

*O crime da Galeria de Cristal, by Boris Fausto: a study about  
intermedia and sensationalism /*

*O crime da Galeria de Cristal, de Boris Fausto: um estudo sobre  
intermídia e sensacionalismo*


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**ABSTRACT**

This article aims to analyze the concept of Intermedia in the book *O crime da Galeria de Cristal e os dois crimes da mala: São Paulo, 1908-1928*, published in 2019, by Boris Fausto (Brazilian historian and writer). We intend to point out and to discuss the intersections and media borders between the various spheres that are connected in its writing. This study also aims to observe how sensationalism took place in Brazilian press through the fait divers. In order to support this research, we resort to the concept of Intermedia, by Higgins (2007), which can be seen in Fausto's book (2019) by the presence of traces of multiple origins like literature, newspaper, radio, cinema and theater, which are connected through society's grotesque and bloodthirsty interest in crimes, mainly murders. Although the three stories in Fausto's book (2019) are factual, both occurred in mid-twentieth century, in São Paulo, they are very similar to short stories. This difficulty in classifying his writing within the models of textual and literary genres is also a characteristic of Intermedia. Furthermore, due to the presence of both images and texts fragments, it can be seen as an almanac, according to Dias (2016). Such features, under an atmosphere of suspense, referring to detective narratives. In this sense, we are also guided by some theorists who study the detective literary universe,

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specifically Moraes (2019), Pontes (2007), Reimão (2005), Souza (2000), Piglia (1986) and Albuquerque (1979); in order to reflect on the relations of literature and other languages: Antelo (2000), Brait (2010), Ferreira (2006) and Longui (2020).

**KEYWORDS:** Intermedia; Sensationalism; Criminality.

#### RESUMO

O presente artigo tem por objetivo analisar o conceito de intermídia no livro *O Crime da Galeria de Cristal e os dois crimes da mala: São Paulo, 1908-1928* (2019), do historiador e escritor brasileiro Boris Fausto. Pretende-se apontar e discutir as intersecções e fronteiras midiáticas entre as várias esferas que se entrelaçam na sua escrita, bem como observar o surgimento do sensacionalismo na imprensa brasileira, sobretudo, por meio de *faits divers*. Para dar suporte a esse estudo, nos baseamos no conceito de intermídia, de Higgins (2007), o qual pode ser visto no livro de Fausto (2019) através da presença de traços de origens múltiplas, como da literatura, jornal, rádio, cinema e teatro, que se conectam por meio do interesse grotesco e sanguinário da sociedade por crimes, principalmente, assassinatos. Embora as três histórias do livro de Fausto (2019) sejam factuais, ambas ocorridas em meados do século XX, em São Paulo, assemelham-se bastante a contos. Essa dificuldade em classificar essa escrita dentro dos moldes de gêneros textuais e literários também vem a ser uma característica da intermídia. Ademais, pela presença de fragmentos tanto imagéticos quanto textuais, pode ser visto como uma escrita de almanaque, segundo Dias (2016). Tudo isso, sob uma atmosfera de suspense que remete às narrativas policiais. Nesse sentido, também nos pautamos em alguns teóricos que discorrem sobre o universo literário policiaresco, como Moraes (2019), Pontes (2007), Reimão (2005), Souza (2000), Piglia (1986) e Albuquerque (1979); para refletir as relações de literatura e outras linguagens: Antelo (2000), Brait (2010), Ferreira (2006) e Longui (2020).

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Formação Docente; Currículo; Língua Inglesa.

## 1 Introduction

In the book *O crime da Galeria de Cristal: e os dois crimes da mala: São Paulo 1908-1928*, published in 2019, by Companhia das Letras, Boris Fausto performs a very thorough research, in order to (re) describe in detail three crimes which occurred in São Paulo, Brazil, that scared the whole country at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

According to the book's catalog, it would be part of the "Crimes - History" section. However, there is something unusual about its construction that makes this classification problematic. It is quite difficult to identify to which genre this book belongs to, especially if the reader is unaware of the real occurrence of the three selected crimes.

In this way, the book can be read both as historiographical material, as fiction, and due its similarity to short stories; or even it can be read as a journalistic-investigative text, because of the included clippings from newspaper pages of the criminal sections.

All these possibilities can be considered because the author uses several materials in his writing. In his book we can find several textual and imagery fragments, arranged in an anachronistic way, through a procedure similar to a collage, of the arts. These elements come from different origins, like historical documents and photographs, cartoons, illustrations, jokes, testimonials, news, comments from the population and excerpts from leaflets.

In the synopsis of the book, which can be found on the back cover, there is a text that reminds us of the synopses of short stories or detective novels, because of the mystery atmosphere: "[...] a man is

murdered in a downtown hotel room. A corpse is found in a suitcase when a passenger on the ship was trying to throw it overboard. A woman's body is discovered in a luggage in a vessel" (FAUSTO, 2019, back cover).

On the other hand, we see that in addition to the presence of real crimes and excerpts from newspapers, there are also several references to people who actually existed and were important in the crime scene, all of them in relation to the selected cases, such as the names of prosecutors, judges and lawyers. There are also relevant references to real names from crime studies in general, such as Cesare Lombroso and his questionable method of "identifying the criminal" by physical characteristics.

