieu, therefore, is analyzed both from his sexual orientation and from the gender tensions that his presence evokes in the plot and in the reception.

importance of addressing citizenship in telenovelas and suggestions on themes that could have been further explored. Considering the distance between the telenovela exhibition and the interviews, the team produced a video-synthesis with images of the main cast of the plot to assist in the recollection of characters and their actors.

4 *Pantanal*: the repercussion on social networks

As provided for in the methodological procedures, the present study was based on the first phase of the analysis of the production and reception/consumption of *Pantanal* in digital environments. The networks chosen were YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and X, in addition to the digital ambience of TV Globo, which was the first horizon of analysis, with the exploration of data based on the dimension of production, focusing on GShow, Globoplay, and G1, as well as the social networks of these profiles on Instagram and X, where the contents related to citizenship were observed.

Overall, within this subset of platforms and profiles from TV Globo's digital environment, no particular emphasis on the theme of citizenship is observed, with only a few approaches to it identifiable. On the GShow website (2022d), for example, the theme of violence against women and women's rights emerges, featuring as an example the fact that the character Maria Bruaca (Isabel Teixeira) accepts to go to court against her then-husband Tenório (Murilo Benício), after understanding, through a lawyer, that she was a victim of aggression and harassment for years. It is interesting to note that the GShow website (2022e) indicates a positive repercussion of the telenovela's approach on the theme of violence against women on social networks. Still on the GShow website, another sub-theme evoked is male chauvinism, with a reflection by actor Murilo Benício, indicating that he is not afraid of cancellation, since there are many "Tenórios" in real life (Gshow, 2022d).

Furthermore, another theme addressed on the GShow website (2022c) refers to the homophobia suffered by Zaqueu, also sometimes nominated/qualified as a butler, also observing a formative character for the audience and moving spectators. On GShow's Instagram profile (2022a), there is also an indication of the abusive relationship experienced by Maria Bruaca. Another theme that appears on this platform refers to homophobia (GShow, 2022b), reinforcing its perspective of crime, with Zaqueu as the main character.

On the other hand, on Globoplay's Instagram profile, there is no sign about the *Pantanal* telenovela during the period of the research

carried out. It is inferred that this absence occurs due to the fact that the content of the profile focuses on the publication of content from the broadcaster's most recent programs available on the platform. As the collection for this investigation was carried out in 2024 and the telenovela was broadcast in 2022, there is no record of published content during the search for this study on the production under analysis. Along the same lines, on G1's Instagram page, the content that emerges is about the Pantanal biome, not about the telenovela.

On X, the only profile that mentions the telenovela and some themes associated with citizenship is that of GShow, addressing subtopics such as violence against women, male chauvinism, homophobia, education, the environment, and the right to property, which are absent in the profiles of both G1 and Globoplay.

In the collection, which considered social networks outside the ambience of TV Globo, the themes that emerged present a similarity with what was found in the ambience of the station. Of all the themes related to citizenship, violence against women and homophobia were the ones that appeared the most. The publications mostly referred to the characters Maria Bruaca and Zaquieu. The comments of the users highlighted the importance of the discussion and the interpretation of the actors (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – User comments: emphasis on interpretation and relevance of the theme¹²

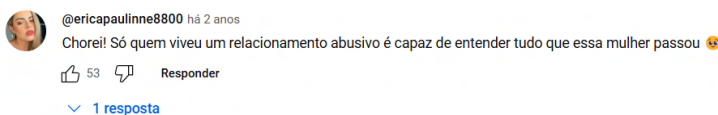


Source: GShow (2022b).

12 Translation: “I also am a person, I am not a joke. I have the right to be treated with respect.” Comments: “Excellent interpretation!!! Very moving”; “It was a lesson for many people; Always!!!!”; “It hurts to be rejected. Feeling alone and humiliated. I feel this every day with my family.”

On YouTube, the posts also add to the echo focused on domestic violence, promoting commotion and even processes of identification with the character Maria Bruaca, as observed in the comment “I cried! Only those who have experienced an abusive relationship are able to understand everything this woman has gone through,” as registered in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – YouTube comment identifying the theme of domestic violence



Source: Maria [...] (2022).

