

Meme Discourse: (De)Memetizing Antifeminist Ideology / *Discurso de memes: (Des)memetizando ideologia antifeminista*

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ABSTRACT

This work aims to discuss the need to think memes from the perspective of a critical visual literacy. More specifically, we seek to analyze how memes are used in social practices that somehow establish or maintain relations of gender domination and to explain how the idea of a critical visual literacy might be useful to oppose this kind of discourse production. This discussion is developed in the light of the concepts of multiliteracies, critical visual literacy, Critical Social Theory and the metafunctions of visual language.

KEYWORDS: Antifeminist memes; Ideology; Critical visual literacy

RESUMO

O objetivo desse trabalho é discutir a necessidade de se pensar os memes a partir da perspectiva de um letramento visual crítico. Mais especificamente, buscamos analisar como os memes são utilizados em práticas sociais instauradoras ou mantenedoras de relações de dominação de gênero e explicar como a ideia de um letramento visual crítico pode ser útil para se contrapor a esse tipo de fazer discursivo. Desenvolvemos essa discussão à luz dos conceitos de multiletramentos, de letramento visual crítico, da Teoria Social Crítica e das metafunções da linguagem visual.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Memes antifeministas; Ideologia; Letramento visual crítico

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Introduction

In 1976, Dawkins¹ introduced the term meme to tell us about the process of cultural transmission that occurs in the space of human communities. To him, if in the realm of natural life, we have genes, replicator units of genetic information, in the realm of culture, we have memes, differentiating replicator units of cultural information. In this approach, the author seeks to take into account the characteristics of singularity of the human species from a Darwinian model² to think about cultural transmission.

For almost two decades, this discussion was largely confined to the academic universe. However, with the development of the Internet and the rise of the cyberculture,³ the term meme became popular and took over social networks. Today, in this second decade of the 21st century, the word meme is almost an omnipresent entity in the field of virtual interactions. Due to the importance of its use in the communicative-cultural content, meme is treated as both a scientific concept with an evolutionary basis and a mechanism of interrelationship among subjects, through texts/utterances, which configure social practices and which, in turn, constitute a discourse genre (BAKHTIN, 1986;⁴ MARCUSCHI, 2008). Now, the meme is seen not only as a scientific concept of evolutionary basis, but also as the naming of a recurring mode of interrelation among subjects, texts/utterances, and social practices, that is, as a discourse genre. And as such, the meme, approaching Davison's ideas (2012), would be

¹ DAWKINS, R. *The Selfish Gene*: 40th Anniversary Edition. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016.

² Dawkins (2016) and Blackmore (2000) defend the idea that, in a field of scarce resources, memes would have succeeded if they could perpetuate and reproduce themselves. That is, diversity, selection and heredity are the central cores of understanding the process of cultural transmission. Therefore, memes would be linked to what is imitated in order to reproduce and proliferate – characteristic elements of a Darwinian approach. In counterpoint, Shifman (2014) criticizes this approach of Dawkins (2016) and Blackmore (2000), emphasizing the social and interactive aspect of memes. In fact, according to Shifman (2014), we interact with memes; we are not merely a locus of their reproduction. In the scope of this work, we will understand meme as an entity of replication – as the memetics of Dawkins (2016) and Blackmore (2000) – and as a social artifact that, to proliferate, depends on the social subjects in the way that Shifman proposes. This, instead of a rupture between Dawkins' evolutionist proposal (2016) and Shifman's (2014) socio-textual proposal, we articulate a link between the two ideas and appreciate them in continuity.

³ According to Lévy (2001, p.xvi), cyberculture is “the set of technologies (material and intellectual), practices, attitudes, modes of thought, and values that developed along with the growth of cyberspace.” [LÉVY, P. *Cyberculture*. Translated by Robert Bononno. Minneapolis, MN: University Of Minnesota Press, 2001].

⁴ BAKHTIN, M. M. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Edited by C. Emerson & M. Holquist and translated by V. W. McGee. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1986.

defined as a succinct humorous text with verbal-visual character that achieves online diffusion by mobilizing a cultural remix.