Therefore, we can identify that the author crosses the border between fiction and fact. Even if he is interested in the need to bring the facts as they really happened, with impartiality, mainly, due to his position as a historian, he is also influenced by fiction, because of putting these crimes in a book and also by the dreamy suspense scenery that is always present in criminology. In this sense, Tony Bellotto<sup>1</sup> *apud* Fausto (2019) claims that:

*O crime da Galeria de Cristal* has the academic rigor worthy of the historian, but imbued with a noir atmosphere reminiscent of Georges Simenon and Edgar Allan Poe. It is the objective exposure (now distant, now ironic, always brilliant) of incredible and inexplicable passions, which we prefer to hide in the suitcase (BELLOTTO, *apud* FAUSTO, 2019, flap).

Thus, this book is a call to imagination, intertextuality and Intermedia. It is a cultural product that reflects not only the fragmentation of society, so present in modern times, but also the excess of information of the most diverse areas that reach people today. Thus, it becomes almost impossible to have a text that is not permeated by different media and different genres.

In the three cases brought by the author there is a certain recurrence of the characters' features. They all represent the ruins of modern society. They are what is rotten in humanity, such as violence, cruelty, fear and death. They are echoes of modernity taken up in order to demonstrate the part of history that is not told; the marginal antiheroes who are wiped out; miserable characters who live and kill narrowly, in silence, in the dark, in emptiness. They are abject social beings that are presented to us by the narrator with the promise of truth in history and the enigmatic construction of the literary imaginative universe.

Boris Fausto is an historian, political scientist, writer and retired professor at the Department of Political Science at the University of São Paulo (USP). He was born in 1930, in the capital São Paulo. He is also the author of *O crime do restaurante chinês: carnaval, futebol e justiça na São Paulo dos anos 30*

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<sup>1</sup> He is popularly known as a guitarist of the Brazilian musical group *Titãs*, but he is also a writer, with an emphasis on the dialogue between detective and horror novels.

(2009), *Negócios e ócios: histórias da migração* (1999) and *A revolução de 1930: historiografia e história* (1970). He has always shown a strong interest in studying crimes. In *O crime da galeria de cristal* (2019), his most recent work, we can clearly identify an Intermedia.

But, after all, what is Intermedia? This is a concept created by the British composer, poet and musician Dick Higgins and it is about a certain simultaneous coexistence of different medias in the same work. It forms a hybrid composition. In addition to its relevance in the scope of music and the arts, the multiartist also made a significant contribution to the theory of modern literature, especially in what concerns concrete poetry.

According to Ferreira (2006), Higgins was a protagonist of the Fluxus group, an artistic movement of the 1960s and 1970s, with the aim of proposing innovations in the artistic field through libertarian ideas. In this space, Higgins studied and worked on various themes, such as happenings, Intermedia, poetry, cinema and music.

The concept of Intermedia, despite having arisen a long time ago, had a rather slow manifestation, reaching more visibility from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup> until now, its main area. It is a concept close to intertextuality, already well known, but which differs from it by encompassing, in addition to different textualities, different media.

It can be seen in Fausto's book through the fusion of the medias: newspaper, from the present clippings; music, with the ones made about the crimes, which were played and sung by people, as the author emphasizes “[...] the pioneer cases – in particular, the first one – were sung in prose and verse [...]” (FAUSTO, 2019, p. 206); literature, due to the format similar to the short stories, as well as the suspense and investigation atmosphere, common to the literary universe of the detective; photography, because there are several parts present in the book which work as an archive; art, through illustrations; cinema and theater, through the adaptations and plays produced based on the cases.

Intermedia, that nowadays is seen more frequently in literature, has reached greater space in it through concrete poetry like the poem "Lixo Luxo", by Augusto de Campos, a critique of society and capitalism. We can also think of "Poema retirado de uma notícia de jornal", by Manuel Bandeira, in which the poet, based on a newspaper, makes a cut and changes the disposition of the elements of the news, transforming it into a poem.

This gesture of Bandeira can be seen from different perspectives, if we consider the production context, an assisted ready-made, since the object is removed from its original place and its common function (newspaper / information) and the poem is reconfigured. And at the same time, it can be seen as an Intermediate composition, since the final work is permeated by literature and journalism. The act of

taking the newspaper to the book and, nowadays, taking the physical book to digital e-readers can also be seen as an Intermediate gesture for the same reason. Thus, it is understood that Intermedia deals with this link between two or more medias; it is the connecting link between them.

The work has different setups, one of them is the art movement “Happening”, which presents elements and similarities to the performing arts. According to Longui (2002) “What drew Higgins attention to develop Intermedia was the advent of happening, in the late 50's and early 60's” (LONGUI, 2002, p. 2). Consequently:

Happening has its origin in the idea of “collage”: in the mid-1950s, painters in the United States and Germany began to turn to works which they created by adding or removing, replacing or altering components of the visual work. They started by including objects in their works, then making collages that involved the viewer, and classified them as “environments” (LONGUI, 2002, p. 3).

In such unique times as today, in the midst of digital chaos, it is inevitable to think about the death of the physical book, its bankruptcy, its disuse. Printed literature has become scarce for a long time, due to technological advances that have brought a new way of reading using the screens of computers and cell phones, without the need of printing, allowing for faster research and writing at a low financial cost. If, on the one hand, less and less is said about the characteristics of physical books, such as types of sheets, covers, weights and binding, on the other hand, more and more comments are made about new e-book formats, such as *mobi*, *pdf*, *epub*, *azw* and *iba*.