Facebook was the network with the most posts related to the telenovela *Pantanal*, within the time frame. However, in light of the term “citizenship,” posts that relate to the themes of violence against women and homophobia stand out, with content that refers to the characters Maria Bruaca and Zaquieu (Figure 3). In Figure 4, a post published on Facebook refers to the Maria da Penha Law, triggered by Bruaca, and mentions that Zuleica (Aline Borges) is a victim of patrimonial violence – one of the types of violence against women.

Figure 3 – Screenshot of publication and example of audience comment¹³



Source: TV Globo (2022).

13 Translation: “Broooo... I am a father!!! Coming out after 40 years... Do you imagine????!! I suffer a lot of prejudice!!! But bit by bit I rebuilt the ideas with my family.... I make sure to do so... It hurts... It is hard... But we have to go on, right?”

Figure 4 – Publication exemplifies patrimonial violence¹⁴



Source: O Segredo (2022).

On Instagram, there were also few publications that referred to the citizenship scope. One publication focused on violence against women through the work of actress Isabel Teixeira (Maria Bruaca's character), and another publication explained what constitutes abuse and violence against women beyond physical aggression (Figure 5). Another highlight was a publication about how the topics addressed in *Pantanal* served as a basis for reflection on the law regarding contemporary families. One publication referred to homophobia based on the figure of the character Zaquieu:

14 Translation: "With Bruaca taking action under the Maria da Penha Law, Tenório will have his assets blocked and will have to pay his bills and settles his debts."

Figure 5 – Publication explains violence against women beyond physical aggression¹⁵



Source: IBDFAM (2022).

On X, there were few publications that had a direct relationship with the research themes. The predominance was in publications with reference to violence against women, based on the character Maria Bruaca, and on homophobia, based on the character Zaqueiu.

Below, we present the data collected from the 23 semi-structured interviews conducted. The focus, therefore, is on the reception of *Pantanal*, specifically observing themes, characters, opinions and other repercussions on “citizenship” in the telenovela. Before exploring the singularities of the relationship between the theme and the telenovela, it is worth mentioning that all interviewees recognize citizenship as a subject that must be represented in serial fiction, given the popularity of the genre in the country.

The main agendas on citizenship identified in *Pantanal* by the interlocutors guide the analysis, which is structured in four subtopics: we begin by presenting a brief overview of the relevance of citizenship agendas being represented in telenovelas and then specify the themes of violence against women, the environment, and homophobia. Finally, the conclusion presents an assessment of the interviewed audience’s attitudes toward the themes addressed.

¹⁵ Translation: “Family violence against women. The relation between Maria and Tenório also reveals violence against women in Brazil. The crime does not only regard physical violence, it also concerns humiliations and varied forms of psychological abuse. In the telenovela, the housewife is constantly depreciated by her husband, who nicknames her ‘Bruaca.’”

5 Citizenship in *Pantanal*: a matter of necessity

Whether openly or between the lines, it is a consensus, from the interviewees' perspective, that questions about citizenship should be present in telenovelas. Interviewee Z, 37, highlights the importance of addressing citizenship issues in a broad and informal way, or even in a playful way: "So, I think it's an interesting way for us to think about the role, also the potential for education that the telenovela has, right? It's not just a narrative by itself, right?"¹⁶ (Interviewee Z). Thus, for her, the implicit way of discussing citizenship made by *Pantanal*, specifically, produces a positive reverberation with the consulted recipients. The same opinion is shared by interviewee G, 62, who, reflecting on some adaptations of the new version of *Pantanal*, says: "I think it is important to clarify the understanding of the new society"¹⁷ (Interviewee G). Interviewee O, 47, reinforces that the media has the role of being a mediating agent in raising public awareness and reflection, bringing themes such as these to viewers:

I always found Globo responsible in this situation, like... to try to show [issues related to citizenship]. For example, on this issue of diversity, Globo raised the flag. Mainly these issues of gender, race¹⁸ (Interviewee O).

Therefore, we note that there is an understanding of the social function of the telenovela, and that some adaptations made in the 2022 version of *Pantanal* are welcomed, since these updates sought to reflect on problems in today's society.

