

Photo-novel and photo reportage: concepts, confluences, (un)limits,

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Abstract: Photo-novels appeared in Italy in the mid-1940's. Several factors concurred in their creation: the personal hunch of an editor who envisioned a hybrid form between the sentimental popular romance and comics; the newspaper serials; and the illustrated film abstracts that published in the printed media. We may consider this last component the most significant: the photo-novel is, above all, a by-product of the film industry. Thus, although originally linked to the cinematographic medium, the photo-novel later became a new way of recounting original stories, enjoying great popular success in several countries like France and Brazil, besides Italy itself. Photo reportage, on the other hand, is one of the specific forms of photojournalism. Modern photojournalism originated with the German illustrated magazines of the 1920's and 30's. Photo reportage is not concerned with the isolated image but employs a sequence of images (photographs) to achieve a narrative logic: photo reportage must have a beginning and an ending. The present article draws a parallel between the concepts of photo-novel and photo reportage. It examines the convergences between both genres with regard to critical receptiveness both to their content and to their form – which combines text and image. It also looks at issues related with the concept of *narrativity*, with the aim of diluting the eventual boundaries between these two narrative forms

Keywords: text/image relations, photo-novel, photo reportage, photojournalism, editorial design, graphic design

The photo-novel

The popular success of the cinema in the early 20th century originated, in France and Italy, adaptations of movies for the printed media. These adaptations combined a text/synopsis of the film with images taken from (some of) its frames. A frame is a photographic image – the smallest physical unit of a movie. The sequential projection of frames (at a given speed) conveys the impression of a moving image. In the 1930's and early 40's, these illustrated

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abstracts took the cinematographic production of the time to locations distant from the large urban centres (where there were no film theatres). Illustrated abstracts also allowed those who had access to exhibition halls to recall and relive the emotions of watching the films.



Figure 1: Cinevita magazine (Italy / 1942). Source: digitized original.

Some of these adaptations were designed as the pages of an illustrated magazine: the simple juxtaposition of images taken from movie frames to the text and film synopsis. In other adaptations, such as those featured in the Italian magazine “Cinevita” (figure 1), images taken from film frames were arranged in

sequential patterns; each frame was matched to a section of the text (plus an internal caption within the frame itself).

Adaptations of films to the printed media (which continued to be produced along the 20th century) are seen as the pioneers of an important mass cultural phenomenon – the *photo-novel*, a narrative form, or genre, combining text and photographic images.

The photo-novel was actually born of a personal intuition of Domenico Del Duca, one of the partners of *Universo*², a small publishing house in Milan. Besides working as an editor, Del Duca authored popular sentimental romances; and, in 1935, launched a comic magazine (comic are called *fumetto* in Italian), "*Intrepido*", that met with great success. The favourable reception enjoyed by both the sentimental romances and the comic magazine suggested to Del Duca that a hybrid format could meet with a similar acceptance. Another successful formula, also an important genealogical component of photo-novels, were the newspaper serials – stories published in episodes. According to Anna Bravo, in Italy the serials and photo-novels were closely connected. But the authors who published serials could not compare to those who used the medium in England and France: Charles Dickens, Honoré de Balzac, Émile Zola (Bravo, 2011: n.p.). The Italian serial stories were melodramatic and dealt with sentimental and antagonistic appeals: the struggle between *good* and *evil*.

To carry out his project of hybridization between sentimental romance and comics, Domenico invited talented illustrators, such as Walter Molino and Giulio Bertolotti. The stories' scripts were authored by Domenico himself or by female authors such as Luciana Peverelli and Elisa Trapani, who specialized in *romanzo rosa*, a mass consumption literary genre offering stories of love and passion with a happy ending. Aimed mainly at the female public, these *romanzo rosa* were often penned by women. Thus, in June 1946, *Universo* starts publishing a magazine entitled "*Grand Hôtel*", featuring sentimental romances under a comic book format. Carrying the subtitle "*Settimanale di letture illustrate*" ('Illustrated reading weekly'), the magazine presented, besides

² Domenico's partner was his brother, Alceo Del Duca.

comics, other text narratives illustrated by a single image (most often a photograph). The settings and characters of the comic stories were realistic: painstaking watercolours offered images that attempted to mimic (to a greater or lesser extent) photographic representation (figure 2), differently from the more synthetic drawings commonly seen in comic magazines.



Figure 2: Grand Hôtel magazine (Italy / 1946).

Source: digitized original.