Literature and other arts and forms of language manifestations are going to the digital realm and because of that the connections between them become almost inevitable. Its borders are becoming opaque and its intersections are clear. Thus, (re) thinking Intermedia today is essential. New technologies must be considered as decisive influences in this multifaceted process, as well as the contemporary chaos that reflects in the narrative.

Therefore, Higgins (2007) was very successful in asserting that the future of art is the media. The author also took as an example the rise of Duchamp's work, guided by the media, in contrast to the erasure of Picasso's. It is a great interpretation about the relation between art and media: “The ready-made or found object, in a sense an intermedium since it was no intended to conform to the pure medium, usually suggests this, and therefore suggests a location in the field between the general area of art media and those of life media” (HIGGINS, 2007, p. 23).

Understanding the ready-made as an Intermedia, as proposed by Higgins (2007), it is noted that it is no longer a question of thinking if the media is part of the artwork or not. It is already there. In this sense, for the author, it is essential to highlight the role of collage at the beginning of this artistic

movement, but demonstrating that the Intermedia goes beyond it. Thus, the poet cites an example of painters who began to include more and more incongruous objects in their works, naming such artistic work as “combinations”. What started with an idea to innovate in detail, became totally different.

According to Higgins (2007), art needs “[...] portability and flexibility, and this the traditional theater cannot provide” (HIGGINS, 2007, p. 25). Even though art has no commitment to follow the changes in society, it is impossible to think of an art that ignores them. Thus, the way in which society updates its points of view also influences the way in which it relates, produces and consumes art.

The author explains that it is difficult to categorize the collage or try to impose rules and laws on it, in the sense of thinking about a structure or a sequence of steps to be followed to make it, because “[...] each work determines its own medium and form according to its needs” (HIGGINS, 2007, p. 25). As an example, the poet mentions some artists who mixed the Intermedia consisting of music and philosophy, music with sculpture or poetry and sculpture. Finally, he concludes that the Intermedia is a historic and irreversible innovation.

In *O crime da Galeria de Cristal* (2019), we see an Intermedia determined by the intersection between text and image and by subdivisions in each one. As an example, the book presents passages from the five basic textual sequences: narrative, at the moment it narrates the cases, from the voice of a neutral omniscient narrator; argumentative, when it is based on historical documents, laws or names of authority to discuss some element of the episodes; descriptive, mainly, when accurately describing to the reader the space of events and the characteristics of the characters; explanatory, by the act of selecting and presenting information that the reader needs to know in order understand the story, as well as by characterizing historiography in a certain way; and conversational when inserting the characters' dialogues or reconstructions of how they could have been.

The book also has many images such as illustrations and old photographs of the most important places, both culturally and in terms of modernization for that period, such as the headquarters of the most renowned newspapers, Teatro Colombo, Cine Bijou Theater, Estação Norte (by trains), Bonde de Bom Retiro and the places of interest for investigating crimes, such as houses or hotels where victims and suspects had lived, spaces where crimes occurred and nearby public places.

Chapter 11, entitled “The crimes in letter and image” (FAUSTO, 2019, p. 206), illustrates this statement very well. In it, the author shows that in addition to the news about the crimes, which is quite common, something different happened because, from them, several productions were made “[...] in books, in texts published in newspapers, in novels and films” (FAUSTO, 2019, p. 206). According to the

historian, the popularity of criminal cases was so sensational and fictionalized that about twenty movie theaters had to be installed in Rio de Janeiro for the population to watch the film about the suitcase crime.

Sensational crimes are pervaded by media. Another example of this comes from the theatrical context. “The most notable of its kind, however, is that of the theatrical Artur Azevedo (1855-1908), when exploring the supposed fear of men of being victims of Michel Trad [...]” (FAUSTO, 2019, p. 208). After this affirmation, the author inserts in the book part of the script of the play:

*D. Felisberta:* – Well then! A handsome boy came to me so close that I asked him:  
– What do you want, sir? Do you know what he answered me? – I want to love you!  
*Trancoso* (jumping out of bed) – The suitcase? Who was that rascal? I'm going to the police tomorrow! He also wants to put me in the suitcase!... (FAUSTO, 2019, p. 209).<sup>2</sup>

This crime resembles the suspense and investigation genre, both in literature, cinema and theater. However, there is a humorous tone in this play. A serious matter: death, from the tragedy stories, becomes a comedy. It enters in national folklore and in the social imagination about villains and heroes. From that we see that sensational crimes cause a strong commotion in the population, due to the high disclosure and emphasis that the press builds around it. So it has the possibility of entering in different spaces and reconfiguring itself in each one. Fausto (2019) demonstrated how each crime is portrayed in each media.

## 2 Crimes tell stories

In an interview to the Brazilian newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* (2019) for the production of a podcast, Boris Fausto underlines that his interest in these murders reported in the book is due to the fact that “Crimes reveal a lot about history”<sup>3</sup>. As a historian, right at the beginning of his book, Fausto (2019) makes an explanation about why he chose these three crimes to write about. Even though literature does not need reasons or purposes, he gives it to his readers. In this context, he emphasizes five aspects, which, in his view, served as a background in the constitution of São Paulo today.

Why did I choose these three crimes, in the midst of so many other cases? First, taking into account the narrative possibilities of all of them. Then, for the relevant role played by women, in different situations, in each case; the possibility of considering the institution of the jury from a particular angle; the theme of the role of the press, at the

<sup>2</sup> This joke works in Brazil because the word “suitcase” (*mala*) has a pronunciation similar to the phrase to “love you” (*amá-la*) in Portuguese language.