However, the interviewee L, 43, despite agreeing with the relevance of representing issues related to citizenship, considers that *Pantanal* treated them in a timid way, in order to avoid controversy. Among the topics she considers that could have been explored more vigorously is the political issue, in particular the reactionary agendas of the extreme right, which is observed in this speech: "The telenovela, it touched, like, very softly on these issues, which I think is an interesting strategy to penetrate audiences that were, at that

16 Original text: "Então, acho que é uma forma interessante, a gente pensar o papel, também o potencial de educação que a novela tem, né? Não é só uma narrativa por si ali, né?"

17 Original text: "Eu acho que é importante a título de esclarecimento de entendimento da nova sociedade."

18 Original text: "Eu sempre achei a Globo responsável nessa situação, assim... de tentar mostrar [assuntos relacionados à cidadania]. Por exemplo, nessa questão da diversidade, a Globo levantou a bandeira. Principalmente essas questões de gênero, de raça."

time, very focused on far-right speeches, right?”¹⁹ (Interviewee L). Despite some more critical inclinations regarding the “quality” of the thematization of citizenship, the overall content is positive. Next, we present how the questions related to gender, the environment, and sexuality were elaborated by the interviewed subjects.

5.1 Violence against women: Maria Bruaca and the limits of her representation

The theme of violence against women arises largely from informants when asked about Maria Bruaca. Interviewee Z, 37, mentions that the character goes through episodes of intense violence, mainly psychological, and transforms throughout the plot – a perception shared by many of the interviewees. Despite the abusive scenes involving Bruaca and her husband Tenório (which even generated discomfort among some subjects surveyed), the conquest of freedom and the rediscovery of Maria Bruaca’s sexuality are the most emphasized points. Interviewee T, 39, for example, quotes: “And this sexual thing too, which was repressed, but then she loosens up about it. I really liked this character”²⁰ (Interviewee T). This reveals that the character’s personal triumphs are valued by the receivers. Even with a positive recognition, some interlocutors also presented problematizations.

The criticism of Maria Bruaca’s narrative arc in *Pantanal* appears, for example, in the testimony of interviewee Z, 37, when she underlines that the final resolution of the character seems the same as the first version of the telenovela, in which justice is carried out through her own hands: “I thought they could change this narrative of the telenovela [...] Another outcome, more consistent with the Maria da Penha Law and with the things that exist today”²¹ (Interviewee Z). Regarding this closure, interviewee L, 43, adds: “Although we have, for example, a gender discussion focused on the issue of women, the solution given was the death of the villain [Tenório]”²² (Interviewee L). However, in general, the interviewees understand the final choice of

19 Original text: “A novela, ela tocou, assim, muito suavemente sobre esses assuntos, o que eu acho uma estratégia interessante para penetrar em audiências que estavam, naquele momento, muito voltadas para discursos de extrema direita, né?”

20 Original text: “E essa coisa sexual também, que era reprimida, mas daí ela se soltou com isso. Essa personagem eu gostei bastante.”

21 Original text: “Eu achei que eles pudessem mudar essa narrativa da novela [...] Um outro desfecho, mais condizente com a Lei Maria da Penha e com as coisas que existem hoje.”

22 Original text: “Ainda que a gente tenha, por exemplo, uma discussão de gênero voltada para a questão da mulher, a solução dada foi a morte do vilão [Tenório].”

the character by the cultural context in which the story takes place. Another interlocutor, interviewee C, 46, points out how the solution presented to women's problems is still linked to a man, and also makes a critical reflection on how the second version continued to approach the outcome for the character:

[...] the idea that turning things around is about getting revenge. And, in both versions, this happens. Cheating on the husband who cheated on her and all. So, there is still a relationship that is always tied to a man. And I think this is a problem for both versions²³ (Interviewee C).

In short, Maria Bruaca's narrative in *Pantanal* is seen by the interviewees as a trajectory of overcoming and freedom. However, there is a recurring criticism about the limitation of the outcome, which remains linked to dependence on a man and revenge. This reveals a tension between the character's achievements and the expectation of a more decentralized resolution of the male figure.

