

**Discourse Analysis before Strange Mirrors: Visuality and
(Inter)Discursivity in Painting / *A análise do discurso diante de
estranhos espelhos: visualidade e (inter)discursividade na pintura***

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to understand the discursive dimension of some paintings through Michel Foucault's discourse analysis approach. The image of the mirror in several canonical paintings was selected, intending to observe its discursive operation as an element of the visual artistic utterance. Basically, this text has three parts: firstly, it determines the place occupied by the aesthetic discourse in Michel Pêcheux's and Michel Foucault's works; secondly, it focuses on the analysis of three European paintings, namely *The Maids of Honour* by Velásquez, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* by Manet, and *Dangerous Liaisons* by Magritte; thirdly, it discusses the intersection between visuality and interdiscursivity based on a) the contributions of M. Foucault's works on aesthetic discourse and b) the image of the mirror found in those paintings.

KEYWORDS: Discourse Analysis; Aesthetic Discourse; Michel Foucault

RESUMO

Este artigo intenciona compreender a dimensão discursiva das pinturas por meio da análise do discurso ancorada em Michel Foucault. Recorta-se a figura do espelho em pinturas canônicas com vistas a observar seu funcionamento discursivo enquanto elemento do enunciado artístico visual. Apresenta três partes: a primeira, que determina o lugar ocupado pelo discurso estético nos trabalhos de Michel Pêcheux e de Michel Foucault; a segunda, que se concentra na análise de três pinturas europeias, a saber, As meninas, de Velásquez; Um bar em Folies-Bergère, de Manet; e As ligações perigosas, de Magritte; e a terceira parte, que discute a intersecção entre visualidade e interdiscursividade a partir (a) das reflexões de M. Foucault acerca do discurso estético e (b) da figura do espelho presente nessas pinturas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Análise do discurso; Discurso estético; Michel Foucault*

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Introduction

How can Discourse Analysis approach objects that do not have explicit language registrations, such as the case of paintings? This apparently simple question generates a number of other questions, when an exclusively visual object is confronted with a theoretical and methodological framework of this domain. Some of these questions are: a) To which Discourse Analysis is it referring? b) In theory, is it possible to consider paintings in its discursive materiality? c) Does the object which raises problems for the theory help to develop it? In order to reflect on these questions, the image of mirror, in several paintings, as an element of the visual utterance, responsible for activating memories and mobilizing discourses, was considered.

The reflections presented in this study were based on the French Discourse Analysis perspective, derived from dialogues between Michel Pêcheux - and his group - and Michel Foucault. For our analysis, the work of the elements of visual materiality in the interdiscursive network, which goes through the discursive field (Cf. MAINGUENEAU, 2009, p.23) of art as a condition of its interpretability, will be observed.

Interdiscursivity is considered to be a principle that rules the production of meanings. It is exactly because "something says" (*ça parle*) always 'before, elsewhere and independently'¹ (PÊCHEUX, 2009, p.149) that texts and images make sense to us. By placing discourse and interdiscourse in evidence, the primacy of the latter over the former is observed; this hierarchy is often the main thesis of the French school, mainly in M. Pecheux's reflections (2009). For this reason, it is more appropriate to refer to interdiscursivity than to discursivity, since the latter implies the former. When considering the discursive formations (Cf. PÊCHEUX, 2009, p.147) which are interrelated in the discursive field of art, more particularly in the discursive subfield of paintings, how the techniques and effects are named in each one will be observed. According to Maingueneau (2009, p.78), "[...] the identity of a discourse is inseparable from its emergence and (from) its maintenance through interdiscourse"².

¹ In the Portuguese version: 'algo fala' (*ça parle*) sempre 'antes, em outro lugar e independentemente'.

² In the original version: "[...] l'identité d'un discours ne fait qu'une avec son émergence et son maintien à travers l'interdiscours".

Thus, to treat visibility in discourses means to observe how the nonverbal materiality acts inside the interdiscourse, mobilizing certain memories and silencing others, constituting certain types of discourse (Cf. MAINGUENEAU, 2009, p. 129), relating "discursive units (which belong to previous discourses of the same genre, of contemporaneous discourses of other genres, etc.) with which a particular discourse enters into implicit or explicit relation"³ (MAINGUENEAU, 2009, p.77).

M. Pêcheux, in his last writings⁴, had already alerted to the transformations of political discourse, without, however, lingering over the spread of mass communication technologies and future consequences of its popularization to the perception of the public man. Although this author was aware of the changing of discourses regarding the emerging media, these notes appear in the form of brief mention, and the absence of a further deepening prevents these passages to have full anchoring of statements.

In relation to the aesthetic discourse⁵, however, M. Pêcheux mentions this kind of discourse, often found in M. Foucault's works. In Pêcheux's texts of the 1980s, we can observe some changes in the main object of Discourse Analysis: the political discourse. Furthermore, from the developments fostered by J. J. Courtine - and through Pêcheux's own indications, some elements which were not considered before (such as voice, intonation, gestures, and their radio and television transmission), started to be understood as characteristics of the utterance, as traces of it, producing (effects of) sense⁶. Nevertheless, the object of analysis of M. Pêcheux remains the party-political discourse. However, Discourse Analysis is not hindered from working on various discursive materialities, "[...] implied in ideological rituals, in philosophical discourses, in political utterances, in cultural and aesthetic forms, through their everyday relations

³ In the original version: "L'ensemble des unités discursives (relevant de discours antérieurs du même genre, de discours contemporains d'autres genres, etc.) avec lesquelles un discours particulier entre en relation implicite ou explicite".

⁴ Gadet; Pêcheux, 1981; Pêcheux, 1990b; Pêcheux, 2002.

⁵ The aesthetic discourse, or artistic discourse (here used as synonymous) of a certain historical moment, has, as reference, a variety of artistic manifestations: painting, sculpture, music, etc. In this article, the painting was privileged. Based on the reflections and notions proposed by D. Maingueneau (2009), the object of our reflections is the discursive field of art, seen from the viewpoint of the French Discourse Analysis, with Foucault's strong influence. More particularly, three positioning discourses in painting were analyzed: the Baroque discourse, the impressionist discourse, and the surrealist discourse. Thus proceeding, the discourses of production of a category of speakers will be eventually realized: those discourses from European painters in relation to art school with which they are affiliated, that is, Velásquez's contribution regarding the Spanish Baroque, Manet's contribution determining the French Impressionism, and Magritte's contribution to the Belgian Surrealism".

