



# Narratives of modernity: editorial design and visual culture in *Senhor* magazine (1959–1964)

## *Narrativas da modernidade: design editorial e cultura visual na revista Senhor (1959–1964)*

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### ABSTRACT

This article investigates *Senhor* magazine (1959–1964) as an artifact of graphic memory and its role as a cultural mediator in a Brazil marked by the tensions between modernities and patriarchy. Although recognized for its graphic and editorial sophistication, the magazine still requires analysis that places it within the field of design as a social phenomenon, especially in relation to gender representations and the visual and editorial choices that reflect the sociopolitical context of the time. Using a systemic approach, it primarily analyzes the covers of the first sixteen issues of the magazine, published between March 1959 and June 1960, as well as other graphic design elements, through a semiotic analysis articulated with specialized literature and contextual references of the period. The results point to the magazine's role in consolidating an elitist and masculine imagery of Brazilian modernity, combining local and international influences. The research contributes to the studies on editorial design and visual culture by highlighting the magazine as an expression of the sociocultural dynamics and power structures in 20th-century Brazil. Furthermore, it emphasizes the role of illustrated magazines as mediators of cultural values and agents in the construction of graphic memory.

**Keywords:** Graphic Memory. Editorial design. Gender. Cultural identity. Illustrated magazines.

### RESUMO

*Este artigo investigou a revista Senhor (1959–1964) como artefato de memória gráfica e sua atuação como mediadora cultural em um Brasil marcado pelas tensões entre modernidades e patriarcado. Embora reconhecida por sua sofisticação gráfica e editorial, a revista ainda requer análises que a situem no campo do design como fenômeno social, especialmente em relação às representações de gênero e às escolhas visuais e editoriais que refletem o contexto sociopolítico da época. Partindo de uma abordagem sistêmica, foram analisadas prioritariamente as capas das 16 primeiras edições da revista, publicadas entre março de 1959 e junho de 1960, assim como outros elementos do projeto gráfico, por meio de uma análise semiótica articulada à literatura especializada e às referências contextuais do período. Os resultados apontaram para a atuação da revista na consolidação de um imaginário elitizado e masculino da modernidade brasileira, combinando influências locais e internacionais. A pesquisa contribuiu para os estudos sobre design editorial e cultura visual ao destacar a revista como expressão das dinâmicas socioculturais e das estruturas de poder no Brasil do século XX. Além disso, enfatizou o papel das revistas ilustradas como mediadoras de valores culturais e agentes na construção da memória gráfica.*

**Palavras-chave:** Memória gráfica. Design editorial. Gênero. Identidade cultural. Revistas ilustradas.

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## INTRODUCTION

Graphic memory plays a central role in studies of material culture and graphic design, connecting the history of visual artifacts to the construction of cultural identities. In this context, graphic artifacts significantly contribute to the formation of visual narratives and the preservation of symbols that reflect the social and cultural dynamics of a society (Farias; Braga, 2018). These elements, often considered ephemeral, accumulate historical and cultural meanings that strengthen the collective perception of cultural unity and uniqueness (Assmann, 2011).

In turn, studies of material culture demonstrate how consumer objects carry and transform cultural meanings over time, as material goods go beyond their practical use, acting as mediators of values, social practices, and identities (Miller, 2002; McCracken, 2007). This approach broadens the understanding of graphic design, which ceases to be seen merely as an aesthetic activity and becomes established as an interdisciplinary field capable of analyzing cultural and social dynamics, especially in contexts of modernization and consumption.

In 20th-century Brazil, illustrated magazines played an important role as artifacts of graphic memory, contributing to the circulation of ideas and the consolidation of new fields such as design. These publications were not merely editorial products, but tools for building collective memory, integrating visual and discursive references during a period of profound transformations in the country, such as accelerated urbanization, industrialization, cultural modernization, the emergence of new social identities, as well as intense debates and changes in the political landscape marked by periods of democracy and authoritarianism (Martins, 1995).

As artifacts that are part of what we can call cultural heritage, magazines serve as possible sources for understanding the socio-cultural relationships that supported them. In addition to their ability to “represent the dynamics of history” (Martins, 2009, p. 281), by gathering and interconnecting texts, images, and narratives that document currents of thought and values shaping Brazilian society, magazines allow for the analysis of graphic and social transformations of the period. In other words, they reflect “their potential to represent specific audiences, worldviews, and particular values within the broad social segmentation of the country” (Martins, 2009, p. 296).

*Senhor* magazine<sup>1</sup>, published between 1959 and 1964, exemplifies the role of illustrated magazines as mediators of graphic and cultural memory in Brazil. It transcended its function as an editorial product and became a significant cultural document of its time. Created as a small-scale venture, the publication summarized the transformations experienced by Brazilian editorial design in the 1960s, articulating modernity and culture through a sophisticated and innovative graphic language rooted in the predominance of illustration as a central element of visual communication (Melo, 2006).