5.2 Homophobia: Zaqueiu between identification and criticism

The theme of homophobia emerges when the questionnaire mentions "Zaqueiu" – a gay character, who, in the context of the rural environment of *Pantanal*, faces male chauvinism and prejudice. In his testimony, interviewee R, 31, mentions that Zaqueiu represents his own struggle to be accepted and respected by reporting having experienced similar situations due to his sexual orientation, especially at work: "I also identify with Zaqueiu, especially on this issue of being gay, of living in an extremely sexist society, of always trying to be the best in what he does to be able to stand out"²⁴ (Interviewee R). On the other hand, interviewee O, 40, considers that, despite the importance of representativeness,

23 Original text: "*a ideia de que dar a volta por cima tem a ver em dar o troco. E, nas duas versões, isso acontece. Trair o marido que a traiu e tal. Então, ainda tem uma relação que está sempre atrelada a um homem. E eu acho que isso é um problema para as duas versões.*"

24 Original text: "*Me identifico com o Zaqueiu também, principalmente nessa questão de ser gay, de viver numa sociedade extremamente machista, de tentar sempre ser o melhor naquilo que faz para poder se destacar.*"

[...] he [Zaquieu] does not reflect the vast majority of people who are in the same condition as him. They end up suffering prejudice, but they cannot impose themselves and end up being defeated, let's say, by prejudice²⁵ (Interviewee O).

Therefore, for some of the informants, the way homosexuality was represented was problematic, as it treated the subject stereotypically and presented an outcome of redemption that does not always occur in the lives of most LGBTQIAPN+ people in Brazil.

In this sense, interviewee T, 39, notes that the homosexual relationship portrayed in the telenovela was initially constructed in a cliché way, with jokes and some resistance from other characters, such as the farmhands. Interviewee A, 46, reinforces the importance of representing homosexuality, but warns: “not to put an effeminate there, a cook, who, at a certain moment in the telenovela, becomes a farmhand, this is highly caricatured”²⁶ (Interviewee A). However, the informant seems to recognize that these representations have evolved, culminating in good acceptance by the public: “There was a lot of room, especially because the public liked the couple [...] there was kissing, there was everything”²⁷ (Interviewee A). Interviewee H, 67, on the other hand, when saying “It was represented very well because, in fact, later they [the public] accepted it, right?”²⁸ (Interviewee H), considers that the representations of homosexuality were presented in a relevant way.

The representation of homophobia in *Pantanal*, especially in the panorama of the character Zaquieu, generated mixed receptions: identification with the struggle for acceptance in a homophobic environment for some, but also criticism due to the stereotypical representation of homosexuality for others. We note, however, that the caricature of the “gay man” is overcome by the evolution of Zaquieu's narrative arc, which he developed in a relationship with Zoinho (Thommy Schiavo), and which pleased the interviewed audience.

25 Original text: “ele [Zaquieu] não reflete a grande maioria das pessoas que estão na mesma condição que ele. Que acabam sofrendo preconceito, mas não conseguem se impor e acabam sendo derrotadas – digamos assim – pelo preconceito.”

26 Original text: “não botar um afeminado lá, cozinheiro, que num certo momento da novela vira peão, isso é altamente caricato.”

27 Original text: “Teve bastante espaço, até porque o público gostou do casal [...] teve beijo, teve tudo.”

28 Original text: “Foi tratado muito bem porque, na verdade, depois eles [os públicos] aceitaram, não é?”

5.3 Environment: raising awareness about preservation through the enchantment of the gaze

Among the topics raised, the environment also stood out in the interviews. When asked about the relevance of addressing citizenship in *Pantanal*, interviewee E, 44, reinforces that it is essential to raise environmental issues in telenovelas, as it stimulates awareness and promotes debates on the preservation of Brazilian biomes and their ecological agenda:

So, topics like this help to reverberate issues that are being discussed more and more. So, citizenship, the environment is an issue that we can and should always be brought up, like, in a product, even though it is entertainment, right?²⁹ (Interviewee E).

Other interlocutors agree that the telenovela addresses environmental issues in a pertinent way, revealing the importance of preservation and criticism of uncontrolled exploitation by agribusiness. Interviewee B, 47, comments that the telenovela showed that “agribusiness can’t do everything, right? It cannot deforest at any cost to raise cattle”³⁰ (Interviewee B). Interviewee T, 39, observes a change in the current version of *Pantanal* in relation to the previous one, recalling that the character Zé Leôncio (Marcos Palmeira), who, in the past, did not care about the environment, was now portrayed as someone who began to become aware of the preservation of nature, mainly due to the influence of his son, Joventino (Jesuíta Barbosa).