The magazine's title is a direct quotation – in French – of the American film “*Grand Hotel*”, produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in 1932³. The movie is considered the first cinematographic attempt at parallel narrative of several stories interconnected in some way. This type of movie with multiple interrelated plots is variously called *multi-plot film*, *polyphonic plot*, *mosaic narrative* or *network narrative*. The stories may be connected by their theme, through ties between the characters or for the fact of being set in the same environment or location. “*Grand Hotel*” can be included in the two latter categories, interlacing four different stories in which there are ties between the characters, who work or are lodged in the elegant Berlin hotel that lends its name to the film.

³ The film put together a cast of great stars of the time, such as Greta Garbo, Joan Crawford and the Lionel and John Barrymore brothers.



Figure 3: Il mio sogno magazine (Italy / 1948). Source: digitized original.

If we view the photo-novel strictly according to Del Duca's original concept – as a melodramatic and sentimental expression –, we should consider it more as a genre than a medium, as Anna Bravo suggests (Bravo, 2011: n. p.). However, if we analyse it specifically as a medium, the photo-novel itself actually arises almost a year after the introduction of “*Grand Hôtel*” magazine. Although this publication by *Universo* is seen as the photo-novel's chief genealogical reference, it was the launching of the “*Il mio sogno*” magazine, in May 1947 that consolidated the format that would become known in Italy, somewhat later, as *fotoromanzo*. Introduced by *Novissima*, a small Rome publisher, “*Il mio sogno*” exhibited the same sentimentalist approach of “*Grand Hôtel*”; however, it brought in a significant change: the realistic drawings were replaced by photographs (figure 3).

The neologism *fotoromanzo* appeared a few days after the appearance of “*Il mio sogno*”, with the launch, in May 1947, of the “*Bolero Film*” magazine, by the Milanese publisher *Mondadori*. A subhead within a textbox on the cover advertises: “*Attenzione! Bolero Film cerca attrici e attori per i suoi fotoromanzi*” (“Attention: Bolero Film is looking for actresses and actors for its photo-novels”).

The success of the new genre/medium was huge and immediate. Several titles were launched by other Italian publishers. According to Anna Bravo (our

translation): “In just a short while photo-novels settled down in the cultural topography of both Italian females and males” (Bravo, 2011: n. p.). Photo-novels commanded large print runs and the phenomenon spread into other countries, especially to France⁴; they also enjoyed great success in Brazil.

Photo-novel and movies

Notwithstanding the fact that the original concept of the photo-novel (and its popularity) is connected with gender issues (on the melodramatic key), this narrative form has more solid connections with the universe of the cinema. One may venture the idea that the relationship between “*Grand Hôtel*” magazine and the homonymous film produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer cannot be reduced to the mere appropriation of the title. It is clear that the characters in the photo-novels published by the magazine reflect Hollywood types that they take as their image reference, that is, they are serial stories conceptually based on film stereotypes. Moreover, the illustration on the cover of the first issue of “*Grand Hôtel*” (figure 4) shows a couple entering a movie theatre – called *Grand Hotel* –; the posters depicted in the same illustration show that the film being exhibited is “*Anime incatenate*” – the title of the first comic published by the magazine. This clearly suggests that the comics published are intended to be seen as the graphical analogue of a movie. Thus, we conclude that we are dealing with something beyond the appropriation of a title. The editorial concept of “*Grand Hôtel*” reflects the *multi-plot* structure of the American movie: the serialized narrative is a kind of *polyphony* of Hollywood imagery, a weekly parade of stories inspired on cinematographic productions and types.

⁴ Photo-novels are produced to this day in Italy and France.



Figure 4: Grand Hôtel magazine (Italy / 1946).
Source: digitized original.



Figure 5: Il mio sogno magazine (Italy / 1948). Source: digitized original.

There are still other aspects that substantiate the proposition that the photo-novel concept reaches beyond a gender-restricted approach and has a stronger link with the cinema. The first magazine to use photos instead of illustrations in its photo-novels, “*Il mi sogno*”, makes a clear reference to the film medium in its subtitle: “*Settimanale di romanzi d’amore a fotogrammi*” (‘Weekly love stories in frames’) (figure 5). In spite of this allusion, the frames of the “*Il mi sogno*” photo-novels were not only rectangular as movie frames: some circular appendages were used in the clippings for some of the scenes (figure 3). However, the most frequent layout, and the one that was consolidated in the pages of photo-novels in general, was the sequence of rectangular, orthogonal clippings.

The photo-novels' page design or, more broadly speaking, their traditional, consolidated editing/montage process was almost unchangeable, employing frames with little or no size difference between them (figure 6) (frames were generally organized following a modular structure). Sometimes a frame was larger than the others – but this seems to be due to space/composition factors, and not to narrative and dramatic concerns. The text that follows was taken from a publisher's instruction manual of sorts for the production of photo-novels⁵:

The most dramatic and suggestive photo enlargement should be chosen (...) Photo size must not be arbitrary but should correspond to the most convenient reduction of the original photos (*apud* Habert, 1974: 80).