⁶ M. Pêcheux did not go further on the specific characteristics of the enunciative features.

with everyday situation, with the ordinary of the sense"⁷ (PÊCHEUX, 2002, p.49). In an article published in 1984, originally in German, Pêcheux (2012)⁸ states that:

It seems that our project supposes seriously regarding the notion of *discursive materiality* as the level of socio-historical existence, which is neither language nor literature, not even the "mentalities" of an era, but it refers to the verbal condition for the existence of objects (scientific, aesthetic, ideological objects) in a given historical juncture. From this point of view, the decision not to *a priori* restrict the study of textual material of consecrated literary objects seems extremely interesting and positive to me: this decision allows us to interrogate the processes of construction of discursive references throughout its extension, understanding both Alltagsprache (and Alltagsfiktion) and the scientific, technical, political and aesthetic discourses (p.151-152, [emphasis in original])⁹.

According to Pêcheux, we need to study other materialities always with respect to political discourses. In general, these last two excerpts previously presented show the possibility of working the discursive materialities implied in aesthetic forms. Still, it seems that M. Pêcheux refers to "verbal conditions of existence," for instance, "the impressionist discourse," as what was said about the impressionist movement, because "it allows us to question the processes of discursive reference construction [which are not the consecrated literary objects, but other textual materials] of aesthetic discourses"¹⁰ (PÊCHEUX, 2012). This passage reveals the complexity of M. Pêcheux's thought, which either anchors the aesthetic forms to political-ideological discourse or redirects the aesthetic forms as domains which determine the field of Discourse

⁷ In the Portuguese translation: "[...] implicadas em rituais ideológicos, nos discursos filosóficos, em enunciados políticos, nas formas culturais e estéticas, através de suas relações com o cotidiano, com o ordinário do sentido".

⁸ The Portuguese translation is based on the French version of the paper presented at the first German version: "Metapher und Interdiskurs", in J. And U. link Wulfing (Eds), *Bewegung und Stillstand in Metaphern und Mythen, Stuttgart*, Klett-Cota, 1984, p.93-99.

⁹ In the Portuguese translation: "Nosso empreendimento supõe, parece-me, levar a sério a noção de materialidade discursiva enquanto nível de existência sócio-histórica, que não é nem a língua, nem a literatura, nem mesmo as "mentalidades" de uma época, mas que remete às condições verbais de existência dos objetos (científicos, estéticos, ideológicos...) em uma conjuntura histórica dada. Desse ponto de vista, a decisão de não restringir, a priori, o estudo do material textual aos objetos literários consagrados, parece-me extremamente interessante e positiva: ela permite interrogar os processos de construção da referência discursiva em toda sua extensão, compreendendo tanto a Alltagsprache (e a Alltagsfiktion) quanto os discursos científicos, técnicos, políticos e estéticos".

¹⁰ In the Portuguese translation: "Permite interrogar os processos de construção da referência discursiva [que não são os objetos literários consagrados, mas outros materiais textuais] dos discursos estéticos".

Analysis, without making these very relations with the political-ideological domain explicit, but interpreting them as correlated:

Bourgeois politics came to the fore, producing a new type of relation to the elsewhere and to the nonexistent (the "we," the "all," and the "each one" in the assemblies, revolutionary parties, the new army ... and national language): The feudalism had kept the ruling order, *translating it* into specific forms (representations, images) designed to the dominated classes. The particularity of bourgeois revolution was to absorb the differences by breaking barriers: It universalized legal relations at the moment that the circulation of money, goods... and free workers was universalized (PÊCHEUX, 1990b, p.10 [emphasis in original])¹¹.

Before the revolution in 1789, aesthetic discourse served as a tool of the dominant order, governed by religious discourse. Thus, not only were the religious teachings (biblical ones) conveyed through stained glass and paintings to the illiterate population, but these materialities also conveyed the own political order of the societies of which they were part¹². In this case, aesthetic discourse was subordinated to religious discourse, governed by the dominant ideology, derived from the Church. The art, in this perspective, was pervaded by domination strategies.

Aesthetic discourse, as characterized in footnote 8, can be seen as a discursive field from which three *positions* and three *categories of speakers*¹³ were selected for the analysis. In 1969, in France, two major theories of discourse were formulated: M.

¹¹ In the Portuguese translation: "A política burguesa começava, produzindo um novo tipo de relação ao alhures e ao inexistente (o "nós", o "todos" e o "cada um" nas assembleias, as festas revolucionárias, o novo exército... e a língua nacional): o feudalismo havia mantido a ordem dominante traduzindo-a em formas específicas (representações, imagens) destinadas às classes dominadas. A particularidade da revolução burguesa foi a de tender a absorver as diferenças rompendo as barreiras: ela universalizou as relações jurídicas no momento em que se universalizava a circulação do dinheiro, das mercadorias... e dos trabalhadores livres".

¹² According to Pêcheux (1990b, p.10, [italics added]), "[...] the religious ideology, which dominated the socio-historical, feudal and monarchical formation, consisted essentially in managing this relation with the 'elsewhere' that founds it; it represented this 'elsewhere', making it visible through the ceremonies and parties – where the discourses were inscribed - which put this unified radiant transfigured social body into play, which manifests the *constitutive nonexistent* of the feudal society". / In the Portuguese translation: "[...] a ideologia religiosa, que dominava a formação sócio-histórica, feudal e monárquica, consistia essencialmente em administrar esta relação com o 'alhures' que a funda; ela representava este 'alhures', tornando-o visível através das cerimônias e das festas – inscrevendo-se aí os discursos – que colocavam em cena este corpo social unificado, radioso, transfigurado, que manifesta o inexistente constitutivo da sociedade feudal".

¹³ Discursive field, positioning discourses and discourses of production of a category of speaker are notions found in Maingueneau (2009, p.44-47).