These perceptions have as background the dramatic Brazilian historical moment in relation to environmental policies at the time of broadcasting the telenovela. Interviewee L, 43, recognizes the urgency in portraying these problems — “Especially because there was a government that was a blackout, right, in relation to science and the environment”³¹ (Interviewee L). Although interviewee T, 39, agrees with this observation, she points out that the narrative did not make it clear how the National Congress is susceptible to corruption and lobbying by companies in the agribusiness segment, which force politicians to seek the loosening of environmental agendas.

29 Original text: “Então, temas como esse ajudam a reverberar questões que estão sendo discutidas cada vez mais. Então, cidadania, meio ambiente é uma questão que a gente pode e deve colocar sempre em pauta, assim, num produto, por mais que seja entretenimento, né?”

30 Original text: “o agro não pode tudo, né? Não pode ficar desmatando a qualquer custo para criação do gado.”

31 Original text: “Especialmente porque estava tendo um governo que era um apagão, né, em relação à ciência e ao meio ambiente.”

Another highlight in relation to the environmental theme is the character Velho do Rio (Osmar Prado), which is portrayed as a nature protection entity, and the cinematographic panoramic images of the *Pantanal*. Interviewee F, 67, for example, emphasizes the beauty of the natural landscapes that appeared in the telenovela, which reinforces the relevance of the environmental theme: “There were always those beautiful images”³² (Interviewee F). Juma also integrates the audience’s fascination with representations of the environment. About this character, interviewee B, 47, highlights: “because of the story of Juma, of turning into a jaguar, right? This whole thing reminds me a little of this relationship between man and nature”³³ (Interviewee B). Here, it is observed that she represents the inseparable mixture between nature and humanity, even if some do not sympathize with the character, considering her “moody.”

Thus, the environmental issue, in the perception of the interviewees, appears through the appreciation of beautiful images of nature, and also through the practices and reflections of the characters on their relationship with the environment. Criticism emerges especially with regard to the exploitation made by agribusiness in the country and the concern with the preservation of the *Pantanal* biome.

The analysis of the interviews on *Pantanal* shows the ability of the narrative to generate reflections on the Brazilian reality, addressing issues of citizenship, such as violence against women, the environment, and homophobia. Thus, we consider that the narrative of the telenovela stood out as a micro-universe of society, addressing relevant issues, but not always in a deep or transformative way. The audience’s attitude reflects a duality between the discomfort caused by difficult topics, such as gender violence or discrimination, and the appreciation of this television genre that, even with limitations, promotes relevant debates. Throughout the interviews, some interlocutors even commented on how much the telenovela mobilized conversations between friends, family, and co-workers, to the point that specific WhatsApp groups were created to discuss the story. In this sense, *Pantanal* not only entertains, but also becomes a potential means of raising awareness, encouraging the viewer to reflect and discuss social and cultural issues about the Brazilian reality.

32 Original text: “Sempre tinha aquelas imagens lindas.”

33 Original text: “pela história da Juma, de virar onça, né? Toda essa coisa me remete um pouco a essa relação entre homem e natureza.”

6 Conclusions

The analysis of the telenovela *Pantanal* demonstrated how television drama can act as a significant space for reflection on themes of citizenship. The approach to issues such as violence against women, homophobia, and the environment highlights the relevance of serial fiction in the construction of public debates and in sensitizing the audience to structural social problems, constituting a privileged space for the discussion of an agenda of themes of Brazilian society (Botelho; Schwarcz, 2011). The repercussion of these themes among viewers indicates that, even without positioning itself directly as a product of political engagement, the telenovela plays an important role in cultural mediation (Martín-Barbero, 2003) and in the formation of social discourses.

However, the results point to a double movement: at the same time that *Pantanal* (2022) brought visibility to these agendas, some of its approaches were criticized for reproducing stereotypes or for avoiding deepening the subject. The representation of the character Maria Bruaca and her trajectory of personal triumph, for example, was widely valued, but its outcome remained linked to traditional dynamics of male dependence and personal justice. Likewise, Zaquieu's narrative arc evidenced the fight against homophobia, but its initial construction was considered stereotyped by the interviewed audience.