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1 *Senhor* is the title of the magazine and a Portuguese noun meaning “lord,” “master,” or “gentleman.” It also functions as a formal address for men (abbreviated as “Sr.,” similar to “Mr.” or “Sir” in English). The term carries connotations of authority, masculinity, and social distinction, which the magazine’s title intentionally evokes - a nuance that has no direct equivalent in English

The state of the art regarding cultural illustrated magazines in Brazil and Latin America has been consolidating, highlighting their role in culture and graphic design. The book *A Revista no Brasil*<sup>2</sup> (2000) provides a historical overview of these publications in the 20th century, while Niemeyer (2002), in his doctoral thesis, analyzes the graphic design of *Senhor* as a bridge between international modernism and Brazilian culture. On the other hand, Bustamante (2007), guided by Niemeyer in her dissertation, investigates, through semiotics, the use of colors in *Senhor*, exploring how its graphic elements reflected Brazil's cultural transformations and the balance between national identity and global modernity.

Building on this overview, this article discussed how *Senhor* magazine contributed to the construction of visual and discursive narratives that reflected and shaped certain cultural dynamics in Brazil between 1959 and 1964. Additionally, it explored how its graphic and editorial language interacted with the sociopolitical context of the time. Despite its renowned editorial and graphic sophistication, the magazine still lacks more in-depth analyses of its role as a cultural mediator, capable of understanding design as a social process that promotes other modernities within the Brazilian context of the 1960s.

The hypothesis is that the narratives of modernity promoted by *Senhor* magazine dialogued with patriarchal values still present in Brazilian society. The coexistence of aesthetic innovation and the maintenance of traditional hierarchies suggests a tension inherent to modernity in the country: while projecting a modern and cosmopolitan image, the magazine also highlighted the social and cultural limits of its time. By analyzing its visual and discursive choices, the study aimed to reflect on the reaffirmation of gender patterns even within proposals considered progressive or avant-garde.

The main objective of this work was to investigate how *Senhor* magazine functioned as an artifact of graphic memory and its contribution to cultural and visual discourses in Brazil during the 1960s. To achieve this, a semiotic analysis was conducted on the covers of the first 16 editions (1959 and 1960), mapping themes, images, and editorials anchored in academic studies and publications about the magazine, along with a contextual consideration to situate the analyzed materials in relation to graphic memory, editorial design, and the sociocultural environment of the period.

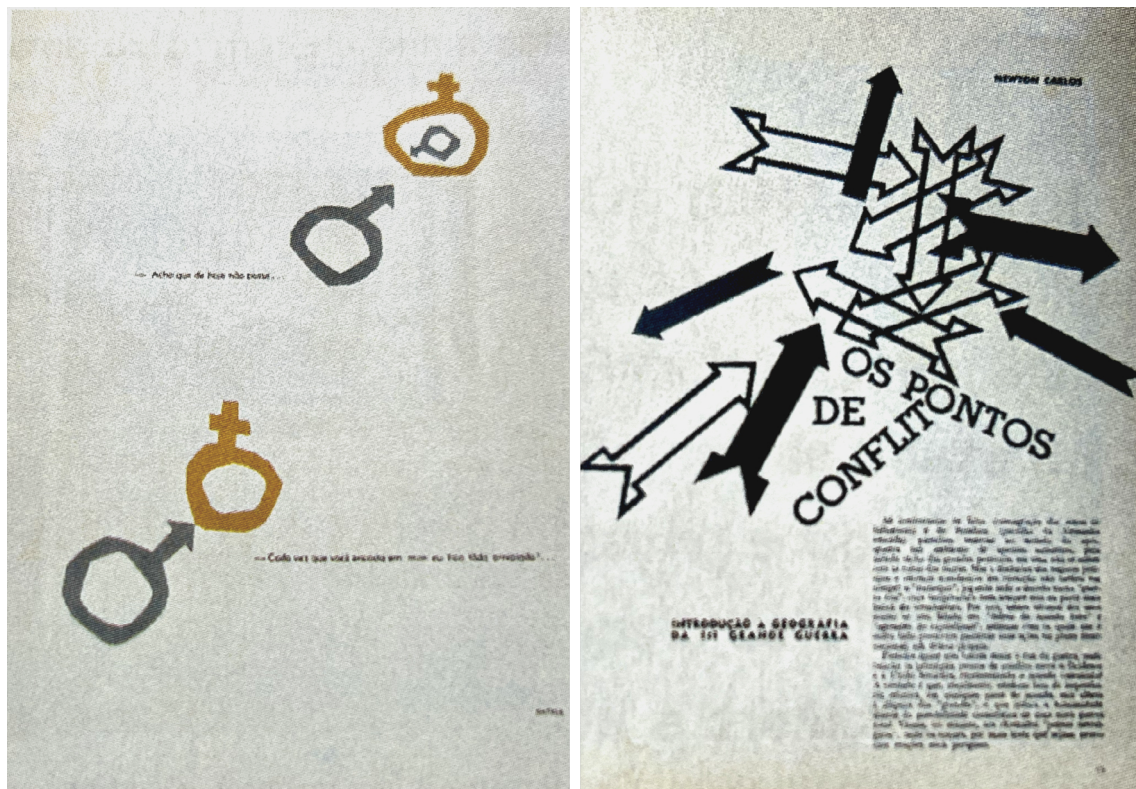
The article was organized as follows: first, it investigated the trajectory of the graphic and editorial design of *Senhor* magazine, analyzing its visual and narrative choices within the context of graphic memory and visual culture. Next, it examined how the magazine's graphic language interacted with the Brazilian sociopolitical landscape between 1959 and 1964, reflecting cultural transformations and debates surrounding modernity in the country. Finally, it discussed the magazine's role in articulating alternative modernity possibilities, highlighting its function as a cultural mediator and its contradictions in reaffirming elitist class and gender structures.