Due to the high capacity of reproduction and the speed with which they are made, memes have a high synthetic capacity, functioning as “micro-narratives, carrying within them discourses and ideas that circulate within the cultural context [...] therefore, constituting a unifier of the dynamics of cyberspace” (CALIXTO, 2017, p.48).⁵ In this sense, thinking about memes is a useful way of thinking about society.

In Brazil, the production and the dissemination of memes are intense, so much that there is a professionalization of this work, as BBC Brazil reports it.⁶ In fact, in Brazil, a country famous for its irreverent and transgressive culture, memes had already been discussed by Holanda (2016) and Candido (1970). They were incorporated into the daily life of our culture, becoming a massive tool for disseminating ideas.

Mememes are used for various purposes, such as jokes about the application of the National High School Examination (ENEM)⁷ and, in the wake of the discussion carried out by Chagas (2018), as political propaganda vehicles. Moreover, they even come to be used as vehicles for the propagation of hate speech,⁸ functioning as the locus of dissemination of prejudices.⁹

Hence, this work aims to discuss the need to think memes from the perspective of a critical visual literacy, which theoretically and methodologically assists the analysis of memes as both social practices that instill and/or maintain relations of gender domination,¹⁰ as well as a countervailing feature to this kind of discursive production. We develop this discussion in the light of the concepts of multiliteracy, critical visual

⁵ In the original: “micronarrativas, carregando em seu interior os discursos e as ideias que circulam no interior da trama cultural [...] constituindo, portanto, um aglutinador das dinâmicas do ciberespaço.”

⁶ Available at: [<http://www.bbc.com/portuguese/salasocial-39402172>]. Access on: May 22, 2018.

⁷ Available at: [<http://especiais.g1.globo.com/educacao/enem/2017/memes-do-enem-2017>]. Access on: May 22, 2018.

⁸ According to Brugger (2007, p.151), hate speech is characterized by the use of words “that tend to insult, intimidate or harass people by reason of their race, color, ethnicity, nationality, sex or religion,” having “the capacity to instigate violence, hatred or discrimination.” In the original: “que tendem a insultar, intimidar ou assediar pessoas em virtude de sua raça, cor, etnicidade, nacionalidade, sexo ou religião”; “capacidade de instigar violência, ódio ou discriminação contra tais pessoas.”

⁹ Available at: [<http://www.1folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2018/05/ódio-na-internet-tem-assumido-estilo-de-meme-para-atrair-jovens.shtml>]. Access on: May 22, 2018.

¹⁰ “We can speak of ‘domination’ when established relations of power are ‘systematically asymmetrical,’ that is, when particular agents or groups of agents are endowed with power in a durable way which excludes, and to some significant degree remains inaccessible to; other agents, or groups of agents, regardless of the basis upon which such exclusion is carried out” (THOMPSON, 1990, p.59). For reference, see footnote 11.

literacy (THE NEW LONDON GROUP, 1996; RIESLAND, 2002), Critical Social Theory (THOMPSON, 1990)¹¹ and metafunctions of visual language (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006).

The corpus of this research consists of a meme taken from the webpage Moça, não sou obrigada a ser feminista 4 [Girl, I am not obliged to be a feminist 4]¹² – a well-known antifeminist page on Facebook.¹³ It became so famous for its controversies that it has been punished countless times for spreading intolerant messages.

1 Visual Literacy: The Meaning of Multimodality in the Use of Language

Communication is a multimodal phenomenon by excellence. That is, in agreement with Jewitt (2014), in the space of communicative phenomena, people use resources of the most distinct sources: images, gestures, postures, words etc. to interact. In this sense, multimodality is not a novelty of contemporary texts, but a general characteristic of the use of language itself.

In the meaning-making process, each of the multimodal dimensions plays a fundamental role. According to Jewitt (2014, p.15), “representation and communication always draw on a multiplicity of modes, all of which have the potential to contribute equally meaning.” This author suggests that one of the points relevant to research in multimodal communicative interactions is the description and the analysis of the choice of resources and the articulations among different semiotic modes, understanding these factors as culturally situated.

