

ARTICLES

# CONVOCATION REGIMES FOR ENVIRONMENTALISM IN BRAZILIAN BUSINESS MAGAZINES

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**ABSTRACT** - The tensions between the liberal-capitalist discourse and the antagonistic discourses of environmentalism are of special interest in Brazil. This paper outlines a study of the convocation regimes employed in environmental reports published in 2010 in the two most prominent Brazilian economics and business magazines, whose communication contracts propose the modalization of executives and companies towards economic success. Its objective is to analyze how enunciators thematize environmental antagonisms while keeping their general communication contract within the liberal-capitalist paradigm. The enunciator constitutes a regime of sameness/otherness, where sameness is built upon the terms of the reformist orientation of environmentalism, while deep ecology and radical ecology are presented as othernesses. The nodal points that connect the chains of equivalence of the discursive field of environmentalism, in terms of environmental reformist sameness, or "sustainability," are technology and efficient management, which return the reader to the original communication agreement.

**Keywords:** Business magazines. Liberal-capitalist discourse. Environmentalism. Sustainability.

## REGIMES DE CONVOCAÇÃO DO AMBIENTALISMO NAS REVISTAS BRASILEIRAS DE NEGÓCIOS

**RESUMO** - As tensões entre o discurso liberal-capitalista e os discursos antagonistas do ambientalismo revestem-se de um especial interesse no Brasil. Este artigo apresenta um estudo dos regimes de convocação das reportagens sobre meio ambiente publicadas em 2010 nas duas revistas brasileiras mais influentes de economia e negócios, cujos contratos de comunicação propõem a modalização de executivos e empresas em direção ao sucesso econômico. Seu objetivo é analisar como os enunciadores tematizam os antagonismos ambientais conservando seu contrato geral de comunicação sob o paradigma liberal. Para isso, o enunciador constitui um regime de mesmidade/alteridade, sendo que a mesmidade é construída nos termos da corrente reformista do ambientalismo, enquanto a ecologia profunda e a ecologia radical são apresentadas como alteridades. Nos termos da mesmidade ambiental reformista, ou "sustentabilidade", os pontos nodais que suturam as cadeias de equivalência do campo discursivo do ambientalismo são a tecnologia e a gestão eficiente, as quais restituem o enunciatário ao contrato de comunicação original.

**Palavras-chave:** Revistas de negócios. Discurso capitalista liberal. Ambientalismo. Sustentabilidade.

## REGÍMENES DE CONVOCACIÓN DEL AMBIENTALISMO EN LAS REVISTAS BRASILEÑAS DE NEGOCIOS

**RESUMEN:** Las tensiones entre el discurso liberal capitalista y los discursos antagonistas del ambientalismo se revisten de un especial interés en Brasil. Este artículo presenta un estudio de los regímenes de convocación de los reportajes sobre el medio ambiente publicados en 2010 en las dos revistas brasileñas más influentes sobre economía y negocios, cuyos contratos de comunicación proponen la modalización de ejecutivos y empresas en dirección al éxito económico. Su objetivo es analizar como los enunciadores tematizan los antagonismos ambientales conservando su contrato general de comunicación bajo el paradigma liberal. Para ello, el enunciador constituye un régimen de mismidad/alteridad, siendo que la mismidad es construída en los términos de la corriente reformista del ambientalismo, mientras que la ecología profunda y la ecología radical son presentadas como alteridades. Los puntos nodales que suturan las cadenas de equivalencia del campo discursivo del ambientalismo, en los términos de la mismidad ambiental reformista, o "sostenibilidad", son la tecnología y la gestión eficiente, que restituuyen el enunciatario al contrato de comunicación original.

**Palabras clave:** Revistas de negocios. Discurso liberal capitalista. Ambientalismo. Sostenibilidad.

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to outline the communication contracts and convocation regimes of two Brazilian economics and business magazines on the theme of “environment.” The analysis encompassed the 2010 editions of *Exame* (24 issues) and *Época Negócios* (12 issues) published by the country’s two most influential media groups, Abril and Globo<sup>1</sup>. This study only comprises the genre of reporting, constituting the journalistic core around which each edition is crafted. Only news stories whose main theme was the environment, were selected, while supplementary or incidental citations were disregarded. Based on this criterion, 46 stories whose main theme was environment were identified, representing the corpus of this research.