Another relevant aspect was the way the narrative dealt with the environmental issue, using symbolic elements, such as Velho do Rio and Juma, to build an imaginary connection between nature and identity. The use of cinematographic landscapes and the educational tone present in some scenes reinforced the appreciation of the Pantanal biome, although criticism has been made of the superficiality of the debate on the impacts of agribusiness in the region.

Considering this, *Pantanal* has consolidated itself as an example of how the telenovela can act as a communicative resource (Lopes, 2009), dialoguing with social and political debates without necessarily assuming an activist character. The study shows that the audience recognizes the importance of these narratives in open television, not only as entertainment, but also as an instrument of awareness and social mobilization. Although there are limitations in the way the themes were presented, the positive reception of a large part of the public demonstrates the potential of television drama to expand the social repertoire and stimulate debates that transcend the screen. Regarding the repercussion on social

networks, the study was faced with the ephemeral effect, typical of digital communication on platforms, which made it difficult to recover the debate about the telenovela during its broadcast on the social networks. Due to the two-year gap between the exhibition and the completion of this investigation, much of what was said at the time on the social networks was not possible to recover.

As an outcome of this research, future studies can deepen the relationship between telenovela, citizenship, and digital mobilization, investigating how the audience engages with and re-signifies these narratives in social networks. In addition, understanding how telenovelas influence public policies and cultural changes can be a relevant way to expand the understanding of the impact of this audiovisual format on contemporary society.

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TECHNICAL DATA – PANTANAL (2022)

(Source: Globo)

Story Concept
BENEDITO RUY BARBOSA

Written by
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NOA BRESSANE
ROBERTA RICHARD
WALTER CARVALHO
CRISTIANO MARQUES

Assistant Directors
ANDRÉ CHAVES
RAPHAEL COQUEIRO
THOMAZ CIVIDANES
FRANCISCA LIBERTAD
RAFAEL PEREZ CABRAL
LUIZ HENRIQUE CAMPOS

Artistic Director
ROGÉRIO GOMES

Directors of Photography
SERGIO TORTOLI
HENRIQUE SALES

Assistant Cinematographers
JORGE CARVALHO
ROBERTO TRICARICO
ALEXANDRE REIGADA
WILLIAM GAVIÃO
JUAN FRUCTUOSO

Head of Dramaturgy
JOSÉ LUIZ VILLAMARIM

Final Editors
CARLOS EDUARDO KERR
MARCOS PEREIRA LISBOA

Music Production Manager

FERNANDO LOBO

Music Producers

RODOLPHO REBUZZI

RAFAEL LUPERI

Art Producer

ANDREA KELLY

LUCIANA MONTEIRO

Art Producer

MIRICA VIANNA

Casting Production

ROSANE QUINTAES

Casting Producers

LUIZA TORÉ

FELIPE AGUIAR

INGRID SOUZA

IDÊ MAGNO

PRISCILA LOBO

Acting Coaches

ANDREA CAVALCANTI

IRIS GOMES DA COSTA

MARELIZ RODRIGUES

Sound Design

MARCELO ARRUDA

Costume Design

MARIE SALLES

Set Design

ALEXANDRE GOMES

Characterization

VALÉRIA TOTH

Authorization

SINDICATO DOS ARTISTAS E TÉCNICOS DE ESPETÁCULOS E
DIVERSÕES (SATED)

Drone Operator

RAPHAEL COQUEIRO

Cast

ALANIS GUILLEN – Juma Marruá
ALINE BORGES – Zuleica
BRUNA LINZMEYER – Madeleine Novaes
CACO CIOCLER – Gustavo Sousa Aranha
CAMILA MORGADO – Irma Novaes
CAUÊ CAMPOS – Roberto
CÉSAR FERRARIO – Clemente
CHICO TEIXEIRA – Quim
CLÁUDIO GALVAN – Ari
DIRA PAES – Filó
DRICO ALVES – Zé Leôncio (adolescent)
FÁBIO NEPPPO – Tião
GABRIEL SANTANA – Renato
GABRIEL SATER – Xeréu Trindade
GABRIEL STAUFFER – Gustavo
GIOVANA CORDEIRO – Generosa
IRANDHIR SANTOS – Joventino Leôncio (Phase 1) / Zé Lucas
(Phase 2)
ISABEL TEIXEIRA – Maria Bruaca
JESUÍTA BARBOSA – Jove
JOSÉ LORETO – Tadeu Aparecido
JÚLIA DALAVIA – Guta
JULIANO CAZARRÉ – Alcides
KARINE TELLES – Madeleine Novaes
LEANDRO LIMA – Levi
LEOPOLDO PACHECO – Antero Novaes
LUCAS LETO – Marcelo
LUCCI FERREIRA – Davi
MALU RODRIGUES – Irma Novaes (Phase 1)
MARCOS PALMEIRA – Zé Leôncio
MARELIZ RODRIGUES – Matilde
PAULA BARBOSA – Zefa
RENATO GÓES – Zé Leôncio (Phase 1)