Due to significant technological changes, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) point to a notorious emphasis on the multimodal dimension of texts, particularly the verbal-visual character. And, in order to prepare people to deal with these technological

¹¹ THOMPSON, J. *Ideology and Modern Culture: Critical Social Theory in the Era of Mass Media*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990.

¹² This page is in its 4th profile, since the other three profiles were deleted as a result of penalty imposed by Facebook. Available at: [<http://www.facebook.com/forafeminismo4/photos/a593579767492861.1073741827.41940554886784/593660757484762/?type=3&theater>]. Access on: July 3, 2018.

¹³ Facebook is a social network that allows people to chat with friends and share messages, links, videos, and photos. The access is free and offers a network of personal and business profiles, brands, humor pages, services, music, and artists.

innovations, in 1996, the New London Group¹⁴ proposed that one of the goals of school practices should be multimodal literacy. Understanding the idea of literacy as “a set of social practices linked to reading and writing in which individuals engage in their social context” (SOARES, 1998, p.38),¹⁵ it can be said that the idea of the group, when referring to the centrality of multimodal literacy, would be to reinforce the need to work in school with culturally situated practices, reading and writing that take into account multimodality, since the “imagery turn,”¹⁶ which already indicated the need for visual literacy, that is, a “visual [...] education that enhances understanding of the role and the function of images in representation and communication, especially in the media” (NEWFIELD, 1993, p.82). On this track of verbal-visual studies, Bamford (2003, p.1) postulates that, to have visual literacy, it is necessary to

- understand the subject matter of images;
- analyze and interpret images to gain meaning within the cultural context the image was created and exists;
- analyze the syntax of images including style and composition;
- analyze techniques used to produce the image;
- evaluate the aesthetic merit of the work;
- evaluate the merit of the work in terms of purpose and audience and grasp the synergy, interaction effective impact and or content of an image.

That is, it is necessary to think about the elements of image construction, in interaction with the audience, materializing effects of meaning.

Until then the ideological aspects of the images were not emphasized.¹⁷ For such an argumentative undertaking, we use the sense of ideology, according to Thompson (1990)¹⁸ and Fairclough (1992),¹⁹ understanding it as the meaning in the service of the maintenance or establishment of relations of domination,²⁰ that is, as a network of

¹⁴ The *New London Group* is a group of ten academics from different countries who met in London in 1996 to discuss and establish pedagogical guidelines to deal with changes in the construction of texts and the relation between text and society. From this meeting, the idea of “pedagogy of multiliteracies” resulted.

¹⁵ In the original: “conjunto de práticas sociais ligadas à leitura e à escrita em que os indivíduos se envolvem dentro do seu contexto social.”

¹⁶ The “imagery turn” is understood as a central use of images in the field of social practices from the last decades of the twentieth century.

¹⁷ See section number 2 below.

¹⁸ For reference see footnote 11.

¹⁹ FAIRCLOUGH, N. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1992.

²⁰ See footnote 7.

meanings that favors asymmetries among social subjects. Through this approach, we seek to think carefully about the social effects of the image in the reinforcement or the mitigation of asymmetric relations of power.

With the entrance of the ideological in the visual literacy, it is pertinent to discuss not only visual literacy, but also critical visual literacy (NEWFIELD, 2011), that is, to emphasize not only the ability to grasp and construct meanings through visual texts (visual literacy), but also to exercise the ability to unravel social and political interests in the production and reception of images (critical visual literacy). Emphasizing the critical posture, some questions arise, such as: “Who constructed the image? In the interests of whom? Where did the image appear? To whom is it addressed? What is being shown and what is being omitted? In what other ways could the same event be shown?” (CARVALHO; OLIVEIRA ARAGÃO, 2015, p.21).²¹