⁵ The text mentioned here is part of an abstract, done by Angeluccia Habert, of the content of a typewritten original entitled “*Instrucciones para el armado de las historietas fotográficas*”. These instructions were drawn up in Argentina; in Brazil, *Editora Abril* used them to guide the production of photo-novels.



Figure 6: Grand Hôtel magazine (Italy / 1963).
Source: digitized original.

One could draw an analogy between the editing of a photo-novel and film editing. To do this we should consider that each photograph in a photo-novel corresponds to a *plane* in the film (and not to a frame). From the physical standpoint, a plane is a sequence of frames. Technically, the plane is the time elapsed between the moment the camera starts and the instant it stops, that is, the stretch of film between cuts (a cut is the transition from one plane to the next). So, the editing of a film is a linear articulation of planes in a given order⁶; by analogy, the editing of a photo-novel could be defined as the linear articulation of photographs in a certain arrangement.

Marcel Martin discerns two types of montage in film editing: the *narrative* and the *expressive* (although there is no clearly marked limit between them). According to Martin, narrative montage “consists in arranging several planes in a logical or chronological sequence – with the goal of telling a story”. Expressive montage, on the other hand, aims at obtaining a dramatic effect by the “collision of two images” (Martin, 2005:167).

It should be stressed that in the instruction manual extract shown above the dramaticism requirement refers to the photos – individually –, and their

⁶ This definition of film editing is a reductionism, but convenient for the purposes of this article.

size is a function of "the most convenient reduction"; no reference is made to the dramatic effect of the whole – the editing or montage. To appropriate the classification proposed by Martin, the montage of a traditional photo-novel is narrative, and not expressive – it does not contemplate the possibility of obtaining dramatic effects by way of a *collision of images*. A photograph of a certain size followed by another a lot larger without an immediate nexus with the preceding image, for example, could cause a rupture in the mind of the reader, intensifying the reading and comprehension experience.



Figure 7: Top: Intervalo TV magazine (Brazil / 1965); Above: Sétimo Céu magazine (Brazil / 1967). Source: digitized original.

However, the publishers thought that photo-novels should tell the story in such a way as to facilitate their easy absorption by the public: a more

sophisticated editing based on dramatic variables was not suitable for a product to be consumed by the masses. From its inception, the photo-novel was conceived as a format directed to a popular audience, and this public is not concerned with dramatic or visual subtleties but only with consuming the content in the customary manner. This was the basic ingredient and recipe for the photo-novel's success.



Figure 8: Amor Film magazine (France / 1958). Source: digitized original.

Thus, it seems like traditional photo-novels are nothing but a follow-up on the expedient of offering images taken from frames and arranged sequentially to synthesize the script from a movie. The difference is that most

photo-novels had specific scripts, and dialogs were inscribed in the frames. In several photo-novels, moreover, the frames suggest a *screen* – and, indirectly, a still image of a movie (figure 7). We should remind ourselves that photo-novels also have in their genealogy stories told *in frames* – the comics.



Figure 9: Pop magazine (Italy / 1973). Source: digitized original.

It is significant that illustrated filmic adaptations published during the 20th century incorporate the photo-novel format, and include dialogs inserted within the frames. In some other adaptations we see the intent of exploiting the design of the printed page to achieve greater dynamism (possibly an attempted reference to the rhythm of the movies). The pages from the adaptation of the film “*Embrassez la pour moi*”⁷ (figure 8) display a more expressive design, with non-orthogonal cuts and diagonal composition, breaking the monotonous regularity of the traditional succession of frames. The non-orthogonality balanced the printed and blank areas, making for a lighter visual composition, less dense than that of traditional photo-novels.

Erotic photo-novels also received (and still receive) a differentiated graphic presentation. The reason is simply that they are not linked directly to the narrative but to eroticism, thence the stress on form. Although the spread

⁷ Original title: “*Kiss Them for Me*” (with Cary Grant and Jayne Mansfield).

(double-page) reproduced below (figure 9) has a more traditional layout, it is outstanding by the use of typographical inflection (in “*Che fai?*”) – a resource characteristic of printed media employed to suggest a change in voice modulation using a larger font size. This device is not exploited in traditional photo-novels.

