

The feeding pictured in the cinema: contribution of social representations**A alimentação retratada no cinema: contributo das representações sociais**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to survey and analyze the social representations of cinema viewers regarding the food portrayed in films. Google Forms was used to raise on Facebook the testimony of people who like cinema about the food portrayed in this communicational and artistic medium. The answers about the most cited film were interpreted by content analysis, using the theory of social representations as a theoretical framework. The sample consists of 35 participants, 89.9% women and 11.1% men. There were 16 films that came to mind and the most mentioned was *Babette's Feast* (26.47%). Two categories were raised: preparing the food and serving the food. At the *Babette's Feast*, food first enters restrictions, suitable for the small village, reflecting the conservative and religious parameters of the two sisters, being only a source of food. The use of the theory of social representations allowed us to study in the film *Babette's Feast* the social realities, the phenomena that involve some fundamental characteristics of daily life and those phenomena that disturb people's routines. The social representations about food for people who like cinema emerge when the food is transformed into tasty food, shared between people. The innovative and previously unattainable flavor portrayed at the

Babette's Feast brings the importance of food, meals as a cultural and social act of integration, memory, innovation, sharing, sociability, subjectivity and individual and social transformation through food preparations and tastings.

Keywords: Social representations, Food, Gastronomy, Cinema, Culture

RESUMO

O objetivo desse estudo é levantar e analisar as representações sociais dos espectadores de cinema referente à alimentação retratada em filmes. Utilizou-se o Google Forms para levantar no Facebook o depoimento das pessoas que gostam de cinema sobre a alimentação retratada nesse meio comunicacional e artístico. As respostas sobre o filme mais citado foram interpretadas pela análise de conteúdo, utilizando-se a teoria das representações sociais como referencial teórico. A amostra constitui-se por 35 participantes, sendo 89,9% mulheres e 11,1% homens. Os filmes que vieram à mente dessas pessoas foram 16 e o mais citado foi *Festa de Babette* (26,47%). Duas categorias foram levantadas: preparar o alimento e servir o alimento. Na *Festa de Babette* o alimento entra primeiramente com restrição, adequado à pequena aldeia, refletindo os parâmetros conservadores e religiosos das duas irmãs, sendo somente uma fonte de alimentação. O uso da teoria das representações sociais permitiu estudar no filme *A Festa de Babette* as realidades sociais, os fenômenos que envolvem algumas características fundamentais da vida diária e daqueles fenômenos que incomodam as rotinas das pessoas. As representações sociais sobre alimentação das pessoas que gostam do cinema emergem quando o alimento é transformado em comida saborosa, compartilhada entre as pessoas. O sabor inovador e antes inatingível retratado na *Festa de Babete* traz a importância da alimentação, da refeição como um ato cultural e social de integração, memória, inovação, partilha, sociabilidade, subjetividade e transformação individual e social através das preparações e degustações de alimentos.

Palavras-chave: Representações sociais, Alimentação, Gastronomia, Cinema, Cultura

1 INTRODUCTION

Cinema through sound image in motion is the stage for communication and manifestation of social representations (SR), socio-cultural behaviors, social, cultural and indemnity phenomena. These images influence the viewer, become the object of desire and seduce the eye, seeking meaning and meaning when the viewers watch, listen and receive information from a film. Art goes beyond the limits imposed by rationalities and expands the understanding of human experience and in this sense; cinema is a producer of thought and culture (RAMOS, 2010a; FERREIRA et al., 2016).

In the technological, global and networked society, in the media, in the cinema, food, present in all moments of life, at the private and public level, has been increasingly addressed and discussed, producing impacts and changes and sharpening the taste and appetite through images, representations and projected senses (McLUHAN, 2001; RAMOS, 2003, 2005; CASTELLS, 2007; LIVINGSTONE, 2009; HALKIER, 2013; LEER; POVLSEN, 2016). Thus, the active viewer makes choices, combines and reinvents the images related to food loaded with RS and uses them to understand the situations that

awaken them, to take action and express opinions. Individual and cultural identities and subjective senses, related to the taste of food are constantly underlined in stories of food symbolism in the cinema (GARCIA, 1994). According to Ferreira et al. (2016) “in the cinema, a scene of a romantic dinner, a family lunch or a business dinner exposes the mechanisms of social interaction that appear as natural, but that are elements of analysis that can be studied in the light of Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology and other sciences”.