2 Critical Social Theory: Functioning and Demystification of Ideology

Thompson (1990)²² adopts a negative conception of ideology, interpreting it as a deleterious element in the field of practices in society. To him, “*to study ideology is to study the ways in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of domination*” (1990, p.61; emphasis in original).²³ Ideology is not centrally and necessarily linked to (absence or lack of) the truth, but rather it is related to the material support of a system of meanings that establishes or ratifies asymmetric relations of power. In fact, the author does not give centrality to the real character of meaning, but to the social effect generated by it:

What we are interested in here is not primarily and not initially the truth or falsity of symbolic forms, but rather the ways in which these forms serve, in particular circumstances, to establish and sustain relations of domination; and it is by no means the case that symbolic forms serve to establish and sustain relations of domination only by

²¹ In the original: “Quem construiu a imagem? No interesse de quem? Onde a imagem apareceu? A quem é endereçada? O que está sendo mostrado e o que está sendo omitido? De que outras formas o mesmo evento poderia ser mostrado?”

²² For reference, see footnote 11.

²³ For reference see footnote 11.

virtue of being erroneous, illusory or false (THOMPSON, 1990, p.62).²⁴

Nevertheless, the author tells us that the question of domination and asymmetric relations of power is not restricted to the space of social classes. To Thompson (1990),²⁵ there are asymmetries in various social sectors – gender, ethnicity, states, etc. – which should be criticized and overcome. According to him (1990, p.60),²⁶ the symbolic-ideological forms are organized as it is shown below:

Table 1: Modes of Operation of Ideology

Modes of Operation of Ideology	
<i>General modes</i>	<i>Some typical strategies of symbolic construction</i>
Legitimation	Rationalization
	Universalization
	Narrativization
Dissimulation	Displacement
	Euphemization
	Tropes (e.g. synecdoche, metonymy, metaphor)
Unification	Standardization
	Symbolization of unity
Fragmentation	Differentiation
	Expurgation of the other
Reification	Naturalization
	Eternalization
	Normalization/passivization

In *legitimation*, *relations of domination* are established and maintained by acceptable and fair reasons. It can occur through processes of *rationalization*, *universalization* and *narrativization*. In the first case (rationalization), there is the construction of a chain of reasoning that seeks to defend or justify a set of relations; in the second one (universalization), “institutional arrangements which serve the interests of some individuals are represented as serving the interests of all” (THOMPSON, 1990,

²⁴ For reference see footnote 11.

²⁵ For reference see footnote 11.

²⁶ For reference see footnote 11.

p.61);²⁷ finally, in the third case (narrativization), there is the use of history and narratives that show us the current social context as part of an immutable and eternal story.

In *dissimulation*, there is the *concealment, denial or obscuration of relations of domination*. This process occurs through: *displacement*, in which “the transfer of positive or negative connotations of a term to another term, group of people or person” (THOMPSON, 1990, p.62);²⁸ *euphemization*, in which “social relations are described in terms which provoke a positive valuation” (1990, p.63);²⁹ and *tropes*, in which figures of speech – metaphor, metonymy, etc. – are used in the place of perverse relations of power.

Through the process of *unification*, asymmetric relations among social subjects are established or maintained through “the construction of a form of unity that interconnects individuals in a collective identity, regardless of the divisions and differences that can separate them” (THOMPSON, 1990, p.65).³⁰ This procedure operates through *standardization*, in which symbolic constructs are adapted to a standard symbolic reference, and through the *symbolization of unity*, which relates to the construction of symbols of unity, identity, and collective identification.

In *fragmentation*, there is unification of people in a collectivity and the segregation of individuals or groups that can create obstacles to the dominant group and they can be excluded or segmented from the general set. Two typical discursive strategies of this ideological procedure are the *differentiation* and the *expurgation of the other*; it refers to the promotion of inequality between a group and specific individuals – this is the construction process of an enemy.

And, in *reification*, there are relations of domination which are established or maintained by the “a transitory, historical state of affairs as if it were permanent, natural, outside of time” (THOMPSON, 1990, p.67).³¹ This procedure manifests itself through: *naturalization*, something of the socio-historical context is treated as if it were an element of nature; *eternalization*, historical phenomena are represented as

²⁷ For reference see footnote 11.

²⁸ For reference see footnote 11.