This paper is the culmination of a three-year research project conducted by the Print Media Research Group of the Postgraduate Program in Communication and Semiotics of PUC-SP, with the support of CNPq, a Brazilian research funding agency, which resulted in a hypermedia DVD titled “Regimes of visibility in magazines – a multifocal analysis of communication contracts,” (PRADO, 2011; 2008). In this hypermedia, an analysis was made of 28 contemporary publications aimed at female, male, young, executive, black and homosexual audiences. The research was based on critical theories of communication and on theories of discursive analysis (LACLAU; MOUFFE, 1985; FOUCAULT, 2009), which recommend not only a strict textual analysis but also a critical historical and social approach to the conditions of text production. In this paper, we will deepen the analysis of business magazines based on the setting of characteristics of the convocation strategies that reveal the modus operandi of the communication contracts of the aforementioned magazines.

### SIGNIFICANT CHAINS AND NODAL POINTS

First, it is necessary to explain the concepts of “communication contract” and “convocation.” A communication contract is a presupposed agreement which is discovered a posteriori, at the moment of the discursive analysis, such that it is not to be regarded as an agreement reached explicitly between a news organization and its readers. Rather, a “contract” involves understanding what the enunciator states in order to modalize the reader by means of knowledge, guiding them as to how they

should be or do something (PRADO, 2008; 2010; 2011). Convocation is the semiotic term for the communicative impulse that the pragmatic relationship of communication seeks to incite in the reader, starting with the communication contract proposed by the enunciator (PRADO, 2010; 2013).

Thus, the communication contract builds, in the text, the relation between the enunciator, which is a function of discourse, and the enunciatee, another function, connected by the projected reception. When the reader identifies with the enunciatee, the contract fulfills its purpose. From this point on, we will use the term “reader” rather than “enunciatee”, since it is simpler. All the discourse semiotics terms are borrowed from Greimas and Courtês (1993).

Examining the relationships between enunciators and readers in the communication contract proposed by the publications studied here implies investigating them as significant chains linked by nodal points, starting with specific watchwords, which become a network of symbolic equivalencies in which meanings are generated, seeking to diminish the differences existing in the audience, homogenizing segmented subgroups of readers who seek success in business, following the modalizations of the enunciator. These nodal points articulate temporary discursive totalizations (selected and shown as established and definitive) that indicate subject positions consistent with leadership and wealth, linked to a neoliberal emotional economy that homogenizes segments competing for prestige and power (SOUZA, 2006; PRADO, 2007; BINKLEY, 2010).

For Laclau and Mouffe (1985), a discourse is a set of differential sequences of a political nature, since it involves “the construction of antagonisms and the exercise of power” (HOWARTH et al., 2000, p. 9). The attempts to sew significant chains stem from social antagonism and from the way in which discourses try to deal with it. The sequences are differential because a term is only valid insofar as it differs from the others. In the words of Laclau, the term socialism only takes on meaning within a set of other terms such as feudalism and capitalism.

The construction and experiences of social antagonisms are central to the theory of discourse. From the outset, social antagonisms inject an irreconcilable negativity into social relations. This is because they reveal “the limit points of society in which the social meaning is contested and cannot be stabilized” (HOWARTH et al., 2000). In other words, a discursive totalization is never complete inasmuch as the fields of signification are ambiguous and temporary. For this reason, the semiotic building of meaning chains is an unceasingly shifting movement

of displacements that instigates constant changes among the various positions of the agents and of the discourses themselves. Antagonisms are “the evidence of the frontiers of social formation. (...) they show the points where identity is no longer fixed in a differential system, but contested by forces which lie outside – or at the very limit itself – of that order” (HOWARTH et al., 2000, p. 9). Thus, social objectivity itself stems from antagonism. For Howarth et al. (2000, p. 9-10):

As they cannot be reduced to the preconstituted interests and identities of social agents, the construction of antagonisms and the institution of political frontiers between agents are partly constitutive of identities and of social objectivity itself. (...) In Lacanian terms, antagonisms disclose the lack at the heart of all social identity and objectivity. (...) social antagonisms occur because social agents are unable to attain fully their identity. Thus, an antagonism is seen to occur when ‘the presence of [an] “Other” prevents me from being totally myself. The relation arises not from full totalities, but from the impossibility of their constitution.’ This ‘blockage’ of identity is a mutual experience for both the antagonizing force and the force that is being antagonized. (...) the task of the discourse analyst is to explore the different forms of this impossibility, and the mechanisms by which the blockage of identity is constructed in antagonistic terms by social agents. (Howarth et al., 2000, p. 10)

When a field is organized by various differential positions around a watchword or nodal point, it is because there is an equivalential logic, which reduces the differences between the various groups and organizes them according to a common significant: the ‘oppressed,’ ‘libertarians,’ ‘saviors,’ ‘liberals,’ ‘revolutionaries,’ ‘successful executives.’