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2 It is the book's original title in Portuguese, which means *The Magazine in Brazil*.

## SENHOR MAGAZINE: AN ARTIFACT OF GRAPHIC MEMORY

Founded in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the magazine distinguished itself through its focus on culture and the prominent presence of illustration in its visual language (Melo, 2006). Its editorial approach aimed for a high standard both in content and graphic presentation, targeting an educated and economically privileged audience (Niemeyer, 2002). Every element of the magazine was considered part of the construction of a unique aesthetic experience, as shown in Figure 1. This distinctive character allowed the magazine to be perceived as a showcase of quality in editorial standards, prioritizing prestige over immediate profit (Basso, 2005).



Source: Bustamante (2007, p. 53).

Figure 1. Examples of using typography as illustration in *Senhor* magazine: n. 6, p. 19 (1959) and n. 7, p. 13 (1959).

The magazine's audience was predominantly composed of men from the economic and intellectual elite, many of whom were clients of Editora Delta, already engaged with elite cultural products such as the *Delta Larousse*<sup>3</sup> Encyclopedia, works by modern and classical authors, bossa nova records, and imported jazz, among others. This repertoire reinforced an image of sophistication and erudition aligned with the ideal of modernity cultivated through the pages of *Senhor* magazine. Its profile consisted of liberal professionals and entrepreneurs seeking social status through culture. The subscription price of the magazine further reinforced this positioning, being significantly higher than that of popular publications like *Manchete* and *O*

3 Encyclopedia of reference in Brazil, published by Editora Delta in partnership with the French publisher Larousse



*Cruzeiro*, thus establishing itself as a symbol of social and intellectual distinction (Niemeyer, 2002; Basso, 2005; Melo, 2006).

The magazine's editorial content covered culture, politics, economics, and entertainment, with an emphasis on cultural journalism. Reflecting Brazil's modernization in the 1960s and the societal transformations of the time, *Senhor's* thematic diversity made it one of the main reflections of that period. The predominance of literary and critical texts underscores the magazine's importance as a space for intellectual development and cultural dissemination (Basso, 2005; Melo, 2006).

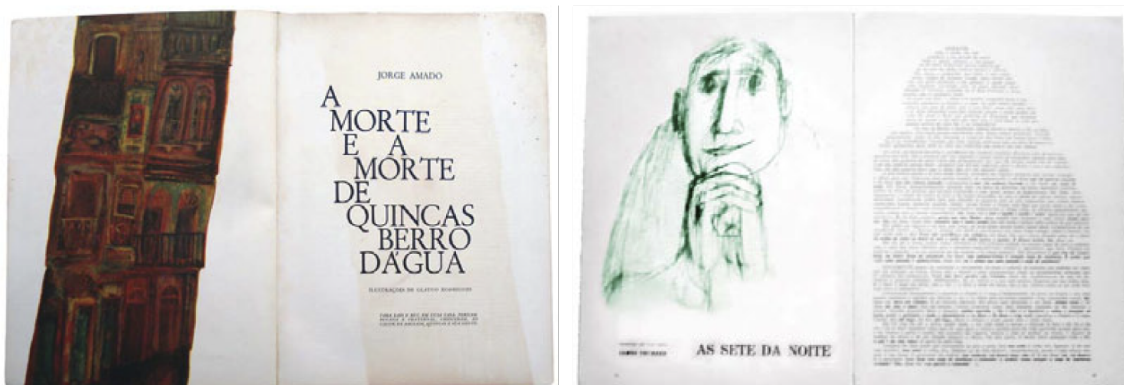
Visually, the magazine combined elements such as fine arts, cartoons, photography, and typography, resulting in a distinctive layout (Melo, 2006) (Figure 2). Its graphic design influenced generations of designers and established an aesthetic standard that resonated in subsequent publications.



Source: Bustamante (2007, p. 52, 84 e 86).

Figure 2. Examples of experimental layout using typographic techniques in *Senhor* magazine: n. 6, p. 66 (1959); n. 13, p. 98 (1960); and n. 14, p. 26 (1960).