Photo reportage

Photo reportage is inscribed in a wider field: the photojournalism. The latter is, in a broader sense, a journalistic genre in which photography plays a fundamental role in the production/presentation of information. According to Jorge Sousa, the information conveyed by photojournalism can assume the following forms:

from *spot news* (single photos condensing a representation of an event and its meaning) to more elaborate and planned reports, from photo documentaries to “illustrative” photos and *feature photos* (photographs of peculiar situations witnessed by photographers in their deambulations). Thus, in a wider sense, we can also use the term photojournalism to cover photo documentation and some illustrative photos published by the press (Sousa, 2000: 12).

It is not our aim in this paper to detail and distinguish between different forms of photojournalism (even because these are often ambiguous). Our approach is ontological and focalizes the photo reportage. According to one of the pioneers of modern photojournalism, the Hungarian Stefan Lorant, a photo reportage “should have (...) a beginning and ending defined in terms of place, time and action” (*apud* Sousa, 2000: 81). Thus, photo reportage aims at *telling a story*.

In the early age of the alliance between photography and journalism, the focus was on the single image, “to take this image to the public as a testimony” (Sousa, 2000: 25). This objective envisioned the consubstantiation, in this single image, of “the diverse significant elements of an event (...) so they would be easily identified and understood” (Sousa, 2000: 18). Thus, photography was seen as a testimony, truth itself – a tautology –; after all, a photograph, as Roland Barthes stressed, “always brings along its referent” (Barthes, 1984: 15).

There was still, up to that moment, no idea of photojournalism as such. The concept of photojournalism, or, more specifically, that of photo reportage, arose in Germany in the 1920's. The text/image articulation in the German illustrated magazines of the time was no longer centred on a single image; the focus is on “the text and the whole *photographic mosaic* used to tell the story” (Sousa, 2000: 72).

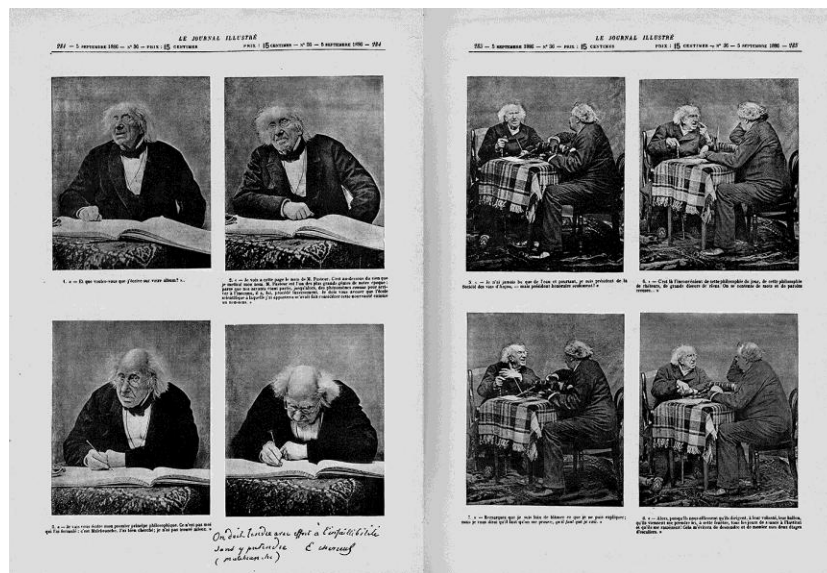


Figure 10: Le Journal Illustré (France / 1886). Source: digitized original.

However, we can consider that the first photo reportage was produced a few years before that. Although it was an isolated experience, that report was published in 1886, in the French periodical “*Le Journal Illustré*” (figure 10). It is the interview conducted by the photographer Félix Nadar with French scientist Michel-Eugène Chevreul. The text was combined with a series of twelve sequential photos taken by Paul Nadar (Félix's son).

The journal's editorial deals with the difficulty of achieving reliability in interviews (translation by the author of this paper):

The trustworthiness of the stories told relies on their absolute, mathematical precision. A word forgotten changes the meaning of the sentence/phrase, or even misquotes the interviewee, the personality one is questioning.

To forestall this inconvenience, the editorial presents the solution of "offering readers 'evidence' of the veracity of the dialogue recorded/reproduced":

Soon, as we all know, it will be possible to record human words using the wonderful Ader phonograph⁸; then, there will be no more mistakes, no more omissions. But a young artist with a famous surname, Paul Nadar, has been able to accomplish beforehand, through photography, the phonograph's task of recording enunciated sounds.

It is an admirable and penetrating – though odd – analogy between the sound recorded and the photographic image. To paraphrase Barthes, a recorded voice also brings along its referent. The fact is that Nadar, in his intent of exploiting the expressive potential of the human face, offers *proof* that what has been said is true, as suggested by another passage of the editorial:

Paul Nadar reproduces instantaneously all the attitudes and, so to say, all the visages of the famous scientist. His face changed, the rhythm and speed of his speech flowed with the different questions posed to him.