On the other hand, when the differences tend to impose upon and break the equivalential logic, the field tends to open up into larger divisions. In the case of the magazines examined in this paper, it is a question of nullifying the radical, historical and politically constructed potential of the environmentalist discourse, in the sense of absorbing as sameness the radical otherness of a policy that opposes the predatory activity of capitalism, renaming it “sustainability,” redefining environmentalism as though it were simply the “gospel of eco-efficiency,” as we will see later. Dealing with otherness entails several ways of considering the antagonism in the confrontation between capitalism and environmentalism: suppressing, reducing, pseudo-accepting otherness or emphasizing it as evil. When antagonism was suppressed or ignored, we classified the stories in the group of unstated otherness, with the absent Other. When the antagonisms were addressed by the enunciator, we found three distinct cases: a) the enunciator emphasizes the otherness, describing the Other as evil; b) the speaker reduces the

otherness, building up the Other as a partner; c) lastly, in a few cases, the otherness is accepted and the enunciator incarnates the Other.

### ACTION AND NODAL POINTS

Nodal points are the significantants that act as sutures, as knots i.e., the ones that close a discursive field, partially fixing its meanings, as in the significantants 'God of the afflicted' and 'deregulated market.' One can have a field in which the meanings of the significantants fluctuate constantly until a given significant chain, sutured by a nodal point, fixes these meanings. These unbound elements are called moments and are articulated around this nodal point. This articulatory practice takes place in a conflictive field abounding in antagonistic forces, in which several discourses attempt to gain a hegemonic position. This characterizes the elevation of a discourse to a dominant position, encompassing within its area of action discursive elements in chains of equivalence, which partially suppress their differences.

Thus, hegemonic practices presuppose a social field crossed by antagonisms, and the presence of elements that can be articulated by opposed political projects. The major aim of hegemonic projects is to construct and stabilize the nodal points that form the basis of concrete social orders by articulating as many available elements – floating significantants – as possible. (HOWARTH et al., 2000, p. 15)

Exame and *Época Negócios* have nodal points/watchwords and generative paths with similar meanings, but present differences with respect to the ethos of the enunciator. The enunciator of Exame is assertive; his speech is peremptory, tending towards monolingualism, often emphasizing otherness. In *Época Negócios* (although this does not change the character of the modalization), the enunciator is elusive, appearing only briefly in the interstices of complex dialogal statements that make up the texts, in which otherness is not emphasized as firmly established opposition. They are, so to speak, a pundit who stays in the background, who speaks through their narratives about issues and themes relating to the world of business.

These characteristics become exemplary in the theme of "sustainable development" that is frequently addressed by both publications, in which a set of tensions, sanctions and homologations is associated with the streams of environmentalism. The discursive space2

of environmentalism is one of contention, whose meanings, and therefore predominance, are disputed by three “streams of environmentalism.” Joan Martínez Alier (2009) uses the following terms: “cult of wilderness,” “gospel of eco-efficiency” and “ecology of the poor.” The discourse of the magazines in question on the environment constitutes a regime of sameness/otherness, establishing as Same the gospel of eco-efficiency and as Other the cult of wilderness and the ecology of the poor (adopting the terms coined by ALIER, 2009).

The cult of wilderness is the oldest of these streams, dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the first wildlife preservation parks were created. Its objective is to preserve what remains of natural, untouched spaces, meaning: “situated outside the influence of the market” (ALIER, 2009, p. 22). This stream elicits ethical and esthetic arguments for the preservation of natural life, and many embattled civil society organizations are its representatives.

In contrast, the “gospel of eco-efficiency”, which constitutes the core of the discourse on the environment in the economics and business magazines under discussion, defends economic growth, albeit not at any cost (ALIER, 2009, p. 26). This version is the one linked to the notion of “sustainability” or “sustainable development.”