The editorial and visual style of *Senhor*, characterized by cosmopolitanism and the pursuit of a unique identity, reflects a transitional period in Brazilian design and graphic communication. This influence occurred within a context of intense transformations in the Brazilian press, especially in the 1950s, when a wave of modernization swept through the economy, culture, and media. *Senhor* emerged in this fertile environment, integrating a movement that reinterpreted international models — particularly those from French and British schools — combining them with local ideas. This process resulted in a distinctive style and paved the way for bolder editorial projects, including that of the magazine itself (Basso, 2005). Its layout broke away from traditional models, adopting a free and experimental approach (Figure 3). From the early editions, the absence of a rigid grid revealed a thoughtful planning of content and form, aiming for a striking and cohesive visual experience (Bustamante, 2007).



Source: Bustamante (2007, p. 84 e 85).

Figure 3. Examples of graphic blotches in *Senhor* magazine: n. 4, p. 50–51 (1959) and n. 3, p. 38–39 (1959).

*Senhor* magazine can be understood as an artifact of graphic memory, based on the thinking of Farias and Braga (2018), who define this field as a means of rescuing and reevaluating visual artifacts, especially ephemeral printed materials, with the aim of recovering or establishing a sense of local identity. In this way, *Senhor*, as an editorial product of its time, functions as a testament to the national graphic production and contributes to understanding the communication and aesthetic dynamics of the period, articulating a unique and provocative reading of the national reality in dialogue with the consumption patterns of the era.

### IMPRESSIONS OF A BRAZIL IN TRANSFORMATION (1959–1964)

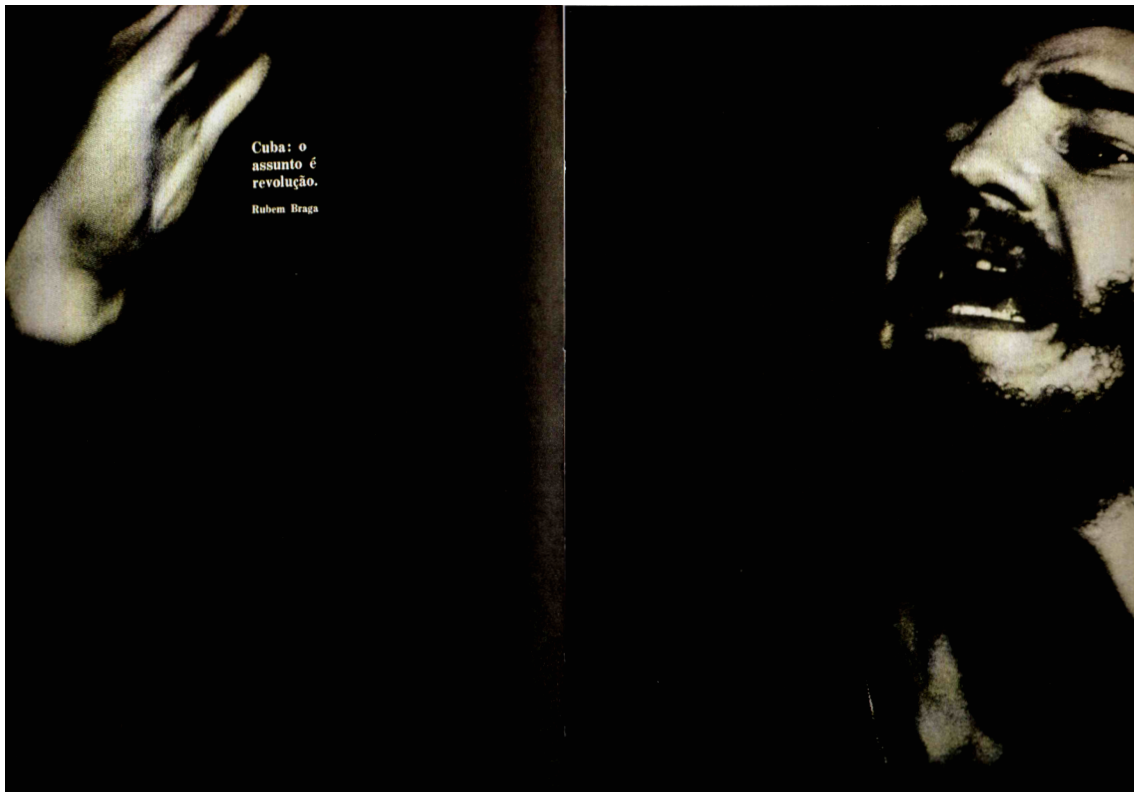
The period of publication of the magazine (1959–1964) coincided with profound changes in Brazilian society. Politically, the country was experiencing the final years of the democratic experiment before the 1964 military coup. The developmentalist era, driven by the governments of Juscelino Kubitschek and João Goulart, was characterized by industrialization, rapid urbanization, and the strengthening of an emerging middle class, which was also becoming a consumer audience for culture.

In addition to following the cultural changes, the magazine contributed to the construction of visual and textual discourses that reflected the ongoing transformations in Brazil. It established itself as a space that not only mirrored but also articulated the cultural shifts of the 1960s through active editorial curation, with examples such as visual essays that engaged with *Cinema Novo*<sup>4</sup>—like black-and-white photographs of transitioning cities—and in dossiers that combined stories by Lygia Fagundes Telles and art critiques, fostering the crossing of different languages (Figure 4).