<sup>3</sup> Headline of the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*, referring to the interview given by Boris Fausto on April 8, 2019. Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ilustrissima/2019/04/crimes-revelam-muito-sobre-a-historia-diz-boris-fausto.shtml>.

same time as a reflection of public opinion; by the subject of the insertion of foreign ethnicities in São Paulo society (FAUSTO, 2019, p. 12).

Fausto writes a complete introduction to the main São Paulo newspapers: O Estadão, Correio Paulistano and Comercio de São Paulo, their visions and their social impact. In general, they had political and criminal issues as their most recurrent themes. And for Fausto (2019) it is from these newspapers that sensationalism in Brazil emerges.

According to the author, sensationalism in the Brazilian press would have been created and developed, more precisely, at the time when the three crimes from the book took place. In this way, sensationalism is built on national territory in crimes. In the short story “O crime da Galeria de Cristal”, with the same name as the book, there is the subtitle “O crime da Galeria de Cristal. O crime-folhetim” (FAUSTO, 2019, p. 41). The crime of leaflets would be the sensational crime. A very different case from the ordinary and which stands out through the unusual.

Nevertheless, the historian, José Geraldo Vinci de Moraes (2019) brings a very interesting reflection, showing how the crimes changed the press of the time, forming a new cultural panorama. The author emphasizes the importance that certain popular businesses of the time had, such as Café Guarany, also cited by Boris Fausto, as central spaces in the dissemination of information and in the visibility of crimes.

It is surprising how, based on these small indications that emerged in the press, it is possible to gather traces of the formation of the modern circuit of musical practices and dissemination that adjusted to the profound changes that occurred in the city (MORAES, 2019, p. 172).

The crimes serve as points to situate the change that the São Paulo society underwent. And yet, to boost it, having a strong participation in the advent of the expansion of cultural spaces such as cinema, museums and theater, as already mentioned, due to the installation of several movie theaters for films about crimes to be broadcast.

Crime has also shaped a significant part of the history and formation of Brazilian journalism. It provided an expansion in the format of the newspaper, in the classification of news and the specialization of each journalist.

Over time, it was even necessary to establish the differentiation of subjects and columns, creating a kind of internal division, as special columns for crimes, social life, entertainment and, in the case of Rio, Carnival and, later, popular music [...] reporters and chroniclers were trained in the daily routine of newsrooms for a heuristic and writing practice following some procedures, images, clichés and angles. In this way, the profile of the journalist specialized in covering a certain story was being built and,



at the end of the line, formed the taste and type of reader with his expectations (MORAES, 2019, p. 179).

In addition, despite the fact that several crimes happen daily in the city of São Paulo, there were few brutal and unusual murders and local newspapers used to focus more on news in the region, since interstate contact was not as fast and effective as today, due to the lack of technology of the time. Thus, this is another important issue for strengthening sensationalism in the Brazilian press. Without having new crimes to report, or because they were unaware of others that happened far from the metropolises, the newspapers repeated the information already known about the cases already reported, giving more and more emphasis to them to try to hold the reader's attention.

During the first days of the month, *O Estado* and *O Correio* followed the events closely, broadcasting the news on a recurring basis, as in a leaflet. In the absence of news, smaller articles rewrite the information already known, functioning as a kind of reminder (MORAES, 2019, p. 180).

This journalistic practice of the reminder, mentioned by the author, is a sensationalism feature, because what it does is to exalt a fact of social interest to the extreme. “Part of the population was interested in the form of the show that the jury offered and, excited by the news from the press, greatly afflicted by the sessions (MORAES, 2019, p. 180)”. The fact that the jury changed its opinion after the audience demonstrates that the crime is seen as a spectacle. In this way, it creates a layer of suspense, terror, investigation, mystery around it.

This suspense atmosphere remains in Fausto's book (2019). It is due to the collage made by the author from photographs and clippings from old newspapers about the selected crimes, which also refer to the vintage style, because they bring the old to the current. Thus, the book tells the history of São Paulo society of the 20th century, based on the criminality of that time,

The crimes investigated, counted and analyzed by the author took place, respectively, in the years 1908 (The first crime of the suitcase), 1909 (The crime of Galeria de Cristal) and 1928 (The second crime of the suitcase).

The first one presented in the book, although not the first to happen, was “O crime da Galeria de Cristal”, the murder of Arthur Madeiros, committed by a woman with whom he had had an affair in his youth, Albertina Bonilha, and witnessed by her current husband, Eliziário Bonilha.

This crime became known as an “honor crime” by the population and divided opinions both from the people and from the press, which sometimes defended Albertina's attitude and sometimes accused her. That's because as soon as the perpetrator of the crime became pregnant in her youth, she was soon abandoned by the child's father, the victim.

Based on this event, arduous discussions about the treatment of women and their social roles were brought up by the newspapers of that year and, later, resumed by the author from the way which society condemned female killers much more for being a single mother than being a murderer.

Another aspect of interest in this story is the publication of *Revista Careta*, in its March 6, 1909 edition, in which there is a photo of the corpse still in the morgue. Again, the historian makes a critical reference to the sensationalism of the press, because it often goes beyond the limits, ignoring human rights and respect for victims and family members, to draw more attention from the population, but also in order to stand out in the media competition.