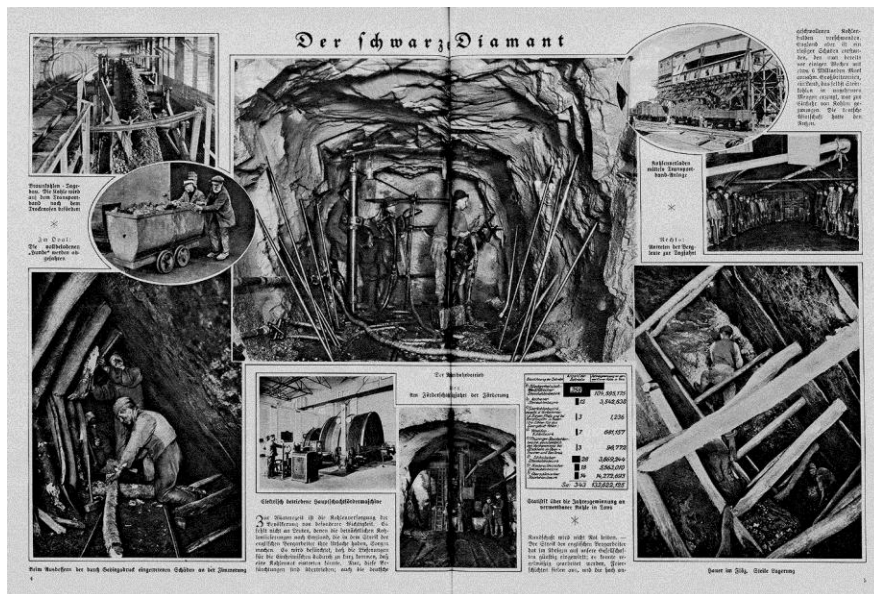


Figure 11: Rheinsberger Zeitung: Illustrierte Beilage (Germany / 1926).
Source: Newspaper information system of the Berlin State Library <zefys.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de>.

⁸ The phonograph was an apparatus invented in 1877 by Thomas Edison to record and reproduce sounds using a cylinder. It was the first machine capable of sound recording and playback.

Nadar's anachronic experience contains the seed of the concept of photo reportage. But it was the German journalism of the early 20th century that realised the idea of *picture-story*, or *photo-story* – the photographic report with beginning and end, in the definition of Lorant, who was the editor of one of the outstanding German magazines of the period, *Münchner Illustriert Presse*. Another German periodical of the same period, *Rheinsberger Zeitung: Illustrierte Beilage*, published the story entitled "The Black Diamond", on coal mining⁹ (figure 11). Although there is no visual sequence of frames, the whole – a *photographic mosaic* – attains the objective of describing the procedure of obtaining the substance.

The narrative character of photo reportages also seems to have been quite well suited to police reports. A publication of the genre from the early 20th century, the French periodical "*Déetective*", lent a semi-literary character to its photo reportages. One of them, entitled "The vampire of Kent" (figure 12), the first-person text by reporter Ashton Wolfe suggests a detective story. The starting passage is reproduced below (our translation):

I stretched my arm mechanically towards the telephone.

– B.r.r.i.n.g.

I pressed the receptor to my ear. Feeble and distant, the voice of my friend, Inspector Wedgewood, Scotland Yard's Special Squad, articulated:

– Man, you take too long to pick up the phone. I've been calling you forever.

I glanced at the lighted dial by the bedside table: it was just five!

– An instigating case, my interlocutor went on, his voice much more high-pitched now. In one hour all police officers are going to leave Kent to search the nearby woods and forest, with a pack of hunting hounds [sic]. Ivy Godden, an amiable twelve-year old girl, has vanished misteriously yesterday. The girl is well-known around the country for her refined voice. She sings on Sundays at the Uper Rupkinge church. It is feared she could have been added to the list of victims of the vampire of Kent. If our fears unfortunately come true and we find the body of the poor girl, the dogs will have been set on the trail of the infamous assassin. It will be a merciless hunt for the man, and, if it suits you, I'll take you along. I'll be there with you

⁹ Mineral charcoal (an important energy source in the Industrial Revolution era) was also known as *black diamond*, for its high content of carbon, the raw material of diamonds.

within ten minutes. Be ready.

This photo reportage also does not exhibit a visual frame sequence, but the *photographic mosaic* describes – and reflects – the dramatic character of the text: the victim's photo on a neutral background, at the top of the page; the dogs' *menacing image* cut-out – on half a page –, just below; the frame succession (showing the disturbance in the town) which, via visual contrast, highlights the cropped image of the girl's father.