²⁹ For reference see footnote 11.

³⁰ For reference see footnote 11.

³¹ For reference see footnote 11.

permanent, immutable and recurrent; and *normalization/passivization*, in which specific agents do not play the protagonist role in specific actions.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that Thompson (1990)³² offers us this table of the modes of operating ideology not as an exhaustive map, but as a sort of initial tool of cataloging. In addition, it can also be said that the author does not interpret these processes as exclusive and unilateral, since he points out the possibility of their interpenetration and concomitant occurrence.

3 The Grammar of Visual Design: The Imagery-Textual Resources and their Uses

One of the most productive proposals for visual literacy studies is the so-called The Grammar of Visual Design Grammar (GVD). Following the systemic-functional-grammar path proposed by Halliday (1985), this grammar seeks to describe, in the visual scope, the series of imagery-textual resources available and the ways in which these resources are used in relatively recurrent contexts. In fact, the GVD is characterized more as a model of analysis of images in context – a kind of social semiotics – than as a general theory of image reading.

In order to put into practice their proposal, the idealizers of the Grammar of Visual Design Grammar, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), inspired by the proposals of the systemic-functional linguistics and aiming at understanding how elements are combined/connected to create meanings, propose the analysis of texts and visual compositions in their basic components and functions. In the wake of Halliday's (1985) metafunctions, they introduce us to three imagery-textual functions: *representational*, *interactive* (or *interpersonal*) and *compositional*. The first metafunction is related to the way experience is represented; the second is related to the way texts establish relations with the readers, and the third metafunction is associated with the way texts are organized as visual structures.

In the representational dimension, there is segmentation into two extended categories: *narrative* and *conceptual*. The narrative category is linked to the idea of actions among participants and events that unfold in space and time; in its turn, the conceptual category is related to the idea of classification in terms of individual

³² For reference see footnote 11.

characteristics and identity. In narrative representations, we analyze the presence of the participants in the event, the presence of vectors indicating action or reaction (marks or vectors formed by the line of sight, arms and/or body orientation), and the insertion of participants in a background plane that indicates the circumstances of space and time in which the event develops. In conceptual representations, once they are characterized by the absence of vectors, the presentation of participants in a partial/whole relation and the absence of or less detailing of the background plane, the participants are analyzed by their class, structure and meaning in particular.

In narrative representations, one of the main processes is *action*, in which there is the presence of vectors of motion in the textual space. It can be segmented into *transactional* and *non-transactional* actions: the transactional action is an action that involves the presence of a vector of connection and that has two participants at least; the non-transactional action is an action involving only one participant and one vector.

At the conceptual level, the processes are segmented into *classificational*, *symbolic* and *analytical*. In the classificational process, people, places or objects are symmetrically organized within the visual space to show how similar they are when they belong to the same class or the same category. In the symbolic process, there are elements in the image that add to this extra value, because they are not intrinsic to it. There is the establishment of identity of the visual participant through attributes that are emphasized through size, choice of colors, positioning, use of lighting, among others. This process is segmented into *attributive* and *suggestive*. In the attributive process, the participant is emphasized through his/her positioning within the image, exaggerated size, lighting, level of details, focus, hue and/or intensity of color that realize the meaning or the identity itself. In the suggestive process, there is only the bearer and based on himself/herself or on his/her qualities, the meaning or the identity is inferred. There is an atmosphere created by details that tend to be emphasized. Finally, in the analytical conceptual process, the participants are related in terms of structure: the *whole* refers to the bearer and the *parts*, to the possessive attributes.

In order to analyze the ways in which the image establishes a relation with the interlocutor – *interpersonal* (or *interactive*) *function* – its form of manifestation is segmented into four types: *contact*, *social distance*, *attitude*, and *modality*. The contact is realized by the contact of the gaze between the participant represented in the image

and the reader; the social distance occurs in the visualization of the participant represented in the image as being near or far from the reader; the attitude is realized when taking into account the angle formed between the participant's body and the reader; and the modality are the mechanisms that adjust the level of reality of the image.