Pêcheux's theory and M. Foucault's theory. These two authors¹⁴ were contemporaries and dialogued with each other, even if their theories of discourse were not identical. There are important points of contact, which help rethink their discursive theory.

On this journey of understanding M. Foucault's work regarding the analysis of aesthetic discourse, starting from *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, we will move to other texts in which artistic utterances are discussed. This choice is justified by the fact that this book is the main reference of Foucault's Discourse Analysis in Brazil (GREGOLIN, 2006). In Part IV, section 6 (Science and Knowledge), subsection "f," named Other Archaeologies, M. Foucault (2011) questions the possibility of conceiving an archaeological analysis that would show the regularity of a knowledge on other domains different from those from epistemological images and from sciences. He mentions a number of possible orientations, such as the analysis of paintings; additionally, Foucault lists the following procedures:

In order to analyze a painting, a painter's latent universe can be reconstructed; one might want to rediscover the murmur of the painter's intentions – which are not, in the last analysis, transcribed into words, but into lines, surfaces and colors –; one might try to highlight the implicit philosophy that, supposedly, shapes the painter's world view. [...] The archaeological analysis would have a different purpose: it would search if the space, the distance, the depth, the color, the light, the proportions, the volumes, the outlines, were not, at the considered time, nominated, stated, conceptualized in a discursive practice; and if the resulting knowledge of this discursive practice was not, perhaps, inserted into theories and speculations, in forms of teaching and recipes, but also in processes, in techniques and almost in the painter's own gesture (p.262).¹⁵

¹⁴ "In their convergences and divergences, the proposals of these *founders of discursivities* dialogued with other theoretical texts, and, since the '60s, destabilized certainties about the language, about discourse, about subject, about meaning. They built the basis of what we think today about the relations between language and discourse, about the non-evidence of the senses, about the articulations of subjectivity with otherness, about ideological determination, about dialogue, about intertextuality, about interdiscursivity... They built the possibility of new views on text, on discursive processes which sustain them". (GREGOLIN, 2001, p.30 [emphasis in original]). / In the original version: "Em suas convergências e divergências, as propostas desses fundadores de discursividades dialogaram com outros textos teóricos e, desde os anos 60, desestabilizaram certezas sobre a língua, sobre o discurso, sobre o sujeito, sobre o sentido. Eles construíram as bases para que possamos pensar, hoje, nas relações entre a língua e o discurso, na não-evidência dos sentidos, nas articulações da subjetividade com a alteridade, nas determinações ideológicas, no diálogo, na intertextualidade, na interdiscursividade... Construíram a possibilidade de novos olhares para o texto, para os processos discursivos que os sustentam".

¹⁵ In the original version: "On peut, pour analyser un tableau, reconstituer le discours latent du peintre; on peut vouloir retrouver le murmure de ses intentions que ne sont pas finalement transcrites dans des mots, mais dans des lignes, des surfaces et des couleurs; on peut essayer de dégager cette philosophie implicite que est censée former sa vision du monde. [...] L'analyse archéologique aurait une autre fin: elle

The regularity of knowledge, according to Foucault's reflections, can also be observed in various manifestations of meaning, in various discursive materialities. The formal elements of a painting (the space, distance, depth, color, light, ratios, volumes, outlines), regarded as part of a discourse practice, can be objects of an archeological analysis, that is, they can be objects – as visual signs of a specific *positioning discourse* (Cf. MAINGUENEAU, 2009, p.45) – of what is called "aesthetic discourse analysis" here.

The fact that the period in which M. Foucault lived in Tunisia and spoke at conferences on art is emphasized in this study, and this also represented the period in which he wrote *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, among other works: "In light of this controversy in the spring of 1966, he will take advantage of his stay in Tunisia [...] to present his conception of the archaeological method (which will result in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, written in Sidi Bou Saïd in 1967-1968 and published in 1969"¹⁶ (TRIKI, 2004, p.52). These works (on the archeology of science, on the one hand and on art, on the other hand) were not totally independent; they were inter-related. This interrelation allows us to see the discursive dimension of paintings and take them as utterances composed of nonverbal elements which determine them, which make them belong to certain discursive formations, which make them compose the aesthetic archive of an era.

Next, when analyzing three European paintings – *The Maids of Honour* by Velásquez, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* by Manet, and *Dangerous Liaisons* by Magritte –, the image of the mirror in the composition of artistic utterance is particularly observed. The mirror, from the second half of the fifteenth century, was regarded already as an "emblem of painting". More than having the function of *mise en abyme*, it constituted a symbolic element. Between the Italian renaissance and the Belgian surrealism, through the Spanish baroque and the French impressionism, its function alternates between the reduplication and the distortion of reality. For this study, the

chercherait si l'espace, la distance, la profondeur, la couleur, la lumière, les proportions, les volumes, les contours n'ont pas été, à l'époque envisagée, nommés, énoncés, conceptualisés dans une pratique discursive; et si le savoir auquel donne lieu cette pratique discursive n'a pas été investi dans des théories et des spéculations peut-être, dans des formes d'enseignement et dans des recettes, mais aussi dans des procédés, dans des techniques, et presque dans le geste même du peintre ".

¹⁶ In the original version: "Face à cette polémique du printemps 1966, il va en quelque sorte profiter de son retrait en Tunisie [...] pour présenter sa conception de la méthode archéologique (qui aboutira à L'archéologie du savoir, écrit à Sidi Bou Saïd en 1967-1968 et paru em 1969)".

image of the mirror was chosen as an element into which, sometimes blending, three natures of discourse converge. They are pointed by Maingueneau (2009) as: (i) positioning discourses in a discursive field (baroque, impressionism, surrealism); (ii) positioning discourses of a category of speaker (the painters Velásquez, Manet, and Magritte); and (iii) the discourse of scientific type, be it of art history (GOMBRICH, 2001) be it of symbology (mirror) in art (CHEVALIER; GHEERBRANT, 1982).