According to the author, “The murder of Arthur Malheiros got a label of detective novel” (FAUSTO, 2019, p. 41). This statement is quite pertinent, because in this case we easily recognize the typical elements of a narrative: narrator, characters, plot, time and space. It is also easy to identify key characteristics of detective stories, such as victim, suspects, criminals, police, investigators, detectives, jury, clues, among others.

The second case brought to the book is “O primeiro crime da mala”, it is about a murder of a businessman by his employee, Michel Trad. The crime motivation was a secret love nurtured by the employee to the wife of his boss. It was not known if it was reciprocated or not, so he tried to get rid of her husband.

As a possible romantic story, the case served as a spectacle, which was presented by the press in short excerpts, reminiscent of the novels published in the newspaper.

We can even say that the only difference was that it was a real story, in which victims, involved and even innocents were being exposed. An information vehicle, which should report crime in an impartial, neutral and serious manner, turns it into a novel, with the clear intention of entertaining and amusing, instead of informing.

It is interesting to point out that a film was produced about this case. When analyzing this production, as well as the reception it had from the society and the context of the time, Souza (2000) argues that: “Social transgressions of any kind, from a simple street fight to the crime of death, were part of urban or rural society, being served by the newspapers daily to their readers” (SOUZA, 2000, p. 106).

[...] it was surprising the elite and the middle stratum for its violence. From the popular trajectory of the case, the imagery of crime unprecedented in the history of the city was fed by other means: at least one book was published and a homonymous play staged, after being properly “examined” by the teachers of the Dramatic and Musical Conservatory (SOUZA, 2000, p. 107).

Affecting the viewer emotionally, therefore, would be the great intention of both cinema and theater as well as that of newspapers, although the newspaper's duty should be to inform.

The third and last case of the book is “O segundo crime da mala”, it happened twenty years after the first one. In the introduction of this short story, the author highlights the changes that occurred in São Paulo at that time, however, some aspects did not change, like violence. Again, the motivation of the crime is passionate, this time the husband murders his wife after a domestic argument. He cuts her up and, putting her in a suitcase, tries to get rid of the body.

Giuseppe Pistone, the new “suitcase killer”, at first did not arouse in the population the same empathy as his predecessor, Michel Trad, as the author points out, until the moment when he began to allude to the possibility that his wife had an affair. Then, many were in favor of the criminal, emphasizing that adultery would justify the act.

Fausto (2019) points out that crimes that cause a public conflict tend to have even more visibility. In the same way seen in 1908, the palace where the trials took place was filled with curious people to watch the sentence. In addition to the issue of femicide, entering debates about domestic violence, the author also brings up another pertinent subject: immigration, since both the killer and the victim, Maria Mercedes Feá, came from Italy to Brazil.

In this case, there are several references to the first crime of the suitcase, as a way for the author to emphasize that the imagination of the population of the time was more lasting than nowadays, where, due to virtual technology, a lot of information is received instantly, but which, however, is not stored in memory anymore.

Both crimes were alive in public imagination. Among the reasons to that is the alarm raised by the media of the time over the cases. Despite occurring today it is not like the last century, because of by the amount of information that is released to the viewer. Several other crimes occurred in São Paulo after these three, however, they did not enter national folklore like these.

### 3 *Faits Divers*

Fausto (2019) thinks of sensationalism as something strictly linked to crimes. Even though several news themes, such as those related to politics, can be sensationalized. For him, what highlighted this content in the journalistic context was the acceptance of *fait divers*. A kind of smaller newspaper, very common in that time, with only the news about the day. This is a term widely used by the author throughout the book and which can be related to leaflets, quite common in Brazil in the 19th century.

But what is meant by *faits divers*, an expression literally translated into Portuguese as “miscellaneous facts”? In a nutshell, the generic label refers to events that gain prominence when they are exceptional, such as sensational crimes, disasters of great repercussion, the suicides of notorious people not necessarily notable as senators or prostitutes (FAUSTO, 2019, p. 16).

According to the author, the *faits divers* will only have a closer look when Barthes analyzes its structure in 1960 as “[...] an immanent report, which closes on itself and does not need external references” (BARTHES *apud* FAUSTO, 2019, p. 16). In other words, it is a paper that contains all the information you need to know in a summarized way so that the reader can quickly and profitably understand the event.

Nevertheless, “[...] the reading of a *fait divers* can still, one hundred years later, cause the same chills or astonishment” (MEYER *apud* FAUSTO, 2019, p. 17). This occurs due to the sensationalist content in those reports. Many times it appeals even to the supernatural and exotic. Fausto (2019) underlines this occurrence as a way to satisfy people's desire to know the private life of others in detail and even what they do not know in their daily lives. However, when they involve more relevant situations, such as criminality, they enter the field of history.

Another relevant aspect that highlights the use of the French term *fait divers* in the Brazilian press is the notorious reference that France was to Brazil in the 20th century, unlike today, in which national media are based much more on American culture, in cinema, music and literature.

We observe that the author constantly goes through social reflections and historical and cultural notes, so that, through the crime narrative of the crystal gallery and the two crimes of the suitcase, he tells the story of São Paulo, Brazil, the press, the newspaper, the arrival of sensationalism in the national territory and its development, as well as comparing all this to the present day, analyzing differences, similarities and transformations.

In this way, the author describes how this process happens: “All this has disappeared with São Paulo as the backdrop, which one I met in part, and to which I return whenever as possible, as a man of the 20th century, for whom the current world it is a strange one” (FAUSTO, 2019, p. 12).

