Policing the borderland in a digital ”Lusophone” territory: a pragmatic approach to the narcissism of minor differences

Branca Falabella Fabricio

Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

In our digital age, persons contact countless of others in varied semiotic encounters. Although we cannot claim the universality of virtual experiences, Web 2.0 technologies (for example, wikis, blogs, and social platforms) have been proliferating. One of the consequences of such propagation is the escalating integration of cyberculture into everyday social, cultural, political and economic life. En-gendering the cultivation of new modes of communication and new forms of collectivity, citizenship, political action and solidarity, they deserve analytical attention, if for no other reason than the scalar dimension of contemporary online phenomena. At first sight, this kind of increased mobility may enhance social network and contact. However, many authors have been cautious in asserting that connectivity is the natural outcome of networking, as ambivalent processes take place in ”electronic life”, alternating narcissistic self-assertion, voyeuristic self-marketing, and serious engagement in public debate. This paper joins this reflection by concentrating on contemporary national-transnational dialogues and identity-alterity construction taking place in virtual contexts – an environment enclosing all sorts of encounters and misencounters. More specifically, it explores the acrimonious facet of translocal interactions on the web by reflecting on ”Lusophony” both as a colonial mindset and as textual practices lived out in the here-and-now by individuals of ”Lusophone” origin (Brazilians and Portuguese, in the case at hand). Concentrating on their semiotic activity in a Brazilian website, the study scrutinizes emerging conflictual discourse, approached through the lens of Freudian narcissism of minor differences, entextualization and orders of indexicality. The analysis detects the pragmatics of rancorous language games, depicting the ”Lusophone” territory as a semiotic battlefield where orienting modernist ideologies (concerning concepts of community, culture, language, race, gender and sexuality) and virulent linguistic actions are the weapons used to patrol identity borders, a modus operandi related to wider social processes.

Keywords: entextualization, violent language games, Lusophony.