1 The Revealing Reflection in Velásquez

Considerably admired by E. Manet, D. Velásquez (1599-1660) was the principal artist in the court of King Philip IV of Spain and one of the main representatives of the baroque of his time (GOMBRICH, 2001, p.406). In his works, the issue of representation is placed. That is why one of his paintings is chosen to integrate the front pages of *The Order of the Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences*, in which Foucault precisely discusses the parameter of representation in the Classical Age. For Gombrich (2001, p.408-410):

In fact, the beauty of Velásquez's mature works is established in such a way in the effect of the brushstroke and in the delicate harmony of colors that illustrations give only a faint idea of the originals. [...] Because of the effects of this order, the impressionist painters admired Velasquez more than any other old master¹⁷.

His most contemplated painting in Museo del Prado in Madrid is, undoubtedly, *The Maids of Honour*, produced in 1656. In the infinity of details of the framework, which are presented from the smallest brushstroke of the dress of the infanta up to the complex play of looks between the characters of the composition, the mirror plays a crucial role in the construction of meaning effects.

¹⁷ In the original: "En fait, la beauté des œuvres de maturité de Velázquez repose tellement sur l'effet de la touche et sur l'harmonie délicate des couleurs que les illustrations donnent seulement une faible idée des originaux. [...] C'est pour des effets de cet ordre que les peintres impressionnistes admiraient Velázquez plus que tout autre maître ancien".



Picture 1: Detail. Diego Velázquez. *The Maids of Honour*, 1656.
Oil on canvas, 318x276cm Madrid, Museo del Prado
Source: Gombrich (2001, p.409)

In the beautiful analysis performed by Foucault (2006a) of this Velázquez's painting, the mirror was not obviously unnoticed. A number of excerpts to which the mirror is particularly referred are listed below:

- (a) But here it is that, from among all these suspended canvases, one shines with a singular brightness (p. 198)
[...]
- (b) Among all these elements designed to provide representations, but which contest them, hide them, conceal them because of their position or their distance, that one is the only one that works, with all honesty, and it shows what must show (p. 199).
[...]
- (c) Instead of rotating around the visible objects, this mirror crosses the entire field of representation, neglecting what he could capture there, and restores visibility to what remains outside any look (p. 200).
[...]
- (d) The mirror, showing, beyond the walls of the studio, what happens in front of the painting, makes, in its sagittal dimension, the interior and exterior oscillate (p. 203)¹⁸.

¹⁸ In the Portuguese version: (a) “Mas eis que, entre todas essas telas suspensas, uma dentre elas brilha com uma luminosidade singular” (p.198). / (b) “Entre todos esses elementos destinados a oferecer representações, mas que as contestam, as ocultam, as escamoteiam por sua posição ou por sua distância, aquele é o único que funciona com toda honestidade e que mostra o que deve mostrar” (p.199). / (c) “Em vez de girar em torno dos objetos visíveis, esse espelho atravessa todo o campo da representação, negligenciando o que ele poderia ali captar, e restitui a visibilidade ao que permanece fora de qualquer olhar.” (p.200). / (d) “O espelho, mostrando, mais além das paredes do ateliê, o que se passa na frente do quadro faz oscilar, em sua dimensão sagital, o interior e o exterior (p.203).

The mirror provides the answers that the viewer demands: At whom do the painter and the princess look? Who is the painting model? What is being painted on the canvas which is before Velásquez in the composition? Moreover, it reflects what lies outside the margins of the painting – the royal couple, Philip IV and his wife, Marianna. They occupy the "symbolic center" of the picture, to which the child's look and the image in the mirror are finally submitted. The area reflected by the mirror, outside the margins of the composition, may be occupied by many individuals in order to become the subject that observes.

This center is symbolically sovereign in this context, because it is occupied by King Philippe IV and his wife. But above all, it is also sovereign because of the triple function it has in relation to the painting. In this painting, the look of the model at the time it is painted, the look of the viewer who contemplates the scene and the look of the painter when he composes his painting (not the painting which is represented, but the one which is before us and about which we talk) are exactly overlapped. These three "beholding" functions get confused at a point outside the painting, but perfectly real, since, from this point, the representation becomes possible as a model, as a spectacle and as a painting (FOUCAULT, 2006a, p.207-208)¹⁹.

Overall, Velásquez's painting is classified as a "representation of the representation," a "painting of the painting" (Foucault, 2006a). It illustrates a scene of genre to which the painter is accustomed, that is, the production of a real portrait in one chamber of the Royal Alcázar of Madrid. The plane mirror represented by Velásquez in the seventeenth century differs from many convex mirrors presented in the paintings from the fifteenth century²⁰. The reflex of the king and the queen in the mirror is inaccurate, fluid; this technique is also found in *Rokeby Venus* (*Venus at her Mirror*) – which separates the painter from realism.

As an element of artistic utterance, the mirror takes part of the complex play of the characters' looks in the picture; it makes the painting model explicit and highlights

¹⁹ In the Portuguese version: "Esse centro é simbolicamente soberano no contexto, pois ele é ocupado pelo rei Philippe IV e sua esposa. Mas, sobretudo, ele o é pela tripla função que exerce em relação ao quadro. Nele vêm se sobrepor exatamente o olhar do modelo no momento em que o pintam, o do espectador que contempla a cena e o do pintor no momento em que ele compõe seu quadro (não aquele que está representado, mas o que está diante de nós e do qual falamos). Essas três funções 'contempladoras' se confundem em um ponto exterior ao quadro, mas perfeitamente real, pois é a partir dele que se torna possível a representação como modelo, como espetáculo e como quadro".

²⁰ *Arnolfini Portrait* (*Portrait of Giovanni Arnolfini and his Wife*), by Jan van Eyck (1434), oil on wood, 81,8 x 59,7 cm, London, National Gallery, was mentioned, for example. Cf. Gombrich (2001, p.241).

the relation between reality and illusion. In Foucault's words (2006a, p.209), therefore, "the representation can be given as pure representation"²¹.