Food occupies a fundamental place in society, in culture and in the life of all individuals, having an important social function and constituting a basic human need associated with habits, rituals, customs, traditions and representations.

In Anthropology, eating is a social act, culturally constituted, from which each person establishes his own and subjective relationship with the foods to be consumed and that expresses the structure and culture of a society in space and time (RAMOS; STEIM, 2000; MINTZ, 2001; LÉVI-STRAUSS, 2006). In Sociology, food is seen as a social practice built throughout life and characterizes what people eat, being a constituent of their identity, according to the postulate "we are what we eat". Food is a constructor of collective identity in a dynamic game of similarities and differences (FISCHLER, 1988; MINTZ, 2008). In Social Psychology, eating, incorporates and integrates the individual and the group in a social, cultural, subjective and identity space, constituting a language that produces meanings, representations, codes and symbols (POULAIN, 2004; BARTHES, 2007; CRAMER; GREENE; WALTERS, 2011; DE SOLIER, 2013).

In this study, we chose to employ Social Psychology, namely the Theory of Social Representations, proposed by Moscovici (2012), who studies the processes through which people, in social interaction, build explanations about social objects that have a strong impact on their lives, like food.

SR is at the same time: “the product and process of a mental activity, through which an individual or a group reconstitutes the reality to which it is confronted and to which it attributes a specific meaning” (ABRIC, 1987, p 64).

SR have a fundamental role in the dynamics of social relations because they respond to four essential functions. The function of knowledge is that according to which SRs allows to understand and explain reality; the role of guidance, the role in which SRs guide behaviors and practices. The justifying function is that according to which the SR allow the justification of the positions and behaviors and the indemnity function, the function in which the SR define the identity. When understanding these essential functions of SR, there is a relationship between SR, identity and social

practices (ABRIC, 1998). It is known that social practice is an action of individuals whether in particular contexts or social interactions and, in the literature on SR, the behavior of individuals, as members of a group, takes the form of social practice (GIAMI, 1997; WACHELKE; CAMARGO, 2007). In this study he proposes to study food, as a social behavior.

The identification of these realities that people or groups have and use to act and to make decisions is indispensable to understand food (ABRIC, 1998).

Studying the food portrayed in the cinema by the SR framework means understanding that people, in their social and cultural context, issue opinions about the foods they eat, according to their subjective aspects, in the way they think is correct and in the way they translate transmitted guidelines.

In cinema, the different types, modalities and details of communication are learned and the capture of representations, of the individual and social behavior of people in different cultural universes. The film is a means of representation and communication with the Other and an instrument of intercultural communication par excellence (RAMOS, 2003, 2005, 2010b; RAMOS; SERAFIM, 2009). The filmic method in cooperation with other disciplines, knowledge, social actors promotes a better knowledge of society, of man in his unity and diversity and in different social and cultural contexts (Ramos, 2010a), namely of representations and eating behaviors.

Food media in its multiple dimensions are configured as symbolic spaces and discourses of identity that seek to be legitimized, as well as possible places of arthritis and construction of the other (LEER; POVLSEN, 2016).

For Reyna (2019) it is necessary to understand the film as an object, above all, in her film discourse, appropriating her social and symbolic discourse of the object / phenomenon represented. Thus, the objective of this study is to identify and analyze the social representations of cinema viewers regarding the food portrayed in films.

2 METHODOLOGICAL PATH

The emphasis of this study is on qualitative research, being descriptive when reporting, in a coherent, consistent and detailed way, the SR of food portrayed in the cinema. It is also exploratory in that it allows researchers to increase their experience around the theme (WARD-SCHOFIELD, 1993; TRIVINÕS, 2006).