Finally, in order to examine the combination among the visual elements of a composition (image) – *compositional function* –, there are three segments: *informational value*, *salience*, and *framing*. The informational value relates to the layout and the position of the elements on the page; salience is related to the way in which the elements are represented in the image to captivate the observer's attention by their position on the first or second plane, the size of the elements in the image, the focus, the contrast of colors, etc.; and the framing refers to the way in which the elements are associated or dissociated in the image by means of dividing lines or different frames.

The following table shows the division of GVD categories presented in order to facilitate its hierarchically analytical vision:

Table 2: Categories of GVD

<i>Textual-Visual Metafunctions of the GVD</i>				
Representational (1)		Interpersonal ou Interactive (2)Interpessoal		Compositional (3)
<i>(1) Representational Metafunction</i>				
Categories				
Conceptual Processes			Narrative Action	
Classificational	Symbolic	Analytical	Transactional	Non-transactional
<i>(2) Interpersonal or Interactive metafunction</i>				
Contact	Social Distance	Attitude	Modality	
<i>(3) Compositional Metafunction</i>				
Informacional Value		Salience		Framing

4 Gender: The Role of Feminism and Patriarchalism in Multimodality

Before starting the analysis itself, we will briefly discuss the presence of gender inequality in Brazil. On this, it is appropriate to say that women are subjected to severe inequalities in social, economic and political realms of society.

According to Sousa and Guedes (2016), due to the permanence of a certain sexual division of labor, in which women are seen as predominantly responsible for domestic care while men are seen as central providers of household sustenance, there is great inequality between men and women in terms of labor market insertion and, consequently, economic compensation.

According to data from IBGE [Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics] (2018), despite the fact that the population as a whole has a higher level of formal education, the average financial income of women is about $\frac{3}{4}$ of men's income. In 2016, while the average monthly income of men was R\$2.306, that of women was R\$1.764. Nonetheless, working women spend 73% more hours on domestic work than men, and they are largely responsible for home care.

Still on the work market, in Brazil, in 2016, 60.9% of manager positions were occupied by men while only 39.1%, by women, both in the public sector and in the private sector. The presence of women in manager positions was higher among the younger women, ranging from 43.1% among women aged 16-29 years to 31.8% among women aged 60 years or older.

In the political realm, despite the existence of a minimum quota (30%) of candidacies of each sex in proportional elections established by Law 12.034 in 2017, women were only 10.5% of the Congresspeople in office. That year, Brazil ranked 152th among 190 countries that reported the Inter-Parliamentary Union about the percentage of seats in its lower chambers (House of Representatives) or unicameral parliament occupied by women parliamentarians in office. In South America, Brazil showed the worst result.

All of the data show how Brazil is a country in which gender disparities are notorious with women still being subjected to evident social, economic and political segregation, despite some advances made in the last decade (PEDRO; GUEDES, 2016).

In this sense, according to Sousa and Guedes (2010), feminism is a movement that fights for female emancipation, seeking to question and to balance the asymmetric relations to which women are subjected, being responsible, as a political movement, for several historical achievements of women's rights, such as the formalization of gender equality enshrined in the Federal Constitution of 1988 (2004), the creation of Special

Secretariats for Women's Policies, the creation of the Maria da Penha Law, among others.

Opposing feminism, we have a whole patriarchal mode of functioning in which men occupy asymmetrical and privileged positions in the family, labor, media, and political spheres (MORGANTE; NADER, 2014) in a process of symbolic and material domination.