Nevertheless, it is noted that when referring to the present as something strange to him, the author approaches Agamben's concept of “contemporary”. For the Italian philosopher, a contemporary is one who does not fit the time he is in, being out of date when considering himself outside of it and still, when distancing himself, he is able to better see it. In this way, the author says that “[...] contemporaneity, therefore, is a singular relationship with its time” (AGAMBEN, 2009, p. 57).

Boris Fausto walks this path by returning to crimes that happened a century before his, in order to understand the course of history, but also because he understood that time better than his own. Therefore, the vintage aspects, with black and white images in the book, causing a certain nostalgic atmosphere are justified by the absence of recognition of the self today and by the presence of memory.

In this sense, we see his preference for the newspaper, his constant reference and his work with the 20th century. Although the newspapers that were very important at that time are in ruins and depletion today, they are fragments in which the author is guided to resume modernity.

The newspapers most mentioned by the historian during the book are *O Estado de São Paulo*, *Correio Paulistano* and *O commercio de São Paulo*, which receive several criticisms regarding the sensationalist way in which they portrayed and romanticized the cases. Fausto (2019) emphasizes that the cases reported by such press vehicles always took the front pages, as the crime is interesting only while it is recent, therefore, in terms of crime, the circulation of leaflets was something very recurrent, since it was easier and faster to produce than newspapers.

As already seen and pointed out, social criticism is something very recurrent in the historian's writing. His precise look goes through the most diverse contexts. It is also noted that the author does not stick to a chronological order of facts, both in the order in which the cases are listed in the book and by the events of each case.

However, despite starting from an anachronistic writing, the author is careful to situate the reader in the context of each story. For example, he reports that “O primeiro crime da mala” and “O crime da Galeria de Cristal” are located in the famous period in Brazil, of great French influence, entitled *Belle époque*. Through such notes, it is pertinent to highlight the clear, concise and dynamic way in which his writing takes place.

Fausto (2019) also opts to keep the old writing of the Portuguese language when referring to the news brought by the newspapers from 1908-1928. Such a choice can be seen as a mechanism to enter the time in focus also through language, since language functions as a fundamental element to understand and analyze each and every society.

In order to point out this theme, let us take a look at the following fragment from the book: “*O Comercio de São Paulo* stamped on its front page a title in bold letters: TRAGEDY! [...] The qualitative “tragedy” referred to a crime of great repercussion, and the article, in addition to the first page, also occupied two columns on the next page” (FAUSTO, 2019, p. 11).

Beyond that, it came with the subtitles: “The crime of *yesterday* / a young man is attracted to a hotel and is cruelly murdered” (FAUSTO, 2019, p. 11). The word “yesterday” in current Portuguese is

“ontem”, but in this fragment the author copies the writing of 20<sup>th</sup> century “hontem”. The same happens with the words “attracted” and “one”: “atraído” (current Portuguese) becomes “atrahido” (old Portuguese) and “um” (current) becomes “hum” (old).

Beyond the old writing, it is also possible to notice some sensationalist content, highlighted, above all, by the adverb “barbarily” and all the words written in capital letters. Nevertheless, Fausto (2019) says that from the narrative of crimes the “sensationalist report” appears in the São Paulo press.

Fausto (2019) emphasizes that both crimes he will write about in his book happen in one:

[...] historical period that became known by another French denomination: the *belle époque*, a moment of cultural change, of inventions and innovations, experienced by the countries of Western Europe between the end of the Franco-Prussian war of 1871 and the First World War (FAUSTO, 2019, p. 17-18).

The historian points out that the journalistic expansion had greater impetus in São Paulo, due, mainly, to the technological innovations that the city was aware of, providing a faster circulation of information. Fausto (2019) also says that people were eager to read the newspaper, being part of their daily lives, because it brought the news, but that today, we are taking the opposite path. For the author “Suspense has disappeared and the newspaper looks like an old news broadcaster, victim of the overwhelming competition from digital media” (FAUSTO, 2019, p. 16).

Progress is transmuting the colonial city into a modern urban center and forging a new sign for readers of illustrated magazines, almanacs, commemorative albums and postcards [...] The reproduction of city scenarios, carried out in a clumsy way, prevented the gaze of this elite of spectators, already accustomed to the “truth” of photography as a duty, from reading the same artifact, between one and another photographic (SOUZA, 2000, p. 112).

The digital age, which almost wipes out the circulation of physical books and newspapers, also acts strongly in the way that readers read. Nowadays we have too much information thrown at the viewer in real time, so we have to read faster and with less attention. Long or elaborate texts are not required. Short and hyped digital headlines tend to be the most accessed. Thus, although there are more options, technologies, innovations, faster and greater access to culture, there is a clear decline in reading and intellectuality today.

#### 4 Detective novel traces

It may be thought, at first, that Fausto's book would distance itself from the literary universe by bringing facts, since fiction is characterized mainly by the creative scope, however, it is necessary to remember that the emergence of detective stories occurred through journalistic reports.

The strong connection with the social context has always been a characteristic of police narratives, as the Argentine theoretician Ricardo Piglia (1986) observes: although crime in society always attracted a lot of attention, police reports of the cases were shallow and constitute a mere narration of facts. Therefore, literature was in charge of providing more creative and profound details about the crimes, since the news pages did not bring that.

In an interview to *Folha de São Paulo*, when asked if he had been influenced by the detective novel, Boris Fausto says “yes”, emphasizing that both in content and in the form of writing, which is more succinct, by short sentences and more synthesized dialogues.