The study scenario was the cinema, because the film, by allowing the continuous and meticulous recording of activities and behaviors, by capturing the gesture and the word, reveals communication and everyday life elements, which appear as banal and fleeting, as details unimportant, but which in

reality are, important for the study of people in their social, family and cultural universe (RAMOS, 2003; 2005, 2010a). The use of film methodology allows access to the SR of individuals and groups, of different generations and genders, in different places and spaces and on the most varied themes.

The questionnaire questions were developed on Google Forms and posted on Facebook to obtain information from people who love cinema: your age, your gender, 1. What film comes to mind that portrays eating at the cinema? 2. What is the scene or phrase from that film that comes to mind? 3. Talk about that scene or phrase from the movie.

From the data of the first question was chosen the most quoted movie for data analysis. To analyze the second and third questions, the Thematic-Categorical Content Analysis Technique was used, following three basic steps: pre-analysis, coding and treatment of results (BARDIN, 2006). In the pre-analysis, the answers were read thoroughly and compiled constituting the research corpus. In the codification of the material, the corpus was transformed in an organized way and aggregated in similar registration units, with the description of the relevant characteristics of the content. Then, the categories were chosen and the interpretation of the individual responses of each category was done in a detailed way from the perspective of the interviewee, exploring the way the subjects structure and provide meanings to others and themselves (BARDIN, 2006). In the analysis of the answers, the Theory of Social Representations was used, in its procedural approach as described by Moscovici (2012). This theory studies the processes by which people, in social interaction, build explanations about the social objects that have a strong impact on their lives Moscovici (2012). The studied RS phenomena are not fragmented into simple variables, but studied in their entirety (NASCIMENTO-SCHULZE; CAMARGO, 2000).

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The sample consists of 35 participants who answered all questions contained in Google Forms, 90% women and 10% men. The predominant age range was 51-60 years (38%), 41-50 years (21%), 31-40 years (21%) and 18-30 years (20%).

14 films came to mind, the most mentioned (26.47%) *Babette's Feast* (1987), then (17.64%) *Ratatouille* (2007) and others less mentioned, namely: *The Hundred-Foot Journey* (2014); *Eat Pray Love* (2010); *Goodfellas* (1990); *La Grande Bouffe* (1973); *Estômago* (2007); *Fried Green Tomatoes* (1991); *Minha Mãe é Uma Peça 2* (2015); *The Dinner* (1998); *Muito Além do Peso* (2012); *Ilhas das Flores* (1989); *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (2005); *Nos Enfants Nous Accuseront* (2008).

Film Analysis - Babette's Feast

The most cited film - *Babette's Feast* will be analyzed below based on the responses of viewers and the book, which has the same name as the film, written by Blixen (2012). The confrontation of individual discourse and individual representations, with data from direct and filmic observation, is an important research method, namely to analyze behaviors (RAMOS, 2005, 2010a, RAMOS; SERAFIM, 2009).

The *Babette Feast* was filmed in Denmark and produced in 1987 by Gabriel Axel. He received the Oscar for best foreign film. Filippa (Bodil Kjer) and Martine (Birgitte Federspiel) are the daughters of a strict Lutheran pastor. After the death of the religious, she appears in the village, Babette (Stéphane Audran), a Parisian woman who offers to be the family's cook and cleaner. Many years later, she receives the news that she has won a grand prize in the lottery and offers to prepare a French dinner in celebration of the pastor's 100th birthday, revealing her culinary skills and her previous job as chef. Parishioners, at first fearful, end up surrendering to Babette's feast (BLIXEN, 2012).

Among the participants who chose the *Babette's Feast*, 62.5% belong to the age group 51-60 years old, 25% 41-50 years old and 12.5% 31-40 years old. The speeches of these participants constituted the corpus of the research (pre-analysis) and were divided into two categories (codification): preparing and serving food. Then the content of the testimonies analyzed (interpretation) from the perspective of the subject and the theory of social representations.