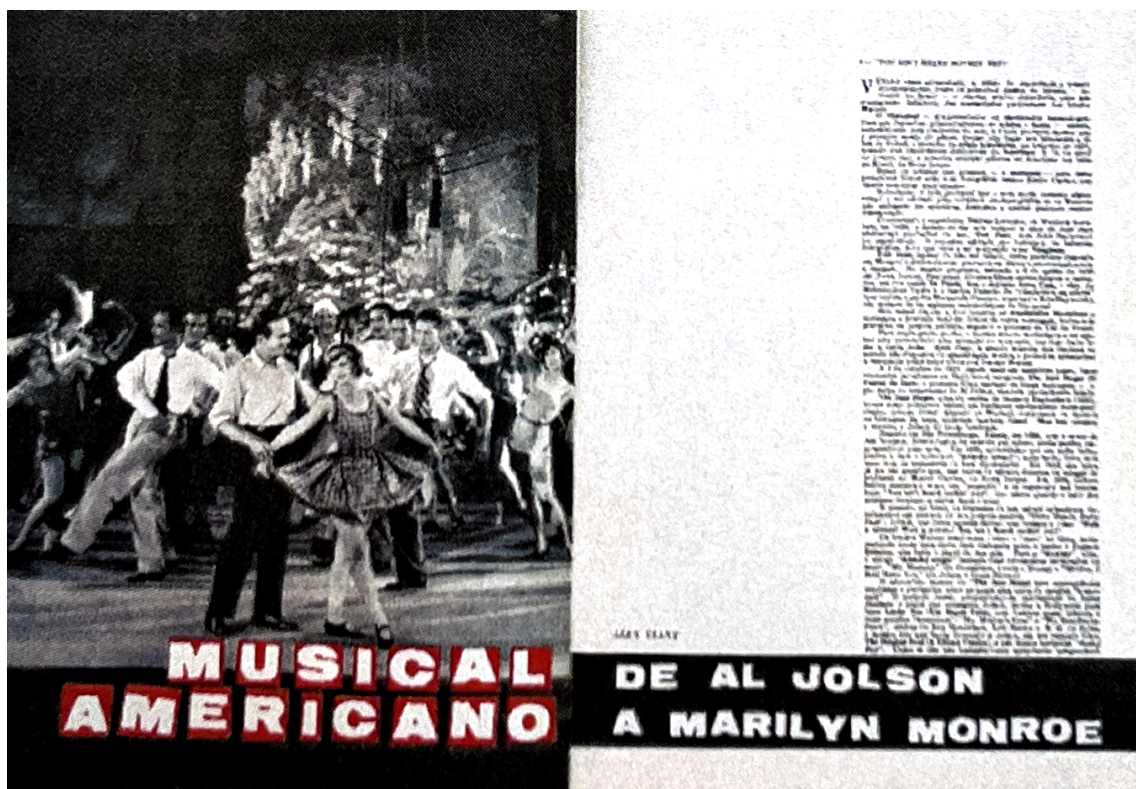
In the field of design as a political argument, the magazine used graphic collages that subverted visual hierarchies, blending popular culture with luxury advertisements, breaking with narrative linearity. Sections such as “Panorama Internacional” contrasted themes like Broadway and Brazilian concrete art, highlighting dilemmas between cosmopolitanism and national identity (Figure 5).

4 *Cinema Novo* was a Brazilian film movement from the 1960s, marked by strong political and auteur-driven characteristics.





Source: Bustamante (2007, p. 79).  
Figure 4. Use of black and white photography in a feature about an expedition to Cuba in *Senhor* magazine, n. 16, p. 18–19 (1960).



Source: Bustamante (2007, p. 52).  
Figure 5. Report on Broadway shows in *Senhor* magazine, n. 11, p. 34–35 (1959).

Despite its brief trajectory, *Senhor* magazine remains a reference for understanding the intersections of design, culture, and politics in Brazilian history, albeit with limited and segmented reach. Embedded in the modernization promoted by President JK<sup>5</sup> — whose slogan “50 years in 5” symbolized progress through industrialization and urbanization — the publication expressed the contrasts of a country in transition. As Jacques Lambert highlighted in an article within the magazine itself, Brazil had a modern and industrialized pole in the South and Southeast, coexisting with regions that were broadly marginalized. In this context, *Senhor* became both a document of this moment and a space for reaffirming the values of the urban elite benefiting from these transformations. Its visual and editorial choices also reflected social, racial, and gender hierarchies, which are discussed in more detail in the following sections of this work.

The visualities in *Senhor* magazine, under the artistic direction of Carlos Scliar (Instituto Cultural Casa Museu Carlos Scliar, 2025), reflected both the modernizing ideals and the oppressive structures of that national project. Designed and led by men, it operated with an editorial perspective marked by erasures. Aesthetic experimentation was prominent on the covers, which favored paintings over photographs, giving the publication an artistic and exclusive character, aligned with the pursuit of symbolic distinction and cultural identity (Niemeyer, 2002; Basso, 2005; Melo, 2006).