2 The Unsettling Reflection in Manet

The pictorial revolution that occurred in France in the nineteenth century had three phases: romanticism, represented by E. Delacroix (1798-1863); realism, represented by G. Courbet (1819-1877), and Impressionism, determined by E. Manet (1832-1883). Manet and his group tried to deconstruct what, in art, was just convention. Thus, they performed artistic experiences considered extravagant by their contemporaries. Exposing models and objects in the sun, for example, they found violent oppositions of light and shadow, different from those perceived inside the studio, represented in the paintings by gradient. According to Gombrich (2001, p.514), "you can also say that Manet and his group were the instigators of a revolution in the treatment of colors almost comparable to the revolution brought by the Greeks in the treatment of forms"²².

Comparatively, from all periods in which he conducted studies in painting (FOUCAULT, 2002, 2004, 2006a), the one in which he was in Tunisia was particularly productive.

To Foucault's sojourn in Tunisia, from between September of 1966 and the summer of 1968, it is necessary to add his visits to Tunis in September of 1968 and May of 1971. A public conference on Manet, carried out at the Cultural Club Tahar Haddad, on May 20, 1971, constitutes, it may be said nowadays, the reason for this interest in the period in which Foucault was in Tunisia, which was also probably the one when he conducted a number of studies of pictorial works in the form of courses (TRIKI, 2004, p.51)²³.

²¹ In the Portuguese version: "A representação pode se dar como pura representação".

²² In the original: "aussi peut-on dire que Manet et son groupe ont été les instigateurs d'une révolution dans le traitement des couleurs presque comparable à la révolution apportée par les Grecs dans le traitement des formes".

²³ In the original: "Au séjour tunisien de Michel Foucault, qui se situe entre le mois de septembre 1966 et l'été 1968, il faut ajouter les visites de septembre 1968 et mai 1971 à Tunis. La conférence publique sur Manet donnée le 20 mai 1971 au Club culturel Tahar Haddad constitue, pourrait-on dire aujourd'hui, ici, la raison de cet intérêt pour la période tunisienne de Foucault, qui a été probablement aussi celle où il a entrepris un certain nombre d'études d'œuvres picturales, sous formes de cours".

The more one researches this moment of Foucault's intellectual production in Africa, the more the hypothesis that the domains of science and of epistemology were not the only ones to be seen by an archaeology of knowledge is confirmed. The term "aesthetic discourse analysis" is not arbitrary, but binds tightly to what Foucault himself stated in excerpts from *Other archaeologies*.

The aesthetic discourse in question will be prudently proposed at the end of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, in a long paragraph within a section entitled "Other archaeologies," which deals with ethics and politics, and raises the question of knowledge that would not necessarily settle under epistemological terms. In this passage, Foucault proposes to extract the wordless "say" of the painting, that is, the discursive dimension, the positivity of a knowledge that goes through it, which would be the fact of what today we call science of the art or *poiétique*, but which, above all, reminds us of the exemplary period of the Italian Renaissance, in which scientific theories and theoretical practices of humanist painters accompanied the establishment of the new pictorial representation (TRIKI, 2004, p.59)²⁴.

Therefore, understanding the visuality through French Discourse Analysis means observing how the nonverbal materiality mobilizes certain regions of interdiscursivity, putting into play the discursive heterogeneity, the pre-constructed discourse and its own discursive formation. By proceeding thus, it is possible to achieve the (inter)discursive dimension which constitutes the paintings, which makes the art speak even without words, which places the objects in the interpretable territory, localizable in time and in space. According to Foucault (2011, p.263), "the archaeological analysis would have a different purpose: It would search if space, distance, depth, color [...] were not, at the considered time, named, stated, conceptualized in a discursive practice"²⁵.

²⁴ In the original: "Le discours esthétique dont il est question sera proposé prudemment à la fin de *L'archéologie du savoir*, dans un long paragraphe à l'intérieur d'une partie intitulée 'D'autres archéologies', qui traite de l'éthique et de la politique, et pose la question d'un savoir qui ne se donnerait pas nécessairement sous des figures épistémologiques. Foucault propose dans ce passage d'extraire le 'dire' sans mot de la peinture, c'est-à-dire la dimension discursive, de la positivité d'un savoir qui la traverse et qui serait le fait de ce qu'aujourd'hui on nomme la science de l'art et la poiétique, mais qui surtout rappelle la période exemplaire de la Renaissance italienne où les théories scientifiques et les pratiques théoriques des peintres humanistes allaient de pair avec la mise en place de la nouvelle représentation picturale".

²⁵ In the original: "L'analyse archéologique aurait une autre fin: elle chercherait si l'espace, la distance, la profondeur, la couleur, la lumière, les proportions, les volumes, les contours n'ont pas été, à l'époque envisagée, nommés, énoncés, conceptualisés dans une pratique discursive".

At the conference on E. Manet²⁶, conducted in Tunisia, M. Foucault (2004) analyzed 13 paintings by this French painter, grouped under three headings: a) the space of the canvas; b) lighting; and c) the place of the viewer. Highlighting these three aspects found in French painting of the nineteenth century, Foucault gradually demonstrated the modernity presented in Manet's paintings and the influence, which will be noticed later, on painters from the following generations. Each Manet's painting constitutes a "modernist utterance"²⁷; all these utterances partially contribute to assign a unit to the discourse of the impressionist school in France in the nineteenth century. The brushstroke, the first ability of the *maîtres de la touche*, is one of the visual elements that mobilize the memory of techniques from previous schools, placing two historical and artistic moments in a field of relations. The enunciative identity reflected in the positioning discourse (Cf. MAINGUENEAU, 2009, p.100) of French impressionism is largely constructed from the break with the previous schools on: According to Gombrich (2001, p.514), "[...] Manet abandoned the traditional method of gradient shadows to cling to ruder and more energetic contrasts, which generated a wave of protests among academic artists."²⁸ These protests gave him a place in the hall of the refused ones²⁹.

This study intends to approach neither the three headings listed by Foucault regarding Manet, nor some of the most prestigious characteristics of these paintings. Only the last one will be dealt with: The place of the viewer. To address this issue, Foucault analyzes one of the most famous paintings of Manet:

²⁶ Published under the title of *La Peinture de Manet*. It was presented with some variations in Milan (1967), in Tokyo and Florence (1970), and, finally, in Tunis (1971). The printed version is based on the last conference in Tunis. Cf. M. Saison (2004).