3.1 1ST CATEGORY: PREPARING FOOD

Preparations for the banquet began with Babette's departure from the village for 10 days to order food produced directly in France. With the aid of a helper dinner was prepared. The towel and napkins were washed and ironed, the dishes and cutlery washed and polished. Candlesticks illuminated the table made up of 12 people (BLIXEN, 2012).

According to reports by some people, in the preparation category, the emphasis is on the subjective aspects of this task:

"For me it is what food preparation represents: a moment of giving, concentration and delicacy that associates culture, emotion and art with food".

"Babette was cooking carefully for her guests."

"When the cook prepares a feast for your guests and excels in production, seeking to make the best dishes she knew."

Babette preparing the food with donation, concentration, delicacy and care seeking to make classic dishes with a lot of emotion and art was the thought of these people who love cinema. They

made this choice, combining and reinventing the loaded images of SR, using them to understand the situations that awoke them, to take action and express these opinions, as explained by Moscovici (2012).

In addition to the explanations, people propose, react or evaluate a particular object differently depending on the classes, cultures or groups constituting the universe of opinions. Each universe has three dimensions: information - corresponds to the knowledge of the people who are part of the group; the attitude - positive or negative global orientation of the group in relation to the object represented and the field of SR - namely the set of aspects of the object that are taken into consideration by the group (SÁ, 1998; MOSCOVICI, 2012).

People's interest was more concentrated in the stages of preparing special meals, as reported by Gracia and Contreras (2011). As the preparation of trivial meals is a common practice, the refined food caught the attention of the spectators, as it is an event that occurs sporadically, in special celebrations. In this way it involves some fundamental characteristics of daily life, and it is a phenomenon that bothers people's routines, as said by Sá (1998). An SR emerges where there is danger to the collective identity, when the communication of knowledge is submerged by the rules of society (MOSCOVICI, 2012).

The act of preparing food in the kitchen (culinary operations themselves) portrayed in the film was not mentioned by the participants, although the kitchen is “a universal activity, present in any human society and is configured by a system of contrasting culinary traits and relate to each other” (GRACIA; CONTRERAS, 2011).

When Babette arrived in the village of Berlevaag, Norway to work as a housekeeper, she was instructed to prepare dry cod, a beer soup with bread, that is, to make simple foods and spend little, as the bosses were poor and for them, food sophisticated were sin (BLIXEN, 2012). In daily life, food is restricted in the film, suitable for the small village, reflecting the conservative and religious parameters of the two sisters, being only a source of food, a biological necessity.

There are significant differences between everyday eating and ceremonial eating. The symbolic-ritual character of eating is expressed in the habit of inviting people to meals at our home or in restaurants. The intention of the invitation is to feed social relationships (WOORTMANN, 2006; BELASCO, 2008; CRAMER; GREENE; WALTERS, 2011).

Daily eating includes multiple activities whose dedication, in time and effort, is difficult to quantify (GRACIA; CONTRERAS, 2011). The task of cooking is a culinary process that includes, in addition to preparation, less pleasant or less considered tasks, such as cleaning food, storing food, washing utensils, garbage collection and cleaning the kitchen.

Cooking introduces specialized functions with shared responsibilities, such as the chef and his assistants, in addition to the pleasures at the table. Nourishment differs from food and, in order to become food, it must undergo a process of transformation through cooking (WOORTAMANN, 2006).

The cuisine adds refinement, lightness, culture and sophistication to this process of cooking food, which then goes from a nutritional need to a higher category. More than just manual or mechanical work, cooking requires talent and creativity. When tasting the food it must be excellent, attested by the color and flavor. Taste experiences are conditioned by societies, cultures, ecology and years of experience, as stated by Freyre (1933).