The representatives of this second stream use the word “nature” but refer more precisely to “natural resources,” or even to “natural capital” and “environmental services.” The extinction of birds, frogs or butterflies, is a “bioindicator” of problems, like the death of canaries on the helmets of coal miners. However, these species, as such, do not have an undisputable right to life. This cult is currently a movement of engineers and economists, a religion of utility and technical efficiency devoid of the notion of sacredness. (ALIER, 2009, p. 27) (Our translation)

Since the notion of sacredness is absent, calculations pertinent to the world of finance are used to propose environmental “compensations.”

Lastly, in the “ecology of the poor,” the main proposition is that social struggles around the world have an ecological component that should be brought to the forefront of discussions. The fight for justice and equality has a strong ecological component (insofar as the burdens of degradation are distributed unequally) that should be reinstated discursively.

The discursive space of environmentalism is therefore divided by antagonistic discourses that engage in a controversial struggle for hegemony, which, in the case of the texts about the environment studied here, is demonstrated in the construction of the sameness-otherness

relationship.

### **ALTERED OTHERNESSES**

We examined all the news stories, searching for markers of meaning attached to nodal points. An analysis of the discursively mapped totalizations indicated that they can be divided into two groups in terms of the relations with otherness. In the first group, the relationship with otherness-environmentalism is non-posed (or presupposed), and in the second, it is posed. In both groups, the discursive constructions of Same/ Other remain in effect because they are given relationally, since every discursive totalization is made in relation to a broader field of discursivity. The first group has no markers of meanings that indicate the existence of opposing currents in the environmental field; all the markers refer to the gospel of eco-efficiency. In the second group, the analysis considered the texts with markers (both written and imagistic), indicating that environmentalism is a field of plural tensions around which the speakers seek to build the meanings of the gospel of eco-efficiency. In this second group, in which otherness is posed, the relationships of antagonism with other discourses that compete for predominance in the discursive field of environmentalism (cult of wilderness and ecology of the poor) can be emphasized, reduced or accepted, as shall be demonstrated.

Simply put: when a story considers environmentalism a discourse of otherness, which would complicate the life of the company or of capitalism, the enunciator adopts certain strategies to deal with this antagonism: he emphasizes, reduces or accepts/faces the otherness.

### **NON-POSED OTHERNESS**

In both the magazines *Época Negócios* and *Exame*, the enunciator constructs sameness for his presumed reader – the successful executive – in terms of the gospel of eco-efficiency, taking companies as protagonists. What does this mean? That in discourses on environmentalism, the only thing that matters is what can represent or become a benefit for the company, which becomes plus-value (PRADO; CAZELOTO, 2006), i.e., the discourse of the gospel of eco-efficiency or sustainability.

The nodal points of these discursive totalizations (and here, one can encompass the non-posed and the posed) are technology and the use of efficient management, which link the meanings of

environmentalism to the liberal-capitalist discourse that underpins the communication contract of the magazines. The modalizing cognitive maps presented by the publications (PRADO, 2006; 2008b; 2010) are based on exemplary cases of business initiatives that were successful in balancing environmental sustainability and business development.

Here, we have the construction of environmentalism, so to speak, with a mild, absorbable otherness as a sub-theme of business. In these cases, efficient management and technology always appear as watchwords or nodal points. In other words, the sustainable company responds to the challenge of balancing liberal capitalism and the antagonistic discourses of the field of environmentalism with a technical device. Once it has been announced that a large amount of money was invested in the development of a renewable source of energy, or that certain environmental management procedures were adopted at a work site, and that such and such a company succeeded in balancing these procedures with their business activities, this suffices to constitute the discourse of sustainability. Therefore, the antagonisms of the discursive field of environmentalism do not appear as complicating factors regarding the functioning of the company or of capitalism itself.