The graphic singularity of *Senhor* in depicting aspects of the daily life of Brazilian elites helped to crystallize a predominantly male, white, and class-based imagery. This construction resulted from a dialogue with international references, particularly magazines such as *The New Yorker* and *Esquire*, which influenced its aesthetics and narrative (Basso, 2005). The combination of foreign influences with elements of Brazilian identity produced an editorial aligned with the discourse of modernization, while simultaneously legitimizing it visually and culturally.

Advertising was one of the strategic elements in the dissemination of the modernizing ideal. The economic growth and urbanization of the 1950s stimulated a new consumption dynamic, accompanied by the strengthening of advertising agencies and propaganda as a means to reach this emerging market (Basso, 2005). Within this context, *Senhor* magazine organized its advertisements in an integrated manner with its graphic design, reserving the first and last pages for advertising, which contributed to the visual cohesion and sophistication of the publication (Figures 6 and 7).

Many of these advertisements were produced by the magazine’s own art team, surpassing the standards of traditional advertising and reinforcing the ideal of refinement (Melo, 2006). Products such as *GE* televisions and *Bendix* washing machines, which had just arrived in Brazil in the 1960s, were among the items advertised, symbolizing technological progress and the promise of domestic comfort and efficiency offered by industrial advancement (Figures 6 and 7).

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5 “JK” refers to Juscelino Kubitschek, president of Brazil (1956–1961).



Figure 6. Advertising of home appliances in *Senhor* magazine: *Bendix* washing machines.

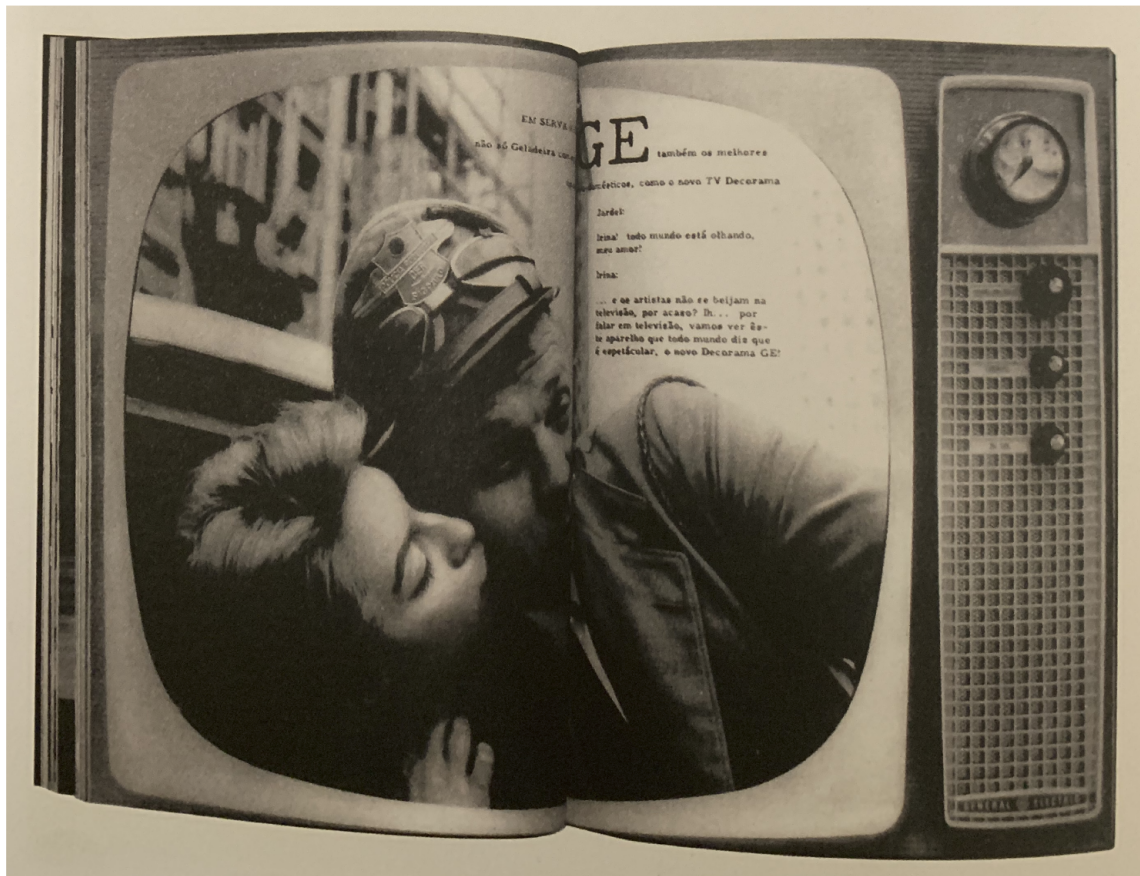


Figure 7. Advertising of home appliances in *Senhor* magazine: GE televisions.