²⁷ In the original: "L'énoncé moderniste, repensé à travers la perspective de l'archéologie foucaultienne, fait du champ de la représentation un champ auquel nous appartenons encore"(SAISON, 2004, p.15).

²⁸ In the original: "[...] Manet abandonnait la méthode traditionnelle des ombres dégradées pour s'attacher à des contrastes plus rudes et plus énergétiques, ce fut un tollé parmi les artistes académiques".

²⁹ *In English.....* Em 1863, o júri recusou-se a apresentar suas obras (de Manet) no Salão oficial. Os protestos foram tantos que se decidiu apresentar todas as obras condenadas pelo júri numa exposição especial que se chamou "Salão dos recusados". In the original: "En 1863, le jury refuse de présenter ses oeuvres (de Manet) au Sallon officiel. Les protestations furent telles que l'on décida de présenter toutes les oeuvres condamnées par le jury dans une exposition spéciale que l'on nomma 'Salon des refusés'" (GOMBRICH, 2001, p.514).



Picture 2: Edouard Manet. *A bar at the Folies-Bergère*, 1881-1882
Oil on canvas, 96x130cm/London, Courtauld Institute Galleries
Source: Néret (2005, p.88-89)

This canvas is a combination of portrait, still life, and scene of genre. Here, the mirror is the element of the visual utterance that most contributes to the effect of "strangeness"³⁰ felt by the viewer. Among many other elements in the composition – which would require a lot of pages to exhaustively explore them– the mirror acts as a node of meaning into which other visual elements converge at the moment of interpreting this painting. The mirror covers much of the surface of the painting, and the discomfort it causes is due to three factors:

i. *The reflection of the woman.* In order to make the reflection be seen where it is, it would be necessary that the painter and the viewer be positioned on the far left side of the picture, according to optics principles. There, where the painter is, a reflection would be generated just behind the woman's body, because the mirror is not placed in an oblique position. According to Foucault (2009, p.76), "The painter therefore occupies – and the viewer is therefore invited to occupy after him – successively or rather simultaneously two incompatible places: one here and the other one there"³¹.

ii. *The man's picture.* In the reflection of the mirror, there is a man who talks to the attendant. On the mirror reflection, he is well positioned near the counter and the woman's face, on which there should be some sort of shadow. But there is nothing. "There is nothing: the lighting comes full shot,

³⁰ It is the last of Manet's great paintings, it is the *Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, which can be found in London. It is a picture whose strangeness, evidently, I do not need to point out to you (Cf. FOUCAULT, 2009, p.73).

³¹ In the original: "Le peintre occupe donc – et le spectateur est invité après lui à occuper – successivement ou plutôt simultanément deux place incompatibles : une ici et l'autre là".

striking without any obstacle or cover whatsoever the whole woman's body and the marble [...]"(FOUCAULT, 2009, p.76)³².

iii. *The play of looks*. Among the characters in the picture, painter and viewer, there is a play of looks. On the mirror reflection, the man who talks to the attendant is much taller than she is. Thus, she should look up, if she were talking to him. She, however, looks down. If the position occupied by the man was actually of the painter, the woman would be observed from above, but both the painter and the viewer observe the servant at the same level as hers, or even further down.

The mirror is the place in which these three systems of incompatibility can be observed: (i) the ambiguous and simultaneous position of both the painter and the viewer; (ii) the presence and the absence of the character who has a conversation with the attendant, influencing the play of light; (iii) the downward look of the speaker with the attendant and the upward look into the represented scene. This structure of the scene contrasts with that of the school of Italian renaissance. In renaissance paintings, the viewer had a fixed position to be occupied, so that the whole represented scene could be contemplated. In Manet's painting³³, viewers are invited to move around the painting in order to find the position that is accorded to them. However, this position does not exist... it is a mixed position, here and there, simultaneously.

3 The Radioscopic Reflection in Magritte

³² In the original: "Or, il n'y a rien: l'éclairage vient de plein fouet, frappe sans obstacle ni écran aucun tout le corps de la femme et le marbre qui est là [...]"

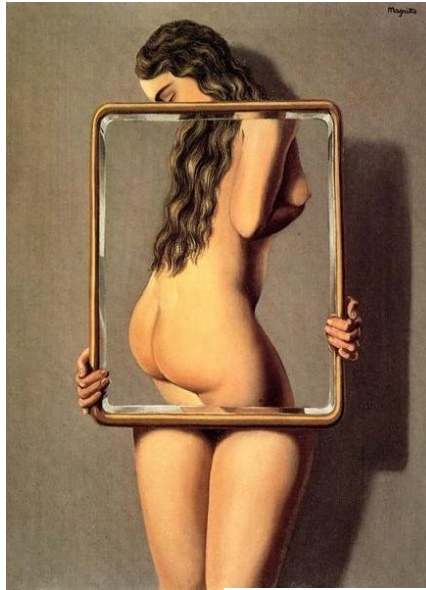
³³ "In order to verify this hypothesis [according to which the materiality would influence the mobility of the viewer], we need to go deeper into the history of the viewer's place that he [Foucault] sketches, from *The Order of Things* to *La Peinture de Manet*. In the classical representation, the viewer is given an ideal and fixed place where he can easily see the show represented. This place is indicated by the work in two ways: by the perspective, certainly, but also by the look of the represented characters. This is the case of *The Maids of Honour*, by Velásquez, which contains a self-portrait [...]. The immobilization of the viewer halfway of the work is part of a strategy to conceal the initial flatness of its support" (MARIE, 2004, p.84). / In the original: "Pour vérifier cette hypothèse [selon laquelle la matérialité jouirait sur la mobilité du spectateur], nous devons entrer plus avant dans l'histoire de la place du spectateur qu'il [Foucault] esquisse, des Mots et les choses à *La peinture de Manet*. Dans la représentation classique, le spectateur se voit attribuer une place idéale et fixe d'où il peut aisément voir le spectacle représenté. Ce lieu, l'œuvre l'indique au spectateur de deux manières: par la perspective, certes, mais également par le regard des personnages représentés. C'est le cas de *Les ménines* de Vélasquez qui contient un autoportrait [...]. L'immobilisation du spectateur à mi-distance de l'œuvre participe d'une stratégie de dissimulation de la planéité initiale de son support".