A story published by *Época Negócios* (09/2010, p. 176), entitled: "Welcome to the future", thematizes a futuristic city abounding in terms that render it sustainable:

It is easy to circulate around the city of the future. Its neighborhoods are autonomous and mixed, containing diverse shops and services, homes, schools and outpatient health clinics. To optimize travel and avoid congested traffic, people use different means of transportation, such as buses, cars, bicycles, and subways. Or they travel on foot. Intelligent mini-cars produce no pollution and are connected through a social network. The green network links squares, parks and historical landmarks. It is also designed for low-speed traffic. The rivers are clean and navigable, its banks are bordered by gallery forest to prevent floods and mudslides, and the streams are not covered with asphalt but are visible. [...] Sanitary landfills transform biogas into electric power. Wind and solar energy supply electricity to street lamp posts and traffic speed bumps generate electrical energy for traffic lights. (ÉPOCA NEGÓCIOS, 09/2010, p. 177)

The reporting addresses three main axes around which it develops its expectations: "the city," "the company," and "the home." In these three cases, the meanings of a sustainable utopia are constructed, in which othernesses and antagonisms disappear: by means of technical devices, cities are able to meet the challenge of preserving the environment without impairing the liberal-capitalist discourse. The reporting is presented in the form of an infographic representation, with

each citation in the text corresponding to a schematic illustration, listing items that the reader can verify and validate.

The corpus of research of this paper reveals a predominance of this type of text, with 31 news stories, 13 published by Exame and 18 by *Época Negócios*, which representing 67.4% of the stories in which othernesses are non-posed, and in which technology and efficient management are the nodal points (or, the Lacanian point de capiton) that link the communication contract to environmental discourses through the gospel of eco-efficiency. The main markers of meaning are given by the nodal points: 'making a profit from the new market of sustainability (7 stories);' 'achieving sustainability through technology (18 stories);' 'quality of life in a sustainable environment/city (3 stories);' and 'training employees/professionals in sustainability (3 stories).' We will not present in detail the stories of this group, since the nodal points converge mostly around the gospel of eco-efficiency.

### POSED OTHERNESS

In this group the enunciator may emphasize, reduce or accept the otherness that is posed on the textual surface. In the case of emphasized otherness, five cases were found in Exame, but just one in *Época Negócios*. While the enunciator of Exame states his antagonisms and establishes controversial reactions to them, *Época Negócios* concentrates its thematizations on non-posed othernesses, and when it states them, it does so to reduce or accept them.

1. ***Emphasized otherness.*** In this group there are 8 stories, 7 published by Exame and 1 by *Negócios*. The main relationships of otherness have to do with interventions by the State and by civil society organizations campaigning in defense of the environment, which are characterized as evil or ridiculous Other. The emphasis of otherness is made by drawing an abyssal line: the evil Other lies on the far side of the line and the company on the side of reasonable sameness. The main markers of meaning are given by the nodal point 'NGOs and/or government hinder companies' (story titles: "Environmental problem stands in Camargo's way;" "Green, pero no mucho;" "He did not consider the dolphins;" "Green cars? Only if Bolivia allows them"). The exception to this rule are reports in which the company itself is relegated to the condition of otherness, i.e., it appears as a bad company, a faulty company that was unable to balance economic narratives of success and practices of environmental sustainability, as in the case of new stories

about ecological disasters, namely, the one that was triggered in 2010 by an oil spill from BP's platform in the Gulf of Mexico, a story covered in both *Exame* and *Época Negócios*. In these cases, the marker of meaning is given by the nodal point 'Sameness failed/tyrannized' ("Warning signs," "Kicked out and underpaid," "A 60 billion dollar mistake"). In the case of the State and civil society organizations, otherness consists of their actions being aligned with the discourses of the cult of wilderness or of the ecology of the poor. In the former case, NGOs apply pressure by advancing the preservation of natural areas, which, from the standpoint of companies, means delays or obstacles to investments in projects of economic interest. In the discursive field of environmentalism, the State/NGOs are antagonists of companies. The state manages regulatory environmental organs that allow major works and impose fines in case of environmental breaches. By definition, NGOs are not companies and the best-known and active of them do not share the values of liberalism-capitalism as enunciated by economics and business magazines. Thus, their discourses are not sutured by the same nodal points of efficient management and technology. The reports that discuss the actions of the State and NGOs are therefore critical of the activities of these Others.