Based on these considerations, the design of *Senhor* can be understood as part of a social process, as it not only reflected the modernizing discourses of the time but also accompanied and reinforced them. By presenting aesthetics, consolidating values, and expanding narratives that helped shape a particular vision of modernity in Brazil, the magazine exemplifies the idea that “design has always had the fundamental function of an agent of change that interprets all kinds of transformations — social, political, economic, [...] cultural [...] etc.” (Rawsthorn, 2024, p. 13). Therefore, the publication highlights design as an interdisciplinary field embedded within a broader cultural ecosystem, in constant dialogue with external social dynamics.

### **“A MAGAZINE FOR THE GENTLEMAN”: ANALYSIS OF DISCURSIVE AND VISUAL NARRATIVES**

Throughout its first phase, recognized as the publication’s golden age from March 1959 to January 1961, *Senhor* magazine established itself as a cultural and avant-garde reference, with narratives that emphasized cultural, political, and economic themes, permeated by a humor characteristic of the period. Under the direction of Nahum Sirotsky and with Carlos Scliar as art director, it assembled a team of renowned journalists, visual artists, illustrators, and writers, giving the publication a unique and distinctive identity in the Brazilian editorial scene of the time (Niemeyer, 2002; Basso, 2005).

The graphic team assisting Carlos Scliar with the magazine’s layout also included “the Gaucho Glauco Rodrigues<sup>6</sup> and Jaguar<sup>7</sup>, from Rio de Janeiro, then a humorist illustrator for the magazine *O Cruzeiro*” (Melo, 2006, p. 107). Although briefly, Bea Feitler<sup>8</sup> also contributed to the graphic team in 1960 as an art assistant, already demonstrating her potential as a designer. Together, they helped establish the magazine as a space for visual experimentation and discursive articulation. Joining this team were Caio Mourão — an art assistant who joined almost simultaneously with Feitler — and the advertising professional Michel Burton, who took over from Glauco Rodrigues as art director after issue no. 25 (corresponding to the magazine’s second anniversary).

The editorial project proposal allowed *Senhor* not only to explore diverse content but also to establish a platform for intellectual debates, prioritizing the quality of the writing and the historical relevance of literature. The magazine’s editorial line was based on the belief that the dissemination of culture is a fundamental value. To achieve this, the publication’s management invested in hiring esteemed

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6 Glauco Rodrigues (1929–2004) was a Brazilian visual artist, illustrator, and graphic designer. Associated with the modernist movement, his work traversed expressionism, surrealism, and pop art, exploring themes of Brazilian culture with irony and social critique.

7 Jaguar (Sérgio de Magalhães Gomes Jaguaribe, 1932–2021) was a Brazilian cartoonist, illustrator, and graphic designer, known for his irreverent humor and his work in the alternative press.

8 Bea Feitler (1938–1982) was a Brazilian graphic designer who revolutionized editorial design with her innovative work. At *Senhor*, she contributed to the magazine’s visual modernization, foreshadowing the bold approach that would define her international career in publications such as *Harper’s Bazaar* and *Rolling Stone*.

collaborators, acquiring articles, essays, critical reviews, reports, and especially unpublished literary texts. The compensation offered by the magazine was higher than the market average, which facilitated the attraction of renowned writers and emerging talents. This model resulted in the constant publication of unpublished literary works, ensuring authors maintained their copyright rights. In this way, *Senhor* managed to assemble a large team, promoting the coexistence of already established authors and new talents who, years later, would become prominent figures in national and international literature (Basso, 2005; Melo, 2006).

The magazine prioritized journalistic articles and essays, focusing on cultural and political analyses. Among its contributors were educators Anísio Teixeira and Darcy Ribeiro, who discussed education as an essential factor in shaping national identity. In the political and philosophical fields, notable figures included diplomat, lexicographer, and philologist Antônio Houaiss, who reflected on nationalism and the Brazilian *intelligentsia*, and French sociologist and economist Jacques Lambert, with his dualistic thesis on Brazil's rich and poor sectors. Economist Celso Furtado contributed studies on economic development, while Jean-Paul Sartre analyzed bourgeois theater (Basso, 2005).

The multifaceted nature of *Senhor* was also evident in its travel chronicles, which featured contributions from Fernando Sabino, Otto Maria Carpeaux, and Vinícius de Moraes. In art criticism, the magazine had a prominent presence of Alex Viany, who focused on topics related to cinema. Sports journalism was represented by Armando Nogueira. In the field of reporting and articles on politics and economics, Newton Carlos stood out (Basso, 2005). The magazine's thematic diversity emphasized its goal of offering comprehensive and elitist content, guided by the criterion of textual excellence.

*Senhor* also engaged in promoting literary texts by renowned foreign authors, publishing works by figures such as Ernest Hemingway, Leo Tolstoy, William Faulkner, Mark Twain, T. S. Eliot, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Dorothy Parker, Franz Kafka, Thomas Mann, D. H. Lawrence, and Bertolt Brecht (Niemeyer, 2002; Basso, 2005). This literary curatorship positioned the magazine as a space for cultural exchange, reinforcing its role as a mediator of this flow, and also providing the Brazilian public with access to texts from different literary traditions, regarded as high quality.