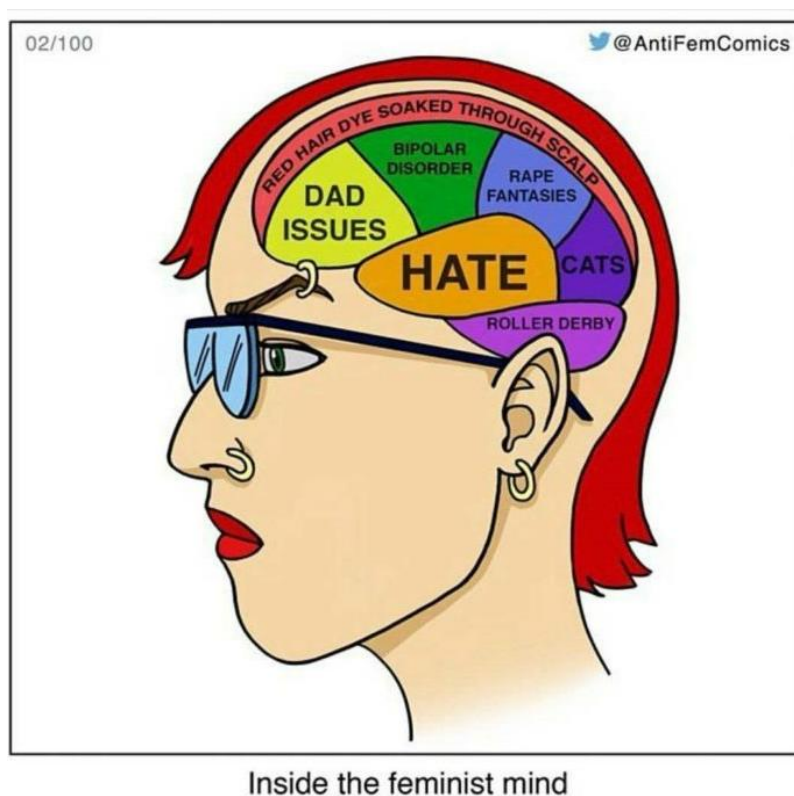
The webpage *Moça, eu não preciso ser feminista 4* [Girl, I am not obliged to be a feminist 4], in opposing feminism, supports (in)directly patriarchalism, maintaining or reinforcing socio-historically constructed male privileges.

5 Analysis of the Meme *Inside the Feminism Mind*

The meme to be analyzed reveals the social image that the creators of the webpage construct and diffuse with regard to women that support feminism. In this sense, it tries to describe, by means of parody and humor, how the feminist mentality works, explaining which ideas structure thinking. Thus, it shows the face and the brain of a feminist, describing its internal structure.

Before we start the analysis itself, we should note that it is not possible to say if the meme was drawn by a man or a woman, since there is no personal signature on the post. However, due to the presence of gender marked by the article “-a” at the end of the word *obrigada* (obliged), which is on the title of the webpage *Moça, eu não preciso ser feminista 4* [Girl, I am not obliged to be a feminist 4], the enunciator creates for himself/herself a social profile related to the feminine gender, configuring a tendency to accept the meme's author as being a woman. This possibility of identifying the author's gender is valid, because there are divergent ways of meaning effects – if not complementary –, such as being a reinforcing factor to the criticisms the page makes to feminism and it gives rise to the idea that, on the page, there are voices of women who oppose the fight for more rights for women, exposing the excesses of this movement.

Figure 1: Meme image³³



On the representational aspect, we have a process of conceptual type in this image, since there is the representation of the feminist participant in terms of class, structure and meaning, despite the fact that there are no vectors. In addition, we can say that the image is a structured analytical conceptual type, since the participant is constructed in terms of a structure – the whole with the bearer and the parts with the possessive attributes – and there is the establishment of a label and descriptions between the whole of the feminist and the parts that constitute her brain. The image describes the functioning of the feminist mind with its brain divisions about feminist emotions, depicting feminists as women driven by hatred, paternal deprivation, eating disorders, authoritarianism, fantasies with rape, lack of logic and infiltration of ink. Furthermore, the portrayed feminist is also represented as a woman who has short hair, wears piercing and lipstick – characteristics said to be revolutionary and subversive to traditional customs.

³³ We chose to use the original meme in English, which was translated into Portuguese on the site where we started our research. Available at: [<https://astrologymemes.com/i/soaked-the-oesoro-rea-rape-dad-fantasies-issues-hate-cats-roller-13017713>]. Access on: Jan 4, 2019. It was first published at the blog @AntiFemComics, Jul 20, 2015, available at: [www.i.imgur.com/bjoOF7].