In the case of the cult of wilderness, it is important to examine the story "Green, pero no mucho" (EXAME, 19/05/2010), in which the enunciator offers an exemplary description of the tension between the company sameness of the gospel of eco-efficiency; and the otherness represented by environmentalists that espouse the cult of wilderness:

About 4000 square kilometers, an area three times larger than the city of São Paulo. It is in this huge tract of land in California's Mojave Desert that several investors planned to install a series of solar power plants. [...] The plan would be perfect were it not for one issue: not all the "greens" are in favor of the idea. (EXAME, 19/05/2010, p. 129)

The text thematizes the antagonism between ecologists who seek to preserve an untouched area, using esthetic arguments, according to the reporting, and businessmen intent on finding a balance between business opportunities and sustainability, using technology to capture solar light in order to produce electrical power. The enunciator pronounces his verdict, negatively sanctioning radical ecologists: "Today, the 'greens' have to balance the defense of fauna and flora with an urgent need: renewable energy." (EXAME, 19/05/2010, p. 129)

Organized groups that defend the environment – NGOs – are often depicted (especially in *Exame*) as angry or laughable. In a story on

the advantages of genetically modified organisms of the multinational Monsanto entitled “The future of food” (EXAME, 25/08/2010, p. 140), environmentalists are described as follows:

In the late 90s, when the first products made of genetically modified plants reached the shelves, the reaction was deafening. (...) Infuriated activists destroyed research centers. In face of this fear, transgenics were banned in a large part of the world. The failure of technology, therefore, seemed absolutely certain. However, despite the noise<sup>3</sup>, rioting and people rooting against them, the result was the opposite. (EXAME, 25/08/2010, p. 140)

Another example is that of a story entitled “He did not consider the dolphins” (EXAME, 11/08/2010, p. 48), which describes how Brazil’s wealthiest entrepreneur, Eike Batista, saw investment plans delayed through pressure applied by organized civil society groups, and faced problems in obtaining an environmental license from the Brazilian government, in other words, from the antagonists of companies: NGOs and the State. This case involved the construction of a shipyard in the state of Santa Catarina, by OSX, a naval construction and services company for the oil industry, which, according to the reporting, expected to make R\$ 30 billion<sup>4</sup> in the first ten years of operation:

It seemed like the perfect plan (at least for Eike) – until a group of environmentalists started to throw a spanner in the works. Concerned with the fate of 60 dolphins, (...) the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMbio)<sup>5</sup> announced, a day after the IPO<sup>6</sup>, that it would not give its consent for the environmental licensing of the project to proceed (...). While representatives of OSX tried to defend the project, protesters brandished posters against the construction of the shipyard and blew horns as a sign of protest. (EXAME, 11/08/2010, p. 48)

The protests of NGOs that employed creative mediatic strategies (masks, costumes, performances, etc.) are shown in photographs (EXAME, 25/08/2010; ÉPOCA NEGÓCIOS, 45) that contrast vividly with the sober postures and garb of the executives presented as models of success on the pages of the magazines. Antagonism is created, thematically and figuratively, between decision makers symbolically qualified by the enunciator and the exotic gibberish of the protesters.

Only one story deals with emphasized otherness of the ecology of the poor. In a report in Exame (16/06/2010, p. 36), a program for the return of lands occupied by rice growers to the indigenous peoples is attacked violently by the enunciator. The story, under the title “Expelled and poorly paid,” refers to the rural producers, who are presented as victims, and ratifies the stereotypes of indolence regarding cultures that

are not inserted within relationships of capitalist production, given that indigenous peoples did not become efficient farmers. Here, the Other is completely rejected.

In addition to emphasizing antagonism towards environmentalists of the cult of wilderness (unless they can be converted to the gospel of eco-efficiency by means of partnerships), the enunciators of the magazines also do this with regard to companies that were not successful in balancing financial profits and environmental sustainability. These are stories about faulty or incompetent companies. In edition 11/2010 of *Época Negócios*, a story draws up a list of cases of disasters, such as the aforementioned oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and of the miners buried in a collapsed mine in Chile, both of which were widely discussed in the worldwide media. The text makes a series of criticisms (negative sanction) of the companies' attitude:

From April 20, when the flames engulfed the platform, until the end of October, BP underwent an unprecedented investigation. This resulted in a kind of "black box", revealing the catalogue of mistakes that led to the accident. The first concerns the company's leadership in the sector and dates back to the year 2000, when the company adopted the precepts of sustainability and announced that its logo, BP, would henceforth stand for Beyond Petroleum. This was a historical shift. After investing for almost a century in an activity harmful to the environment, the company would include alternative energies among its priorities. (ÉPOCA NEGÓCIOS, 11/2010, p. 140)