However, the author shows that although he is influenced by literature, he does not recognize himself as a fiction writer. He says that his technique is based on bringing out the reader's imagination, but about real cases. All of this from the perspective of a great research that analyzes the details of the crime, having as main source, newspapers of the time when they were committed.

Therefore, the range of relationships that make up his work is noticeable. Now, however much the writer humbly rejects the nomenclature "creation" for his texts, showing that he starts from the real, "without creating", it is undeniable that the procedures he administers are applicable to those of a multiartist.

Nevertheless, it is worth analyzing the selection of fragments to be pasted as a form of creation. The gesture of merging images to texts can be seen as an auxiliary technique for the reader to awaken, develop and strengthen an atmosphere of investigation, suspense and mystery in his imagination, which, in turn, is quite common in detective stories.

When reading Fausto's tales, we are also confused by the truth-fiction duality, mainly, in terms of the unpredictability of crimes. In general, especially in detective literature, every detail is thought out and can be essential. A mere hair on the initial crime scene can be a key element in the final understanding of the plot. However, the reality is not so beautiful, neither idealized nor creative.

In this context, working with real crime cases is dealing with a writing of the unpredictable, because its plot is not planned, does not obey a logical sequence, a meaningful outcome and it has less narrative structure than the stories of most famous and traditional detectives, such as those of Edgar Allan Poe, Agatha Christie and Conan Doyle.

When we read Poe's short story "Murders in the Rue Morgue", published in 1841 and considered the great starting point of detective narrative and compare it with the three cases selected in Faust's book (2019) we see that there is a significant difference. In the first, the detective is idealized, placed in an almost super hero position. Auguste Dupin, the first literary detective on record, had a high intellectual capacity, did not need any tools, other than his brain, to solve criminal cases.

On the other hand, taking into account the current context, the influence of new technologies, the extremely media world, in which crime becomes a spectacle, this type of character tends to be discredited. He is far from the real and detective narrative. The writers seek increasingly to update their characters. For this, a common shortcut to Brazilian detective literature, is the inspiration in real crimes.

Albuquerque points out that "Brazil already has its own detective literature based on true cases" (ALBUQUERQUE, 1979, p. 14). According to the author, the more elaborate detective stories end up being directed to the adolescent audience, since most adults prefer real cases or based on stories that are true.

In 2019, the same year of the release of Boris Fausto's book, by Companhia das Letras, it was published in Brazil *Lady Killers: assassinas em série*, by Tori Telfer, by the largest horror, suspense and detective publisher in the country: DarkSide Books. In this book there is a selection of fourteen stories of women who have committed extremely cruel crimes, around the world, in different centuries.

Tori Telfer's short stories are also based on facts, starting from a long historical and journalistic research. Its echo is in the texts that consider crimes in a critical, reflective and literary way. Both are very close to the short story genre, both for the fictional aspect and the length of the essay. However, it is interesting to emphasize that they "get close" but are not limited to this categorization, precisely, due to the hybridity of their books.

However, fifteen years earlier, more precisely in the year 2004, Valêncio Xavier, also from São Paulo, was already working with this technique of clipping real cases of crimes from the newspaper and pasting them in books. Xavier can be considered as a multiartist totally occupied by the media dialogue around crime. However, in addition to being a writer, he was also a filmmaker, journalist and TV director.

In *Crimes à moda antiga* (2004), Valêncio Xavier selected eight cases of real crimes, which happened in the middle of the 20th century in Brazil. Among these are the three crimes that Boris Fausto (2019) selected for his book. However, the way in which Xavier (2004) writes, or rewrites, such stories is much more fictionalized. He does not seek to establish an impartial commitment to reality even though right on the cover of his book, under the title *Crimes à moda antiga* (Old fashioned crimes) there is a kind of subtitle: *Contos verdade* (Real tales).



From this, it can be seen that the author is aware that he wanders on the border between fiction and reality. If they are “tales”, they are part of the field of fiction. Now, how to use the word “real”? On the other hand, these are crimes that really happened. Here is the confusion. It can still allude to the concept of Intermediation, which proposes a similar reflection, under a range of possibilities, nomenclatures, classifications and categorizations, it walks through crossings and intersections and it is difficult to say which media the work belongs to.

Valêncio Xavier also has another very pertinent book in terms of breaking the structure and the dialogue of different areas, it is *O mez da gripe*, published for the first time in 1981, which brings three histories: in the first, it portrays the context of Curitiba, a city in Paraná, during the Spanish flu; in the second, it presents the narrative of a local resident, Dona Lúcia, a character that the reader does not know if she actually existed; and thirdly, the end of the first world war. All these histories are created from several newspaper clippings, the main media that supports his books and also those of Fausto and Telfer (2019).

It is pertinent to point out that since the beginning the national detective literature is permeated by media, it is not something new, but it has had more emphasis recently due to technology. So much so that, according to Reimão (2005), the first Brazilian detective novel, *The mystery*, by four writers: Coelho Neto, Afrânio Peixoto, Medeiros and Albuquerque and Viriato Corrêa, was initially published in a newspaper. According to the author, *A Folha* published the novel in chapters in 1920.

There is a famous statement by Álvaro Lins, one of the great names of the Brazilian detective novel: “The fiction of the detective novel and the fiction of the literary novel are different realities” (LINS *apud* PONTES, 2007, p. 5). With this, it is understood that it is impossible to judge one in the same way as we judge other. We can compare them, of course, but understanding the space of each one.