3.2 2ND CATEGORY: SERVING THE FOOD

The gastronomic experience is guided by the happiness, satisfaction and joy of the guests and the cook, as highlighted in the statements of some people:

“Scene where, at the dinner served by Babette, people have a gastronomic experience that they have never had before. In addition to the feeling of happiness of the guests, the character's happiness stands out; this takes place in the act of providing this experience to their guests”.
"The banquet. People's features when they try the dishes prepared by the character".
"The joy felt at being able to offer that dinner".

The guests' bodies express the happiness stamped on their features provided by Babette when serving the French banquet. At the banquet, food serves to discover pleasure, affective (re) union, reliability, empowerment of being as a unique individual, who needs social obligations and social interaction, but also to discover in his individuality, the pleasure of life.

The food served by Babette was not served for peasants and workers, which defines “tastes of necessity”, but rather a distinct meal served for the upper class, according to the “taste of luxury or freedom” as Bordieu (1988) quotes. This taste of luxury of classic French cuisine, this “distinction”, was printed on the faces of the guests, reflecting discovery, happiness and joy.

The essential cognitive processes that form SR - objectification and anchoring are intrinsically linked to each other and are shaped by social factors (SÁ, 1998; MOSCOVICI, 2012).

In the objectification process, individuals try to reduce the distance between the knowledge of the social object they build and their perception of that object (DESCHAMPS; MOLINER, 2009). Objectification makes it possible to make a conceptual scheme real and replace an image with its material counterpart (MOSCOVICI, 2012).

Thus the taste sensations present in the guests' memories become real when tasting the food served at the banquet, as evidenced by General Loewenhielm, portrayed by Blixen (2012):

“A little suspicious of his wine, he took a sip, was startled, lifted the glass first up to his nose and then at eye level and set it down in astonishment. “This is very strange!” He thought. “Amontillado”. And the best amontillado I’ve ever tasted in my life. ”

“After a moment, in order to test his senses, he took a spoonful of soup, then a second spoonful, and lowered the spoon. “This is incredibly strange, he said to himself. I’m definitely having turtle soup... and what a turtle soup”.

The taste sensations of the preparations experienced by General Loewenhielm at the banquet are grouped, organized and categorized, acquiring materiality’s through the pleasure of eating foods he already knew, such as amontillado wine and turtle soup.

In the first phase of objectification, information and beliefs about the object of representation undergo a process of selection and no contextualization, allowing the formation of a relatively coherent whole, in which only a part of the available information is retained. The second phase refers to the organization of the elements of representation through the concepts of schema and figurative nucleus. In the third, naturalization, the concepts retained in the figurative and the respective relationships are constituted as natural categories, acquiring materiality. Concepts become equivalent to reality and the abstract becomes concrete through the expression of metaphors and images (MOSCOVICI, 2012).

In addition to objectification, anchoring is represented by General Loewenhielm when he tastes the preparations already known (Blixen, 2012):

“But when a new dish was served, it was silent. Incredible! He said to himself. It's Blinis Demidoff! He looked around at the diners. Everyone ate their Blinis Demidoff peacefully, without the slightest trace of surprise or approval, as if they had been doing it every day for thirty years.”

General Loewenhielm once again lowered the glass, turned to the neighbor on the right and said: But it is undoubtedly a Veuve Clicquot 1860, no? The man gave him a benevolent look, smiled and made an observation about the weather”.

In the film *Babette's Feast*, General Loewenhielm experienced again the unique taste of Blinis Demidoff, buckwheat pancakes with caviar and sour cream, usually served with champagne. The chosen one was Veuve Clicquot 1860, the drink of the bourgeoisie, which the general also knew and recognized on the first sip. The general's reference to the dishes he already knew allowed him to apprehend the banquet, the social object in a different way than his table neighbor and the other guests. Although the experience of the guests was different from the general, they felt increasingly lighter, and lighter in spirit, the more they ate and drank, as expressed by Blixen (2012).

Anchoring is the process by which individuals choose a common frame of reference that allows them to apprehend the social object (DESCHAMPS; MOLINER, 2009).