The enunciator of *Época Negócios* is thus highly critical of a company that – despite calling itself environmentally responsible – made mistakes that caused an ecological disaster. The errors, according to the magazine, involved management and technology, which renders BP's discursive ethos incompatible with its discourse of sustainability. With regard to this issue, Exame (16/06/2010, p. 85) drew up a table to point out the mistakes made by the multinational oil company: "Divulging incorrect information," "Underestimating the power of social networks," "Attempting to hoodwink public opinion." In these cases, the enunciator places the companies themselves in the place of Others, but this only occurred after the accidents: expelled from paradise, condemned by the "gospel," for calling themselves "eco," but without showing "efficiency."

2. *Reduced otherness.* In this group there are five stories, four by Exame and one by *Negócios*. These are the cases in which the enunciator reduces the otherness but only under very specific conditions, namely: when environmental organizations align themselves with companies, leaving aside their "radicalisms." The main markers of

meaning are given by the nodal points ‘Other collaborates with the Same’ (“Environmentalism of results,” “Green and pragmatic,” “With Monsanto’s hands,” “The price of the forest”; “Can sushi survive?”). Otherness here is reduced and the Other becomes a partner, diluting the abyssal line; this is a case of “reduction.” The enunciator then shows sympathy for the “converted”:

A strange fate has befallen Brazilian agribusiness in recent years. The more it shows signs of its competence abroad, the more it is castigated in the country – by NGOs, politicians, the government itself. [...] Fortunately, not everyone believes that Brazil’s evils are the excellence of its food production. Even some environmentalist NGOs famous for the virulence of their militancy understand that agribusiness can be a partner not only when generating wealth but also – amazingly – when protecting nature.

The best example has been given by the American organization The Nature Conservancy (TNC) (...), which is responsible for the most successful model for fighting deforestation, that of Lucas do Rio Verde, in the rural areas of the state of Mato Grosso – which was achieved precisely through a partnership with agribusiness (EXAME, 10/02/2010, p. 68)

Thus, NGOs and the State, once again sanctioned negatively by the enunciator, receive as an “example” the attitude of a specific organization that understands that agribusiness can be a partner, even in an environmentally sensitive region, the boundary of the soybean agribusiness in the Amazon. The value of the approach should be recognized from a change in the discursive stance of the Other, who, by adhering at least partially to the discourse of the gospel of eco-efficiency, can, in the opinion of the liberal-capitalist enunciator of Exame, be considered an ‘enunciator,’ in the sense proposed by Rancière (1996). This is when the NGO’s voice may appear as legitimate, after its antagonist otherness has been duly reduced.

3. **Accepted otherness.** Lastly, there are cases in which otherness is accepted, or rather, apparently accepted. There are two cases in which the magazine’s enunciator surprisingly assumes an environmentalist discourse. In fact, this only occurred twice in our corpus. We call it apparent because this is a clear exception in the magazines’ liberal-capitalist discourse, which only changes their communication contracts in a few cases. This is the case of the story published by *Época Negócios* under the title “Is zero growth good?” (*ÉPOCA NEGÓCIOS*, 07/2010, p. 144). The article bears the following subtitle: “For ecological economists, stopping growth is the way to be sustainable, but is that possible?” (*ÉPOCA NEGÓCIOS*, 07/2010, p. 144). The thematization is about “ecological economists” who propose that, even if economic growth were

halted, there would be a gain in quality of life:

The year is 2035, the country is Canada. For the seventh consecutive year, the economy has not grown. But despite zero growth of the gross national product, there is no crisis. The poverty rate is at its lowest level in history, mainly because unemployment is also at its lowest level in recorded history, only 4%. [...] In short, the Canadian population lives better, in a cleaner country and with fewer social problems than it did in 2010. Does that sound like science fiction? This scenario has been described in a book on economics. (ÉPOCA NEGÓCIOS, 07/2010, p. 145)

The enunciator assumes the stance of the environmentalist discourse, apparently accepting that economic growth is harmful to the environment, and seeking at the beginning of the text to surprise the reader who is presumably a supporter of the magazines's communication contract. Thus, the seven consecutive years of economic stagnation, which could be considered disastrous according to liberal-capitalist discourse, is seen as positive based on the development of the text. The story lists a series of ecological problems that threaten the biosphere, with the stamp of scientific discourse, which would be mitigated by the adoption of measures that take into account ecological and quality of life criteria. However, the text remains bound to the stream of the gospel of eco-efficiency.

