# Abstracts

### Media Practices Before the Storm

## Fake News, Memes and the Unconscious Production of Paranoid Utterances

### Lou Caffagni

The essay seeks to uncover the motivations of the terrorist acts that took Brasilia on January 8, 2023. It focuses on the circulation of memes and fake news as a production of a collective unconscious that mobilizes identities and symbols in political struggles. I analyze the creation and dissemination process of memes through the concepts of rhetorics and simulacra.

## Around the World with the ‘Truck Patriot’: Memetization and the Circulation of Laughter in the 2022 Post-Election Period in Brazil

### Viviane Borelli and Isabel Löfgren

The chapter shows how the circulation of the meme known as 'Truck Patriot' became a strategy of collective catharsis, political resistance, and meme activism shortly after the presidential election results in late October 2022. As soon as the election results were announced with Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva as the newly elected president, Bolsonarist militants organized road blockades all over the country with the support of truck drivers and the collaboration of federal authorities. The ‘Truck Patriot’ meme emerged when a Bolsonarist protester, a so-called ‘Patriot’, tried to prevent a dissident truck from breaking through a road blockade and clung to the truck’s windshield on a 10km high-speed journey. Images of the man hanging on the outside of the truck were captured on video and soon went viral on the internet. As soon as these initial images were shared on social media, they were immediately appropriated by various social actors who produced numerous memes that circulated widely across different platforms, becoming the most prominent meme of 2022 on the Brazilian internet. This collective action provided an opportunity for the left to gain superiority on social media in the post-election period, where laughter became a tool for celebrating Lula’s victory and signaling the demise of Bolsonaro. However, as the meme circulated, Bolsonarist protests and threats of coups and anti-democratic acts escalated. We analyze the appropriation of the image of the 'Truck Patriot' from multiple angles, framings, and reconfigurations as a unique interdiscursive internet phenomenon - the circulation of laughter through memetics - which helped to, on the one hand, unify anti-Bolsonarist audiences in the post-electoral period and on the other hand, fuel the hatred and resentment of Bolsonarists, which would culminate months later in the attempted coup on January 8, 2023.

## March on Brasilia: An Interpretation of Bolsonarist Actions in Preparation for the January 8, 2023 Insurrection

### Apoena Canuto Cosenza

The demonstrations of January 8, 2023, in Brazil, can be read as an ultra-right insurrection similar to Mussolini's March on Rome, in 1922. Here we will seek to draw parallels between Bolsonarism and fascism. The paper points out elements that indicate that the events on January 8 had a similar objective to that of the March on Rome: to create a climate that would lead the authorities to hand over power to the leader of the movement.

## The Green-and-Yellow Black Box: Mobilization on Platforms for the Anti-Democratic Event on January 8, 2023

### Aline Roes Dalmolin and Maria Eduarda Mathias

The chapter aims to analyze how the mobilization for the anti-democratic act of January 8th, 2023 took place through extreme-right Bolsonarist groups on social media platforms in Brazil. We bring here the reality of platformization, which encompasses new technologies and their impacts on social and communication processes, associated with a scenario full of emotion, hopelessness, and fear in Bolsonarist informational bubbles. We seek to show how this escalation of radicalization took place by describing the timeline of Bolsonarist groups' narratives on the Telegram platform, especially between January 1 and 8, 2023. The chosen cut covers the period of one week between the ceremony of Luís Inácio Lula da Silva's inauguration as president of Brazil, which took place on January 1st, and the terrorist acts of January 8th, with the invasion and depredation in Brasilia of the buildings of the National Congress, the Federal Supreme Court (STF) and the Palace Planalto by radical Bolsonarists. The mobilization of these groups has been the object of investigation by police agencies and by Brazilian public prosecutors, in order to determine the responsibilities for the anti-democratic acts and seek the punishment of organizers and participants. We observe how different platforms enabled the mobilization of an anti-democratic act of such proportion, which was preceded by coup-mongering camps in front of barracks in Brazil after the result of the 2022 presidential elections and sponsored by different commercial, political, and security sectors of the nation.

### The Attempted Coup

## **Experience and Barbarism in Brasilia: a Savage Journey to Understand the Heart of Brazilian Conservative Rioters**Eduardo Ruedell

On the afternoon of Sunday, January 8, 2023, over four thousand supporters of Jair Bolsonaro broke into the Praça dos Três Poderes (‘Square of the Three Powers’) in Brasilia, in the political heart of Brazil’s capital city. Immediately after arriving on site, rioters began to break the doors and windows of three main government buildings located in the square. With cries of ‘break it all!’, they invaded and depredated the façades and interiors of government buildings, vandalized artworks of great historical value, and confiscated symbols of the Republic displayed inside the buildings. But how can one narrate these events? From what worldview is it possible to understand them? These questions haunted me that whole day as I watched the destruction promoted by those conservative rioters on television broadcasts. The essay that follows is a narrative account of my experience of the Planalto Riots, where impressions from my field notebook written on that day are interwoven with a brief theoretical discussion of Benjamin's concepts of History, experience, and barbarism, and the role of narrative in understanding the unfolding of the Planalto Riots.