According to Dias (2016) the fragmentary Valencian writing alludes to a patchwork. For the author, from a dreamlike layer tuned to the filmmaker side of Valêncio Xavier he builds a writing made of details, while it is also minimalist and still poetic. This mixture, for her, refers to the dream, the mystery.

The researcher also emphasizes the work of Valêncio Xavier Barthesian way, as a “fabric of quotes” (BARTHES *apud* DIAS, 2016, p. 33), whereby “the writer is a collector of relics and remains” (DIAS, 2016, p. 33). He is at both ends, understanding the opposition of relics and rest as the maximum and minimum. In this context of the writer as a collector and an accumulator, it is clear that the author revisits her ideas about Valêncio Xavier and a supposed almanac aesthetic. Boris Fausto can also be seen in the same way. Not only for working with the cases already worked on by Valêncio Xavier, but also and, mainly, for using the technique of clipping and collage of fragments of different origins.

In general, sensational crimes take on large proportions, therefore, this range in different media is natural. However, what is different in Fausto (2019) and Xavier (2004) writing is the way in which they try to capture the fragments about a certain crime from many medias.

Pontes' (2007) statement, when writing about Brazilian detective literature, with emphasis on the author Rubem Fonseca, is pertinent: "He is a writer of several themes and many subjects, in some ways and many measures. And he is also a restless and mutant writer" (PONTES, 2007, p. 162). The term "mutant" is quite convenient for a writer of Brazilian detective literature, perhaps the most appropriate. This is due to the several examples that reaffirm hybridity both in writing and in the career of the authors. Noting, once again, that Fausto is a historian, teacher and writer and Xavier was a filmmaker, journalist, writer, screenwriter and TV director.

The author also points out that Rubem Fonseca would have been the greatest author in the country in the detective genre. Although this statement is interesting, since the importance of Rubem Fonseca's production in the genre is indisputable, it can perhaps be more discussed nowadays, due to the great legacy built by Luiz Alfredo Garcia-Roza.

Another Brazilian author of great prominence in the police literature scene is Raphael Montes, who has also been working with the same technique already used by Valêncio Xavier and Boris Fausto to base themselves on real crimes to write their fictional narratives. In addition to literature, the writer has also been working on film scripts, with the most recent "A menina que matou os pais" (2020) and "O menino que matou os meus pais" (2020), both based on the criminal case that had a great media reach in the country in recent years: the murder of the Von Richthofen couple, by their daughter, Suzane Von Richthofen. Once again, it is observed how much the media takes place in the dialogue between literature and cinema.

Brait (2010) states that these intersections of literature with other languages provide a multiplicity of voices. For the author, the current texts are full of links that link to other texts, forming a huge network of connections. We see that this is a more modern and technological way of thinking about collage and montage. Therefore, the construction of meaning from a reading is increasingly heterogeneous and the closed text itself becomes an unlikely possibility.

In this context, it is worth reflecting on what Higgins (2007) says about this heterogeneity: "In Intermedia, on the other hand, the visual element (painting) is fused conceptually with the words" (HIGGINS, 2007, p. 28). In other words, in the Intermedia work, the fusion between image and text is elementary. The author also mentions that this collage was seen with an emphasis on concrete poetry,

where image and text only work together. It is also common to come across visual novels and, in the future, other similar productions tend to come.

According to Higgins (2007), nothing will stop innovation. There is always someone, somewhere, at the forefront, thinking of something different from everything that has been done.

### Concluding remarks

Based on what was pointed out and analyzed during this research, it was observed that *O crime da Galeria de Cristal: e os dois crimes da mala São Paulo, 1908-1928* (2019) is a book built from the intermedia process of clipping and collage of fragments of different natures. Thus, from its reading, we noticed references from the historiographical, journalistic, literary, cinematographic and artistic spheres, all of this, as a historian, but also of an author influenced by detective novels, forming, therefore, what we can call of a “multimedia approach and reading” of 20th century crime and modern society.

This process is carried out in such a way that neither medium overlaps the other. Both dialogue, connect and generate meaning through the criminalist thread. The attraction that society has for themes related to murders, crimes and criminals is manifested in a fruitful way in the cases selected by Fausto (2019), showing why sensationalism works in Brazil.

Thus, in view of the society that consumes large scale productions on crimes, from the most diverse media, national detective literature tends more and more to function in an anthropophagic way, as is done in this book. The author brings cases with details and he uses different sources for this. Furthermore, the reader also takes on a new role. The narrative-montage requires a spectator-detective. One who should be more attentive, critical, filling in the gaps and investigating the lines.

Therefore, the fragmentation and lack of definition of the textual genre and the multiplicity of languages and images are traces of modernity expand to contemporary times and end up echoing in literature. Collage had its peak on cubism and dadaism and it is no longer an artistic experimentalism, it becomes central to current productions.

From the ready-made technique, it evokes journalistic and folkloric memory, but in the field of fiction. The discontinuity in this process consists in replacing a linear recovery of memory and history by cutting out only fragments of them. The new ways of conceiving writing, sound and image are permeated by technology and the prefix “inter”. According to Antelo (2000) the ready-made is linked to the Dada aesthetic, which represents at its core the agony of society. On the one hand, it marks the end of a period, mainly by breaking with traditional art, in keeping with the concept of beauty and it also brings beginnings,

mainly for providing new possibilities and meanings to the common, which becomes the center of this new concept of art.

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