In the interpersonal scope, there is the presence of contact based on a supply relation, since the visual vector of the participant is not oriented toward the observer. This form of construction strengthens the idea of objectivity created in the image, highlighting how much it is distant from a prototypical exemplar of what becomes a feminist. Nevertheless, in the space of the contact relation, the mouth and eyebrows of the participant are indicative of seriousness and aggressiveness, emphasizing the hostile posture before the one who observes.

Giving attention to the social distance, there is the use of a closed plane, since only the upper plane of the participant's body is portrayed. The use of this plane reinforces the intimate and personal dimension of the image, contributing to the idea of a perception that what is being investigated is the feminist herself. The angle of the image is centralized, reinforcing the objectivity of what is shown.

In the field of modality, that is, the value of the truth or credibility (linguistically realized) of affirmations about the world, we have contact with a type of technological-scientific mode, since there is an explanatory and didactic use of the image. This factor reinforces the demonstrative and realistic effect of the figure.

In the context of the compositional metafunction, we can discuss the informational value and the framing of the image elements – specifically, where the elements that make up the mind/brain of the feminist were placed. The design as a whole has a centralized character, a mode of construction that emphasizes the analytical character of the message. And among the elements that give the idea of a feminist prototype, hate and paternal deprivation represent, respectively, the most centralized elements that occupy more space in the image – it suggests that the feminist is primarily driven by these two feelings. It is not a coincidence that the profile of the feminist is shaped by the brain and its mind insofar as it is the locus of reactions and feelings.

Finally, taking into account the colors, it is necessary to discuss the use of red as hair color and a part of the feminist's mind. This shade is associated with ideas of passion, heat, blood, danger and hostility, aspects that reinforce the idea of how feminists are angry, wrathful and driven by hatred (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006). This meme constitutes a negative perception of the feminist, describing her as a choleric and unfriendly being driven by hatred and paternal deprivation above all.

Starting from the idea that a feminist is the one who propagates feminism and adopting the concept of feminism, that is, a “system of those who advocate the legal extension of the civil and political rights of women or the equality of women’s rights,”³⁴ it is pertinent to say that the meme reinforces the social asymmetries that exist between men and women. It is an ideological image, since it values and constructs, in a markedly negative way, the women who fight for equality between the two genders.

As to the way ideology works, according to an idea not only from visual literacy but also critical visual literacy, we can essentially refer to the fragmentation in the meme. Through the expurgation of the other procedure, feminists are constructed as an exception in the general group of female subjects outlined as a group of hysterical women who adopt angry positions before men and the world, because of strictly personal and psychological factors.

The meme reinforces a relationship of domination between genders, functioning as a kind of maintainer of asymmetries. With the adoption of the idea of critical literacy, the ideological effects can be deconstructed and counteracted, making the reading not only a matter of meaning-making construction but also of changing the social world.

Final Considerations

Through the analysis, it was possible to understand how a meme can contribute to the maintenance of asymmetric relations of power. The webpage *Moça, eu não preciso ser feminista 4* [Girl, I am not obliged to be a feminist 4] constructs and disseminates the caricature of women linked to feminism, such as hysterical women with affective and personal problems, functioning as a discursive element that maintains patriarchalism.

Therefore, memes are not only a place of production of humor and laughter, but also of connecting or not to ideology. In this way, they require a cunning and critical reader to examine the construction of meaning, *dememetizing* them, that is, preventing their non-reflective reproduction. Critical literacy for memes is not an option, especially

³⁴ *Dicionário Aurélio Online da Língua Portuguesa*. [Online Dictionary of Portuguese Language] Available at: [<https://dicionariodoaurelio.com/feminismo>]. Access on: June 3, 2018. In the original: “Sistema dos que preconizam a ampliação legal dos direitos civis e políticos da mulher ou a igualdade dos direitos dela aos do homem.”

with the regard to the non-proliferation of hate speech, but an imperative for anyone who cares about the development of a society, a country and a social universe so they are free from relations of domination and consequently of asymmetries of power.

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