An important member of a group of artists called "surrealists," R. Magritte (1898-1967) conveys, in his works, the fantastic and oneiric universe. According to Gombrich (2001, p.590), "He understood, however, that what he does is not copying reality, but above all is creating a new reality, as we do in our dreams, even if we do not know how we came to that"³⁴.

In his essay on R. Magritte's painting, first published in *Les cahiers du chemin* in 1968, Foucault (2002) particularly focuses on the painting *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, whose first version dates from 1926. Devoted to a series of this Belgian artist's paintings, the text allows the observation of how the verbal and nonverbal elements (which results in a verbal-visual object) work in the construction of the surrealist discourse. Undoubtedly, this Foucault's text is the one which more explicitly approaches the verbal-visuality in painting, since it deals with the relations between the two discursive materialities: "and, in return, the visible form is dug by writing, ploughed by the words that, from the inside, act on it, and conjuring the steadfast, ambiguous and unnamed presence, they bring out the network of meanings that baptize it, determine it, fasten it in the universe of discourses"³⁵(FOUCAULT, 2002, p.23). In some R. Magritte's works, the mirror is placed in evidence, giving it a certain function, according to its positioning discourse.

³⁴ In the original: "Il a compris toutefois que ce qu'il fait n'est pas de copier la réalité, mais plutôt de créer une nouvelle réalité, comme nous faisons dans nos rêves, même si nous ne savons pas comment nous y parvenons".

³⁵ In the Portuguese version: "e, em retorno, a forma visível é cavada pela escrita, arada pelas palavras que agem sobre ela do interior e, conjurando a presença imóvel, ambígua, sem nome, fazem emergir a rede das significações que a batizam, a determinam, a fixam no universo dos discursos".



Picture 3: René Magritte. *Dangerous Liaisons*, 1935
Oil on canvas, 73x54 cm/Private collection
Source: Paquet (2000)

In this painting, the mirror held by the woman³⁶ is used to hide the naked body. However, it is reflected by this mirror. Paradoxically, what is used to hide does just the opposite. Although it reflects only what it hides, the reflection of the mirror reveals an angle of the woman's body that is not accessible from the position where the viewer is. To some extent, there is certain "representation in abyss" because: a) the woman makes a gesture of hiding, using the mirror; b) the mirror reveals what the woman hides: the part of the body from shoulders to the height of the thighs; c) the gesture of the woman's body in the reflection is the one of someone who hides oneself. It's a play of hiding and revealing, in which what comes first is not known.

The mirror works somewhat in the way of a radioscopic painting, but with a whole set of differences. [...] The image is noticeably smaller than the woman herself, thus indicating, between the mirror and what it reflects, a certain distance that the attitude of the woman refutes, or that is refuted by her, tightening the mirror against her own body to hide it best (FOUCAULT, 2002, p. 70-71)³⁷.

³⁶ It is interesting to notice that the mirror is a female symbol (CHEVALIER, GHEERBRANT, 1982).

³⁷ In the Portuguese version: "O espelho funciona um pouco ao modo de uma tela radioscópica. Mas com todo um jogo de diferenças. [...] A imagem é notavelmente menor do que a própria mulher, indicando assim, entre o espelho e o que ele reflete, uma certa distância que a atitude da mulher contesta, ou é por ela contestada, apertando o espelho contra seu próprio corpo para melhor escondê-lo".

The shadow in this R. Magritte's painting is also observed, presenting an interesting behavior. A woman's body is between a grey wall and the heavy mirror. The shadow reveals that the distance is minimal. As noted by Foucault (2002, p.71), "this projected shadow lacks a form, the one related to the left hand which holds the mirror; normally, it should be seen at the right side of the painting [...]"³⁸. Both the reflection of the mirror and the outline of the shadow on the wall are not consistent with the behavior of these elements in reality; however, these are the elements of the imagetic utterance that insert it in the artistic discourse and make it interpretable as a manifestation of the surrealist school since the operation of these elements in the composition reveals the determinant oneiric dimension of Magritte's work. Gombrich (2001, p.590) states that "[...] many of his oneiric images, painted with meticulous precision and exposed with enigmatic titles, are memorable precisely because they are inexplicable"³⁹.

Final Words: Between Visuality and Interdiscursivity

Three painters. Three schools. Three discourses. In this hall of mirrors, in which the reflections are nothing more than ink on canvas and wood, we tried to capture the interdiscursive dimension of pictorial utterances, the wordless discourse of strokes, of colors, of surfaces, of tints.

In Velásquez's work, the mirror is configured as a visual element that repeatedly brings the viewer into and out of the painting. To some extent, its operation is opposed to that of the Renaissance school, whose principle is to make the object-painting invisible, regarding it as a window that is opened for a given scene. This space reflected by the mirror, besides having been occupied by the painter (at the time of the painting creation), can be occupied both by the model painted by Velásquez (on the canvas represented on her back, in composition) and by the viewer. There is a *space of continuous alternation*.

In Manet's work, the mirror calls the place occupied by the characters of the painting, besides the painter's place and the viewer's place into question. The viewer

³⁸ In the Portuguese version: "nessa sombra projetada, falta uma forma, a da mão esquerda que segura o espelho; normalmente, deveria ser vista à direita do quadro. [...]"

³⁹ In the Portuguese version: "[...] beaucoup de ses images oniriques, peintes avec une précision méticuleuse et exposées avec des titres énigmatiques, sont mémorables précisément parce qu'elles sont inexplicables".

attempts to move in order to find a position that is consistent with the reflection being observed, and, in turn, tries to define the position occupied by the painter in the play of looks and reflections found in *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*. At the Conference on Manet, numerous references to the scenic structure of the Renaissance were found: "the painter's and the viewer's panoptical place, the internal system of lighting, the establishment of relations between the characters due to their spatial distribution and their look"⁴⁰(TRIKI, 2004 p.57). Many elements in this Manet's painting dialogue with the visual aesthetics of the Renaissance. The viewer's movement observed in the nineteenth century contrasts with the fixed place which was suggested to this viewer in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The mirror, here, produces a *place of displacements*.