ROMEU BENEDICTO – Anacleto
SELMA EGREI – Mariana Braga Novaes
SILVERO PEREIRA – Zaquieu
ALMIR SATER – Eugênio
ENRIQUE DÍAZ – Gil Marruá
JULIANA PAES – Maria Marruá
MURILO BENÍCIO – Tenório
OSMAR PRADO – Velho do Rio
BELLA CAMPOS – Muda
GUITO – Tibério Cavalcanti
LETÍCIA SALLES – Filó (Phase 1)
TÚLIO STARLING – Chico
VICTÓRIA ROSSETTI – Nayara
MARCELA FETTER – Érica Chaguri
DAN STULBACH – Ibraim Mello Chaguri
FRED GARCIA – Zé Leôncio (child)
GUILHERME TAVARES – Jove (child)
GUSTAVO CORASINI – Tadeu (child)
LUCAS OLIVEIRA DOS SANTOS – Tadeu (child)
VALENTINA OLIVEIRA – Juma (child)

Supporting Cast

THOMMY SCHIAVO – João Zoinho

Special Appearances

PAULO GORGULHO – Ceci
JACKSON ANTUNES – Túlio
EROM CORDEIRO – Lúcio
ORÃ FIGUEIREDO – Reginaldo

PLOT SUMMARY

PANTANAL

Pantanal is a telenovela written by Benedito Ruy Barbosa, originally broadcast on the now extinct Rede Manchete in 1990. In 2022, it received a remake consisting of 167 episodes, aired between March and October of that year. The new version was written by Bruno Luperi, Benedito Ruy Barbosa's grandson, and included adaptations to the storyline in order to reflect contemporary debates and contexts.

In its first phase, the remake follows the cowboy Joventino Leôncio (Irândhir Santos), who teaches his son, José Leôncio (Fred Garcia – child/Drico Alves – adolescent/Renato Góes – adult), how to become a cowboy in the Pantanal region. At a certain point, José Leôncio sets off on a cattle drive while his father remains on the farm. Upon his return, however, the young man discovers that Joventino has vanished without a trace.

Years later, during a trip to Rio de Janeiro, José Leôncio meets Madeleine (Bruna Linzmeyer). They marry shortly thereafter, and she moves to the Pantanal with him. Pregnant, Madeleine struggles to adapt to rural life and, after the birth of Jove (Guilherme Tavares – child), whose name pays homage to his grandfather Joventino, she returns to Rio de Janeiro with the baby. Unable to convince her to grant him custody, José Leôncio agrees instead to cover the boy's expenses. As a result, Jove grows up with no memory of his father, since Madeleine leads him to believe, from an early age, that José Leôncio is dead.

The second phase of the telenovela begins twenty years after these events and features a new cast portraying the older versions of the characters. Still convinced of his father's death, Jove (Jesuíta Barbosa) discovers letters from José Leôncio (Marcos Palmeira) among the belongings of his aunt Irma (Camila Morgado). Irma reveals that his father is indeed alive and encourages her nephew to search for him in the Pantanal. Despite the joy of their reunion, the renewed proximity highlights the stark contrasts between the lifestyle and upbringing of José Leôncio – accustomed to rural customs and ranch work – and that of Jove, a progressive young man shaped by urban life in Rio de Janeiro.

It is in the Pantanal that Jove meets Juma Marruá (Alanís Guillen), forming one of the central couples of the narrative. Juma is the daughter of Maria Marruá (Juliana Paes) – both of whom, according to local beliefs, possess the ability to transform into jaguars – and the squatter Gil (Enrique Díaz). Gil is killed during the first phase of

the telenovela as a result of land disputes, and Maria Marruá also becomes a fatal victim of these conflicts in the second phase.