## Brasília, January 8, 2023: The Party Is Over! The War (Still) Isn't

### Camila Hartmann, Ada C. Machado Silveira, Gabriela Schneider

Our chapter highlights aspects of communication-media dynamics that affect Brazilian democratic life today. We do so notably through the discussion of the violent insurrection on 8 January 2023, that took place in Brasília, the federal capital of Brazil, after a week of the emblematic inauguration of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to the presidency of the Republic. The inauguration, which did not include the solemn act of handing over the position by his predecessor, Jair Messias Bolsonaro, but which had as a response the provocative riots by the military forces that would once again be supporting the defeat of the extreme right in the elections. There is speculation about the purpose of the action, whether it was to sustain a coup d'état by unleashing the military insurgency, which did not happen, or whether it was simply considered a demonstration of force through a mediatized event. Furthermore, we propose that the events in the federal capital materialize procedures specific to what has been debated as a hybrid war or cultural war and place the conflicting panorama at the social center of Brazilian reality. In it, violence is enshrined as a privileged practice of media communication and it is articulated, on the other hand, to the propagation of hate speech. The events can be taken as the end of the party, the closing of a long social laboratory rehearsal that brings together Brazilians as voluntary, but also involuntary combatants, of a war that has (mis)information as its main input.

## **Authoritarian Governments in Brazilian Democracy: Far-Right Coup Attempts Didn't Start Today**

### Gizele Martins

The article begins the discussion by addressing the current political situation in Brazil, where there is a significant far-right presence that attempted to seize power by invading the buildings of the Three Powers in Brasília, the capital of Brazil. However, the actions of the far-right on January 8, 2023, appear to be more of a continuation of the protests from previous decades. In a recent past, about ten years ago, since the 'June Protests' of 2013, conservative and far-right movements had already taken advantage of the weakening and subsequent criminalization of left-wing protests that were taking place on the streets. After the criminalization and automatic political weakening of the Brazilian left, what became evident was the increase in people with painted faces in green and yellow on the streets, calling for a coup against President Dilma Rousseff in 2016. This influenced Brazilian families to protest against the former President with popular movements like pot-banging protests, partly encouraged by the country's major media corporations. In other words, witnessing the current coup-oriented protests requires us to remember how the construction of the far-right began ten years ago.

### Art and Architecture: Brasilia

## **Art and the Political Moment**

### Alecsandra Matias de Oliveira

### This essay comments on political events and the production of visual art in Brazil between 1968 and the episodes on January 8, 2023, by raising questions about the ‘reaction time’ of artists and the ‘reflection time’ of critics and historians. Therefore, some works that tell about the Brazilian political scene in the last 60 years will be shown, focusing on national Pop Art and the discussions in the biennials of the late 1960s and early 1970s and artworks that refer to the ‘Years of Lead’, – the tensest period of civil and military dictatorships. These artistic proposals sounded the alarm of unresolved issues that lay dormant, so to speak, during the years of re-democratization in the mid-1980s but reawakened with the Journeys of June 2013. The meaning of time becomes important: far from being the chronology that governs daily events, the temporality that unites the works presented here is that of resistance to the (colonial and authoritarian) mentalities that still guide national political decisions in Brazil. Parallel to the long duration, art appears in moments that differ from historical reflections as they are immediate reactions to events. Thus, some works are born in the ‘heat of the moment’, arising from the spontaneity forbidden to other types of knowledge that require maturation and need the judgment of its course. This text is mainly about observing how artists capture the political moment in everyday life when freed from chains.

## The Stories of the Victims: The Planalto Riots from the Perspective of Terrorized Art

### Oscar Svanelid

This article delves into a series of artworks and design objects that were damaged during the Planalto Riots on January 8th, 2023. While the media focused on the high costs of repairing these objects, this article considers how the traumatic confrontation with the neofascist Bolsonarismo movement affected their symbolic meaning and material history. The article strives to include the perspective of the damaged objects in the history of the Planalto Riots, highlighting the iconoclastic dimension of contemporary Brazilian neofascism, which resonates with the self-fashioning of the Bolsonarismo movement as the enemy of modernity. By closely analyzing the damaged objects, the article attempts to make sense of the symbolic dimension of neofascist violence as it was witnessed in the riots. This violence was present as an abuse of justice and an aggressive resentment towards the representation of black women in sites of governmental power. However, the article also proposes that the objects should not be seen as powerless victims. Instead, the rioters' violence seems to have activated their symbolic meaning and material force of resistance. The article argues that the Planalto Riots highlight the need to more profoundly engage in discussions regarding the role and agency of art and design installed at governmental sites in Brasilia. It questions to what extent these installations could be seen to resonate with an ‘authoritarian and bloody legacy’ (Thotti, 2023) that continues to haunt Brazilian society.