Figure 12: Détective newspaper (France / 1931). Source: digitized original.

Connotation in photo reportage

In terms of the desired journalistic credibility, the excellence of the photo reportage stems from the fact that the photograph is seen as a *mirror* of reality. In the mid-1850s, photography already "benefited from (...) the notions of 'evidence', 'testimony' and 'truthfulness', which were profoundly associated with it at the time (Sousa, 2000: 33). Some contemporary scholars¹⁰ feel that the evolution in the field of photography has allowed for "the increasingly perfected representation of reality through image" (Sousa, 2000: 15). The *truth-value* of photography is unmistakable, and this is the chief asset of photo reportage.

¹⁰ Sousa quotes Gernsheim, Geraci and Hoy.



Figure 13: O Cruzeiro magazine (Brazil / 1964). Source: digitized original.

This undeniable trait of photography is confirmed by Barthes, for whom, being a "message without a code", photography can only denote; it is nothing besides the "analogical content itself" (Barthes, 1990: 13). However, Barthes

observes that there is one kind of photography which can also be *connotative*, and that is precisely journalistic photography.

Journalistic photography can be connotative in several ways, as it is "an object worked on, chosen, composed, constructed, treated according to professional, aesthetic or ideological norms" (Barthes, 1990: 14). However, the main artifice for endowing journalistic photography with connotation is precisely the possibility of superimposing it on a text (title, caption, article) – after all, journalistic photography is not an isolated structure: Barthes notes a coexistence of two messages: the denoted (the photographic analogue) and the connoted (established via superimposition on the text).

In 1964, the Brazilian magazine “*O Cruzeiro*” published a photo reportage about wild duck hunting in the Jacuí River Valley (Rio Grande do Sul State) (figure 13). Hunting of this animal was then allowed in the region. The text describes the hunt as a bold and brave activity. The tenor of the piece lends the images a positive, heroic connotation: one passage of the text states that the dead ducks "are the trophies won as prizes for the good shots". If those same photographs had been superimposed on a critical text (regarding the images) – evoking, e.g., environmentally conscious values –, the connotation would be the diametrical opposite and the photographs would no longer be seen as representations of *heroic* feats.

Besides that, connotation in photo reportage can also be unconscious: Jorge Sousa points out that the stories published in German photo reportages of the early 20th century were often told interpreting the fact, *assuming a viewpoint (...), even if one was not aware of that*” (Sousa, 2000: 72-73) (our italics).

Photo-novel and photo reportage: confluences

There are significant convergences in the public reception of the two narrative forms reviewed here. Criticism centres on content and form, the text/photograph ensemble.

The development of photojournalism in Germany stimulated the idea that the general public is not concerned only with events involving public figures, but is also motivated by

themes that depict their own life; German magazines begin, thenceforth, to integrate reports on daily life with which a large share of the public could identify, as much as it was anxious for images (Sousa, 2000: 74)

Thus, photo reportages can be seen as privileging the concerns of the upper social strata and avoiding political and social issues. The *reality* constructed by photojournalism would be, thus, imposed by the bourgeoisie. From that point of view, journalistic photographs would seem to foster alienation.

A similar alienating character has already been attributed to the photo-novel. According to Angeluccia Habert, "right from the beginning, photo-novel magazines envision the integration of women into urban society". Through fiction (even under a sentimentalist form), a new standard for the role of women in industrial society is created: a "modern woman, who works out of the home and lives in a big city". This, from one point of view, increases women's motivation toward greater participation within society; but, on the other hand, it "fosters conformism", as, due to their content, photo-novels identify the idea of "happiness" at an "individual and sentimental" level (Habert, 1974: 31-32).

As for the bias regarding the formal aspect of the photo-novel – combining, as it does, text and image – it derives from the literary universe. Arguing for the specific character of the literary medium, Gustave Flaubert criticized the combination of text and image in literature. For Flaubert, "the literary effect of a text can be destroyed by the recourse to illustration" (Casa Nova, 2008: 40); he "held that, in a work of fiction, for the reader and the writer alike, the text's suggestive or allusive power sufficed" (Garcia, 2013: 34).

Likewise, in the field of journalism, "the editors, imbued with a literary frame of mind, resisted for a long time the use of photographs to accompany the text"; the practice was seen as a debasement of the *gravitas* of journalistic information (Sousa, 2000: 17). Here we find a paradox: photography, that

theoretically fulfils the role of testifying to the veracity of a fact, can at the same time compromise this truthfulness. We may see this paradox as a reflection of Barthes' theory: if photography can only denote, it values and confers veracity to information; but combined with text, it can connote and, thus, can also degrade the trustworthiness of information.