Juma grows up strong and self-sufficient, capable of surviving on her own, yet emotionally guarded and distrustful. She lives in a shack with Muda (Bella Campos), who arrives in the Pantanal seeking revenge against Juma's family because Gil had murdered her father in Paraná. Muda conceals her intentions and befriends Juma, but eventually grows attached to the young woman and becomes increasingly conflicted about carrying out her vengeance.

Besides Jove, José Leôncio has two other sons: Tadeu (José Loreto), Filó's (Dira Paes) son, raised at the farm as his godson, and José Lucas de Nada — "José Lucas of Nothing" (Iranthir Santos), so named due to the absence of his paternal surname. Although it is later revealed that he is not José Leôncio's biological son, Tadeu was raised in the same way that Joventino raised José Leôncio: to become a cowboy. José Lucas, on the other hand, was only legally acknowledged in adulthood by José Leôncio, who had met his son's mother during his youth, in the times he passed by the "currutela" (settlement) where she worked.

Another rancher in the region is Tenório (Murilo Benício), who is married to Maria Bruaca (Isabel Teixeira); together, they have a daughter, Guta (Julia Dalavia). A conservative and prejudiced man, he displays overtly sexist behavior, particularly toward his wife. Tenório hides a second family in São Paulo, consisting of Zuleica (Aline Borges), Marcelo (Lucas Leto), Renato (Gabriel Santana), and Roberto (Cauê Campos). When Maria Bruaca eventually discovers the truth, she begins an affair with Alcides (Juliano Cazarré), who works for Tenório.

Alongside Juma and Maria Marruá, who can transform into jaguars, *Pantanal* features other characters who introduce enchantment and mysticism into the storyline. Notable examples include Velho do Rio (Osmar Prado) and Trindade (Gabriel Sater). Trindade is a cowboy and guitar player who has made a pact with the Cramulhão, a demonic entity that occasionally possesses him to deliver omens. Velho do Rio, by contrast, is a guardian and protector of the Pantanal, capable of transforming into an anaconda. It is widely believed that Velho do Rio is Joventino, José Leôncio's long-lost father.



The ninth volume of the Television Drama Collection, *The Telenovela Pantanal as a Communicative Resource for Citizenship: A Case Study*, brings together ten chapters that synthesize the work carried out by researchers of Obitel Brasil — the Brazilian Network of Television Fiction Researchers. The studies were conducted between 2023 and 2025 by more than 90 researchers at various academic levels (from undergraduate research fellows to postdoctoral scholars), all members of the ten inter-regional teams that compose the Network and represent twelve institutions of national scope: University of São Paulo (USP), Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE), Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Anhembi Morumbi University (UAM), Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF), Federal University of Paraná (UFPR), Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar), Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM), and Federal University of Latin American Integration (UNILA).

This book stands out in the Network's trajectory as one of the outcomes of the project "Brazilian Television Fiction as a Resource for the Promotion of Citizenship", funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and approved under the Pró-Humanidades/Public Call No. 40/2022 of CNPq, promoted by the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MCTI), and the National Fund for Scientific and Technological Development (FNDCT). Within this project, the Obitel Brasil Network investigates the telenovela as a communicative resource capable of mobilizing cultural representations and promoting social inclusion, environmental responsibility, respect for diversity, and the strengthening of citizenship.

For the investigation presented in this book, and for the first time in the Network's history, all ten teams dedicated themselves to a single research object: the 2022 remake of the telenovela *Pantanal* (Globo), written by Bruno Luperi based on the original work by Benedito Ruy Barbosa. This production was selected because we understand it as a media event with the potential to generate social impact, and as an exemplary case study of how the telenovela can function as a communicative resource for the promotion of citizenship.

Given this shared object, each team developed its own research project and worked on it between 2023 and 2025. The diversity of investigative approaches adopted by the groups ensured that, even when focusing on the same telenovela from the perspective of citizenship, the studies offered a broad spectrum of reflections, encompassing memory and nostalgia, gender and representation, socio-environmental citizenship, audience repercussion and reception, as well as methodological aspects.

This book follows the logic of collaborative work – a hallmark of the Network's 18-year history – and reinforces the relevance of Obitel Brasil to the field of Brazilian television fiction studies, particularly those focused on the telenovela.