## Dear Oscar Niemeyer

### Tatiana Letier Pinto

Writing a letter is an act of affection towards the receiver – it is an invitation to dialogue, an opening of a direct channel of communication between two individuals. In this context, the article takes the form of a letter to provocatively (and courteously) engage in a speculative conversation with the architect Oscar Niemeyer *in memoriam*. The epistolary genre allows the writer to discuss the relationship between the conception and construction of the Brazilian capital city Brasilia as an inherently segregated space in connection with the events on January 8, 2023. At this time, the city’s main government buildings representing Brazil’s spheres of power were invaded and vandalized by a horde of self-entitled ‘Brazilian people’. The invaders devastated spaces considered sacred to a Brazilian understanding of democracy. Even though physical reparations were quickly undertaken in the subsequent days, what other repairs are necessary to genuinely transform Brasilia into a democratic space for the Brazilian people?

### The Image and the Other

## 8J

### Clementino Jesus Junior

January 8, 2023, is more than a date to be explored in the historical narratives of a dark period in Brazil's already dark history. It is a date when the ‘Queen’ on the chessboard was captured by the Pawn after being surrounded by the Bishop and the Knight. Even if it does not decree the end of the rise of a neo-fascist movement, this date unequivocally has hit the ‘play’ button about the denial of democracy on screens and social networks, which before Bolsonaro became president of Brazil in 2018, was on the side of a small but active part of the population. The essay reflects on the impact of the images of the vandalizing invasions of the National Congress, the Federal Supreme Court, and the Planalto Palace during the Planalto Riots, by looking at newspaper headlines in mainstream media and social media to show how facts can serve more to fictional narratives than factual and memorial ones. The date January 8, 2023, makes official, one week after the inauguration of the new/old president Lula da Silva, the revelation of a country that since its ‘dis-covery’ has no possessions.

## Indigenizing Democracy: ‘Never again a Brazil Without Us’

### Bartira S. Fortes

The chapter explores the intersection of art, democracy, decolonization, and Indigenous rights in the new era of Brazilian democracy following the inauguration of President-elect Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2023. The unprecedented inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the government brings to the forefront a debate on the country’s identity, culture, history, and the recognition of ancestry as a fundamental step towards democracy. To gain a thorough comprehension of the implications of indigenizing democracy, this article delves into a series of significant events. Firstly, it examines the Indigenous participation in the presidential inauguration ceremony, followed by an analysis of the role of Indigenous art in the exhibition *Future Brazil: Forms of Democracy* (2023)*.* Subsequently, it assesses the impact of the Planalto riots on Indigenous peoples and discusses the inauguration of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples entrusted to Indigenous Federal Deputy Sônia Guajajara. Lastly, it explores the mobilizations during the 19th Edition of Camp Terra Livre 2023 centered around the theme *The Indigenous Future is Today:* *Without Demarcation, there is no Democracy!*. The aim of this article is to elucidate the importance of Indigenous participation in shaping Brazil’s democracy, emphasizing the concept of indigenizing democracy and examining the pivotal role of Indigenous peoples in tackling climate change. In conclusion, this article argues that, by challenging dominant narratives and power structures, Indigenous participation serves as a catalyst for reimagining Brazil’s democracy and confronting patriarchal and colonial legacies.

## While Narcissus Invades the Brazilian National Congress, the Yanomami Disappear in the Waters

### Ana Paula da Rosa

We resort to the myth of Narcissus to problematize images and their power both in the invasion of the Três Poderes Square (Palácio do Planalto, Supreme Court, and the National Congress) in Brasília, on January 8th, 2023 where images of the event are considered an expression of vanity, and the humanitarian crisis involving the Yanomami Reservation in Roraima revealed only days later, where images act as denunciation. Considering that the production of images has gained large amplitude in media circuits, we are interested in thinking about the role of the image as an agent of meaning in these mediatized conflicts. In particular, such images allow us to understand the social practices and the communicative dynamics that reveal both the cult of exposure in the case of the PLanalto Riots and the disappearance of subjects through invisibility through the Yanomami humanitarian crisis – happening only days between each other. In this sense, the gaze falls on the notion of 'performative crime' in digital media as a narcissistic movement of political militants when confronted with the invisibility of Indigenous people, who are denied rights as political citizens and as human lives. In the dispute for producing meaning about the conflicts, the relationship between image and power intensifies.