Thus, there are two factors in the rejection of both narrative forms: the content, seen as alienating, as it inculcates superficially elaborated realities; and the text/photography combination, for, hypothetically, the concept of narrative by itself dispenses with the image.

There seems to be no hierarchy between these two rejection vectors. Maybe the most well-founded line of argument is that which regards the content, since both statements are supported by social and political considerations. On the other hand, generalizing Barthes' opinion on photography in the field of journalism – that is, considering text/image relationships in general (and thus including photo-novels), the connoting power of the photograph seems to be greater than the content issues. Thus, criticism seems to be due, more directly, to a biased and prohibitive view of the text/image association.

The photo-novel and photo reportage: moving boundaries

As a cultural product, the photo-novel requires production (similar to that of a cinematographic feature): besides the photographs themselves, a photo-novel story needs a script, direction, set, makeup, actors. Some types of photo reportage demand slightly more sophisticated production. “Look” magazine published the photo reportage “America most wanted students”, on secretarial career training in the USA (figure 14).

An account by the magazine's editor and producer of the photo reportage, George Leonard, discloses part of the production process:

We knew we had to find a young woman and be able to show, using her face, exactly what it means to study to become a secretary. We found our young woman, Judy Kirwan, 18 (...). We visited seven other colleges in the Seattle area and interviewed some 420 youths before deciding Judy was the best.

John Vachon [the photographer] got some (...) impressions, moving around and about [the secretariat school] with his camera to capture significant gestures as the *ballet* of hands feeding paper into a row of typewriters (*apud* Bacelar, 1971: 13).

Once selected – just as an actress would have been –, the student cast in the photo reportage role is photographed playing three different moments: the wish to become a secretary; the learning stage; and, finally, her employment as a professional. According to the magazine's art director, Verne Noll, the three spreads that contained the report unfolded with "an immediate logic: a beginning (the young woman at the typewriter), midway through (the bustle and variety in a secretary's learning process) and an ending (the young lady filling a secretary post, her plans and longings)" (*apud* Bacelar, 1971: 13).



Figure 14: Look magazine (USA / 1965).
Source: digitized original.

This photo reportage on “Look” was produced and materialised much like a *photo-novel*: it involved a script, direction, set, makeup (presumably) and an

actress. Besides that, “Look” tried to imbue the story with feelings and emotion. In the words of Martin Goldman, text editor of the magazine:

The captions must be linked to the photos, but should also go beyond them. Loose captions, in the form of blocks of text, should particularly convey the feelings and emotions hidden in the person who appears in the photos. (...) In an illustrated reportage, the words must summarize thought and emotion on the move, just as the camera captures images; and they should do it with the precision of a sonnet. (Apud Bacelar, 1971: 13)

Another photo reportage, issued in 1937 by the same “Look”, entitled “The Third degree: Brutal police methods sometimes used on prisoners”, makes a more direct emotional appeal. In the photo reportage (figure 15), actors play out the application of some of these "methods", such as the use of an iron claw or a rubber hose. Although there is no dialogue and, so, also no balloons, the page design is similar to that of a photo-novel.



Figure 15: Look magazine (USA / 1937). Source: digitized original.