In Magritte, the mirror paradoxically reveals the body parts, which should be hidden by it. The reflective face of the mirror exposes what the opaque face hides. It works in accordance with a strange transparency, which returns the image of the body at different angles. Still, *the mirror is a place of exposure*.

In all three cases, regularities and differences were observed. In each one of them, the visual element of the mirror reaffirms the imagetic utterance, the positioning discourse (Cf. MAINGUENEAU, 2009, p.45) of their art school: In Velásquez's case, the mirror introduces the problem of representation; in Manet's case, the mirror is a symbol of distortion; in Magritte's case, it reveals the oneiric and fantastic dimension of the surrealist discourse.

The principle governing the operation of reflexes is heterotopic, since they behave as

[...] types of utopias effectively carried out, in which the real positions [...] are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted, types of places that are outside of all places, although they are actually localizable (FOUCAULT, 2006b, p.415)⁴¹.

⁴⁰ In the original: "place panoptique du peintre et du spectateur, régime interne des lumières, mise en rapport des personnages rendue par leur distribution spatiale et par celle de leur regard".

⁴¹ In the original: "[...] espécies de utopias efetivamente realizadas nas quais os posicionamentos reais [...] estão ao mesmo tempo representados, contestados e invertidos, espécies de lugares que estão fora de todos os lugares, embora eles sejam efetivamente localizáveis".

In this same essay, *Of Other Spaces*, Foucault attributes the status of mixed experience between utopias and heterotopias to the mirror. It is a utopia, because its reflection is an unreal space that is virtually opened, and a heterotopia, because it makes the place occupied in front of the mirror real (with respect to the space that it surrounds) and unrealistic (with respect to the fact that, to be perceived, the image passes through the faraway virtual point) at the same time.

Of the six principles listed by Foucault, which are responsible for ruling the operation of heterotopias, the mirror, in art, is very close to the third principle: "In a single real place, the heterotopia has the power to juxtapose several spaces, several positions that are themselves incompatible"⁴² (FOUCAULT, 2006b, p.418). In Valásquez's painting, there is juxtaposition of the space of the king and the viewers in the symbolic center of the painting. In Manet's painting, there is juxtaposition of spaces between the man and the attendant, of the spaces of the painter and the viewer, etc. In Magritte's painting, there is juxtaposition of spaces in the front and the back of the body, of the space that is seen and that is hidden.

When painting is approached through Discourse Analysis as well as in syncretic texts, the interdiscourse is responsible for the production of meanings and interpretations. In the discursive field of art, for example, the mirror mobilizes an entire memory derived from discourses of scientific type which focus on symbology:

Speculum (mirror) originated *speculation*: in its origin, speculating meant observing the sky and the movements of the stars with the help of a mirror. Sidus (star) equally originated *consideration*, which etymologically means watching all the stars. These two abstract words, which describe today's highly intellectual operations, are rooted in the study of the celestial bodies reflected in mirrors. From this, it derives that the mirror, while reflecting surface, is supported by an extremely rich symbolism in the order of knowledge [...]. These reflections of intelligence or of the celestial terms make the mirror appear as the symbol of the *manifestation that reflects the creative Intelligence* (CHEVALIER; GHEERBRANT, 1982, p.635-636, [emphasis in original])⁴³.

⁴² In the Portuguese version: "A heterotopia tem o poder de justapor em um só lugar real vários espaços, vários posicionamentos que são em si próprios incompatíveis".

⁴³ In the original: "Speculum (miroir) a donné le nom de spéculation : à l'origine, spéculer c'était observer le ciel et les mouvements relatifs des étoiles, à l'aide d'un miroir. Sidus (étoile) a également donné considération, qui signifie étymologiquement regarder l'ensemble des étoiles. Ces deux mots abstraits, qui désignent aujourd'hui des opérations hautement intellectuelles, s'enracinent dans l'étude des astres reflétés dans des miroirs. De là vient que le miroir, en tant que surface réfléchissante, soit le support d'un symbolisme extrêmement riche dans l'ordre de la connaissance [...]. Ces reflets de l'intelligence ou de la

In these three analyzed paintings, two discourses that go through the discursive field of art are easily recognized, acting at the level of interdiscourse: a) the discourse of physics, which refers to the operation of mirrors, reflections, images; b) the discourse of the symbols, which rescues the symbology of the mirror in the field of literature, mythology, plastic arts, practices.

In short, to consider the visual materiality of paintings and its role in interdiscourse means to undo the node of discourses that are entangled in the production of artistic utterances and to highlight discursive heterogeneity, discourse pre-construction, and the relations among discursive formations. On the other hand, analyzing the aesthetic discourse based on M. Foucault's work, specifically at the intersection of the archaeological method with the pictorial materiality, has been very productive. As stated by Foucault (2011, p.263), "it would be necessary to show that, in at least one of its dimensions, it [the painting] is a discursive practice that is embodied in techniques and effects"⁴⁴. Analyzing paintings according to their own discursive materiality, characterized by the absence of explicit language registrations, under the French Discourse Analysis perspective, also leads to the encounter of the verb in the interdiscursive dimension, which goes through the materialities and rules the production of meaning in society. In this study, objects that require certain theoretical movements for their understanding were analyzed. Via Foucault (2002, 2004, 2006a) and inspired by Courtine (2006, p.27, [emphasis in original]), some possible ways were rehearsed: "It is necessary to question other utterances besides political utterances [...]; it is necessary to find *texts that disturb*"⁴⁵.

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Parole céleste font apparaît le miroir comme le symbole de la manifestation reflétant l'Intelligence créatrice.

⁴⁴ In the original: "Il faudrait montrer, qu'au moins dans l'une de ses dimensions, elle est une pratique discursive qui prend corps dans des techniques et dans des effets".

⁴⁵ In the Portuguese version: "É preciso interrogar outros enunciados além dos enunciados políticos [...] é preciso encontrar textos que incomodem".

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