The text of *Época Negócios* apparently accepts the antagonistic discourses of the field of environmentalism, which is a theme in opposition to economic growth, but then places them again within the gospel of eco-efficiency. "Quantitative" growth is substituted for "qualitative" growth, based on the premises that "the population is stabilized, the level of development should be reasonably high, and the measure of success has to be improved quality of life and not consumption capacity" (ÉPOCA NEGÓCIOS, 07/2010, p. 148). The enunciator assumes a complex stance, considering the othernesses of the field of environmentalism and negotiating with them, without, however, neglecting to speak from the centrality of the gospel of eco-efficiency.

Another case of apparently accepted otherness is that of the magazine *Exame* in a story published under the title "Madam, sleep well" (EXAME, 24/02/2010, p. 56). In this case, the use of irony is applied to the call of some luxury brands to the environmental awareness of consumers.

Over the past two years, according to the consulting firm Bain & Company, the luxury market has shrunk by more than 10% - an account of almost 25 billion dollars. Analysts expect that sales will

only return to the levels of 2008 in 2012. To face these difficult times, luxury brands have found that the ecological appeal and a politically correct stance are the most efficient ways of assuaging the consumer's guilt upon paying a small fortune for a bag or dress. (EXAME, 24/02/2010, p. 56)

The story thus expresses antagonistic environmentalist criticisms in analyzing this business practice: the attempt to enhance their products by creating an ecologically correct image for them, without there being any relevance, in certain cases, for an effective environmental policy. In a curious inversion, in this story the NGO World Wildlife Fund (WWF) offers companies a negative sanction: "A survey conducted in 2007 by the environmental NGO WWF, however, threw a bucket of cold water on these projects. In the organization's sustainability rankings, the highest score obtained by luxury brands was a feeble C+ (...)" (EXAME, 24/02/2010, p. 58)

In this story, therefore, there is a change in the stance of the enunciator, who, in the case of this company, uses technology to make its products sustainable, abandoning irony in favor of a positive sanction by identifying the company's inclusion in the precepts of the gospel of eco-efficiency, which exempts him from producing "empty" marketing pieces.

### FINAL REMARKS

As has been discussed, in most of the news stories analyzed here, the communication contracts related to the theme of sustainability seek to suture environmental concerns with the growth of companies and the development of capitalism. How has this antagonism been confronted by the enunciators of the analyzed magazines? We have found three main strategies for naming this environmental otherness, in addition to the strategy of suppressing it from the textual surface: emphasizing the environmental Other as evil; reducing the otherness (NGO as a partner of the company), or accepting the position of the Other and assimilating it. In these totalizations, the main nodal point is management and technology, which engenders a change in the antagonistic potential of environmental otherness, articulating it to the enunciators' liberal-capitalist discourse.

## NOTES

- 1 Exame is a biweekly magazine that has been published since 1967, with 173,900 issues in circulation (MÍDIA DADOS 2011). Época Negócios is published monthly, dating from 2007, with 79,500 copies in circulation (MÍDIA DADOS 2011).
- 2 According to Maingueneau, discursive space "(...)" demarcates a subset of the discursive field, linking at least two discursive formations that presumably maintain privileged relations which are crucial for an understanding of the discourses under consideration." (MAINGUENEAU, 1997, p. 117) (our translation)
- 3 In thematizing policy problems, Jacques Rancière makes a distinction between people who "speak" and people who merely "produce noise": "Because the problem is not about people who speak 'different languages,' in the real or figurative sense, understanding each other, or about correcting 'breakdowns in language' by inventing new languages. The problem is in knowing if the subjects that are -count in the interlocution 'are' or 'are not,' if they speak or produce noise." (RANCIÈRE, 1996, p. 61) (Our translation)
- 4 Equivalent to approximately US\$ 17 billion in January 2012.
- 5 A Brazilian federal environmental agency.
- 6 Initial Public Offerings, which normally aim to raise investment capital.

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RECEVEID ON: 11/04/2012 | APPROVED ON: 02/10/2012