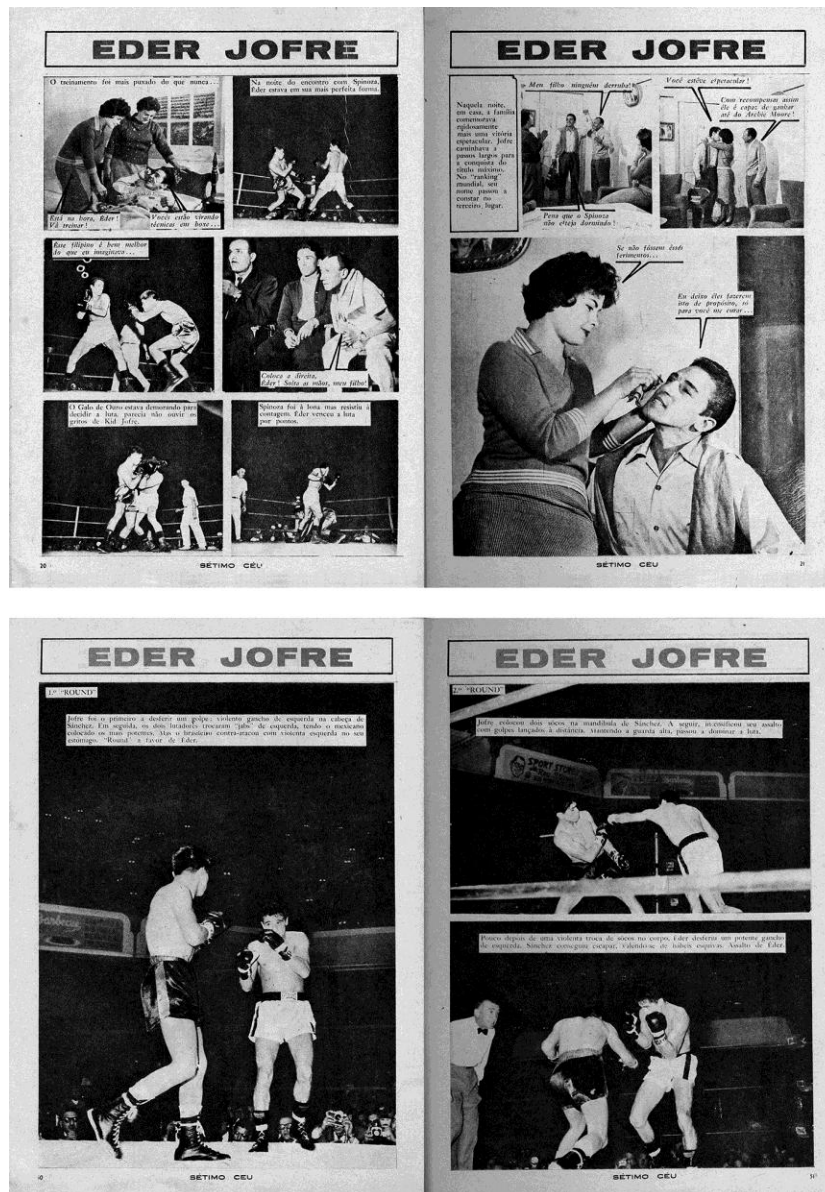


Figure 16: Éder Jofre: o galo de ouro campeão mundial magazine (Brazil / 1960). Source: digitized original.

But dialogue balloons were also employed in photojournalism, originating a mixed narrative form – simultaneously photo-novel and photo reportage. In the 1960's in Brazil, biographic photojournalism appropriated the photo-novel format. Illustrated biographies of personalities or celebrities like sportsmen and popular music artists became commonplace.



Figure 17: Sétimo Céu magazine (Brazil / 1993). Source: digitized original.

The magazine “*Éder Jofre: o galo de ouro campeão mundial*” (figure 16), published in 1960, contains a short biography of the Brazilian boxer. Entitled “*Punhos de ouro*” (Golden Fists), it's a photo-novel telling Éder Jofre's story: from childhood (coming from a boxing family, he was always bullied by his schoolmates), the early times in the sport and his career in boxing, to his conquest of the World Bantamweight Championship Belt in November 1960, in Los Angeles. The photos come from the boxer's own collection (except for childhood photos): Jofre played his own role, alongside family members. There are also photos from contests, such as the match in which Jofre defeated Mexican boxer Eloy Sanchez by *knockout* and became WBA World Bantamweight champion for the first time.

Another similar production that mixed the two narrative forms was the Brazilian photo-novel “*Pacto de sangue*” (Blood Pact), published as a special issue of “*Sétimo Céu*” magazine (figure 17). This so-called *documentary photo-novel* features actors playing out the story of the murder of the actress Daniela Perez, in 1992. Besides the dramatic performance, there are other texts and actual photographs covering the crime.

According to Eduardo Leone, there is not a specific narrative style characteristic of each medium. If narrative is “understood as the concatenation of a certain number of actions which evolve from a beginning to a conclusion” (Leone, 2005: 51), all narrative is set up according to a given logic, in which the relations between parts aim at intelligibility. There is, thus, not a theatrical narrative and a cinematographic narrative, for example – what is specific is *narrativity*, the conjugation of a narrative with the medium used: in a book, a dash indicates a character's speech, while in comics a balloon is used.

Is it possible to distinguish a narrative technique employed by photo-novels and another by photo reportages? Essentially, there seems to be no limit between both forms. Even in terms of their rejection, the two genres are comparable. But, to ponder the issue briefly, we might ask: would the presupposed fictional character of photo-novels and the equally presupposed testimonial nature of photo reportages constitute a limit between them? If so,

an apparent paradox is introduced: as we have seen, photo reportages generally seem to exploit drama more than photo-novels. However, as the photo-novel is predominantly a work of fiction, isn't the connotation – the particular vision – that can be lent to a photo reportage equally fictional? A photo reportage is not devoid of the authorial dramatic component. The reflections put forward in this paper and some of the examples presented would argue for the dilution, to different degrees, of eventual limits between the two narrative forms.

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