Another person brings the issue of food as a factor of rebirth among the elderly:

"It brought food as a kind of rebirth agent for a community of elderly people who were just waiting for death to come."

For elderly guests at the *Babette's Feast*, food served as a powerful social bond, as stated by Gracia and Contreras (2001). Commensality - the process of eating together reinforced the social relationship, belonging to the group, transferring meaning and giving life to the elderly, as reinforcement in their identities.

The film is an important document to understand how each culture represents itself and represents the other and otherness. Cinema implies a method, a way of doing, of apprehending and knowing the world, of reproducing and treating the real, revealing the way of thinking, the ideology and representations of a society (SORLIN, 1977; RAMOS, 2003, 2005).

Two participants summarize the film in a way that encompasses the two phases:

"The scenes of food preparation and then the surprise of the guests to the banquet."

"The scene that the main character begins to prepare the list for the banquet, after the arrival of the ingredients, the preparation of the dishes and of course, the satisfaction of Babette to serve your guests."

For these people, the film portrayed food, which begins with the elaboration of the shopping list based on the menu, the receipt of food, preparation and the act of serving, marked by the feelings of surprise of the guests and the satisfaction of Babette. The thinking of these participants explains the complex concept of food "that begins with food selection", but which also involves modes of preparation, eating habits and consumption behaviors (FLANDRIN, 1998; PHILIPPI, 2003; BELASCO, 2008; MONTANARI, 2009). The elaboration of the shopping list and the receipt of food are part of the food selection.

It is noted that Babette was concerned with the selection of foods, which encompasses objective and subjective aspects, according to the concept of the word: selection is a set of conscious and unconscious decisions made by a person when buying and / or consuming food (HAMILTON; MCILLVEEN; STRUGNELL, 2000), being dependent on objective aspects such as physical and financial accessibility (BRASIL, 2006) and subjective aspects such as desires and needs, triggered by odor, taste, vision and hearing (DREWNOWSKI, 1999).

The subjective aspects were evoked by the participants, such as Babette's satisfaction in preparing dinner and the surprise of the guests triggered by the odor, flavor, sight and hearing when tasting the dishes served.

The objective aspects (physical and financial accessibility) did not attract the attention of people who gave their opinion about *Babette's Feast*, however in the film this issue was mentioned. Parisian Babette won a grand prize in the lottery and offers to prepare a French dinner in celebration of the pastor's 100th birthday (WOLTZ; PRADO, 2016). Foodstuffs for dinner preparation were ordered in advance.

The film *Babette's Feast* is a social and historical testimony, apprehending the visible, the ephemeral or ostensive of a culture and a society, giving an account of their expectations, dynamics and conscious and unconscious processes. This film reflects the society, in which they are inserted, highlighting the most visible aspects, but equally, the most hidden and obscure, illustrating in some way, the unconscious and implying a subjective dimension (FRIDEMANN; MORIN, 1955; FERRO, 1977; FRANCE, 1975, 1989).

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The intention of the elaborated questions was to highlight the semantic universe of the object studied, *Babette's Feast* in a faster and more dynamic way, valuing the use of the privileged word - symbol and sign in human relationships, through which people build and seek make sense of the reality around them.

The interpretations by the Content Analysis were always in the sense of seeking depth under the apparent reality portrayed in the answer given.

The use of SR theory in this study allowed us to study social realities, the phenomena that involve some fundamental characteristics of daily life and those phenomena that bother people's routines, such as the film *Babette's Feast*. These social realities were appropriated by the individual or the group, reconstructed in their cognitive system, integrated in their value system, dependent on their history and the social and ideological context that surrounds them.

In the film *Babette's Feast*, the SR for people who like the cinema about food emerges when food is transformed into tasty food, shared between people. The innovative and previously unattainable flavor portrayed at the Babette's party brings the importance of food, meals as a cultural and social act of integration, memory, innovation, sharing, sociability, subjectivity and individual and social transformation through food preparations and tastings.

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