In addition to foreign literature, *Senhor* magazine emphasized domestic literary production, publishing previously unpublished works by renowned authors such as Nelson Rodrigues (*Boca de Ouro*, 1960), Graciliano Ramos (*Pequena História da República*, 1960), and Jorge Amado (*A Morte e a Morte de Quincas Berro D'Água*, 1959). This reinforced its focus on Brazilian literature and contributed to strengthening its cultural identity and consolidating its influence within the intellectual circles of the time.

In the realm of cinema and theater, *Senhor* also distinguished itself by showcasing modern movements that aimed to intellectualize and autonomize the film production, elevating it to the status of art. Regarding theater, the magazine followed and acclaimed the renewal movements of Brazilian theater, which proposed

to bring the country's reality to the stage and contribute to the construction of a national identity (Basso, 2005).

In the first 16 issues of *Senhor* magazine, published in 1959 and 1960, a graphic and conceptual pattern that reflects the construction of masculinity and gender relations within the context of that period can be observed. According to Bustamante (2007), during this time, the covers were illustrated by members of the magazine's art department or by recognized artists—only one edition featured a cover that was exclusively typographic. Male presence on these covers was consistently manifested, either as the protagonist or in a position of superiority or dominance over female figures.

### **ILLUSTRATED PATRIARCHY: 16 COVERS OF *SENHOR* MAGAZINE (1959 AND 1960)**

This section analyzed gender representation on the covers of the first 16 issues of *Senhor* magazine (1959 and 1960). The visuals projected a modern ideal of masculinity while reaffirming gender hierarchies. We propose to reflect on how these images contributed to a patriarchal imaginary aligned with the values of the elite of that time. This approach emerged organically during the research, stemming from the recurring male centrality on the covers and the absence or subordination of female figures.

The following reflections are based on the covers of the first 16 issues of *Senhor* magazine (Figure 8). Inspired by semiotic analyses and the observations of Lucy Niemeyer (2002), from the first issue of *Senhor*, published in March 1959, in her doctoral thesis, we will now provide a synthesis that will pave the way for new questions and future discussions.

The first cover, by Carlos Scliar, establishes an iconic scene of Rio de Janeiro by evoking the landscape of Copacabana (Figure 9). The black and white background reproduces the infinite succession of ocean waves, creating a rhythmic movement that repeats in the depicted female figure. Niemeyer (2002) describes this figure as a woman with voluptuous shapes, loose black hair, walking briskly along the beach, attracting the gaze of a man sitting on a bench near the sand. This man, positioned below the magazine's title, establishes a direct relationship with the idea of a "*Gentleman*" observer.

The visual interaction between the two characters reinforces a male gaze that appropriates femininity within a play of desire and contemplation. Furthermore, the man's gaze not only focuses on the woman but also extends to the reader, transforming him into a voracious observer who follows the sway of the walker. The scene encapsulates one of the main dynamics present in the magazine's covers: the valorization of the male gaze as the dominant agent and the objectification of the female body.

In the second cover (Figure 9), by Glauco Rodrigues, this hierarchical relationship between genders is intensified by the portrayal of an expansive male figure in a vivid red, suggesting imposition and dominance over a withdrawn female figure, represented in yellow, implying vulnerability and covered with letters. The female character appears to be in her workplace, against an orange background that





Source: Bustamante (2007, p. 51).

Figure 8. Covers of *Senhor* magazine: 16 editions dated from March 1959 to June 1960, issues 1 to 16, presented from left to right, from top to bottom.

conveys tension. She is possibly a secretary typing on a machine, while the man, with his hands on her shoulder and close to her chest, displays a gesture of possession and authority. The scene alludes to the social structure, where men held a dominant role, and even when women were in professional environments, they were perceived as subordinate.



Source: Bustamante (2007, p. 51).

Figure 9. Covers of *Senhor* magazine: issues 1 and 2, authored by Carlos Scliar and Glauco Rodrigues, respectively (1959).

The third cover, by Glauco Rodrigues, reinforces this perspective by depicting a couple at a table, where only the man's face is fully visible, while the woman's is partially outside the magazine's frame (Figure 10). Both are dressed elegantly, with the man wearing a suit and bow tie, and the woman in a plunging dress. The posture of the characters suggests an interaction in which the man, with his hands on his chin and leaning forward, demonstrates overt interest. In contrast, the woman keeps her gaze downward, in a stance of modesty and introspection, explicitly illustrating the prevailing gender hierarchy in society, which reinforces stereotypes of discreet femininity.

The fourth cover, by Glauco Rodrigues, presents a variation in the representation of women by depicting several women on top of a car (Figure 10). However, these figures are drawn in a less figurative manner, in poses that emphasize their bodies, wearing dresses that highlight their curves. The chaotic arrangement of the female figures on the cover, combined with the lack of individuality among them, reinforces the perception of women as objects of collective desire, fragmented and accessory to the male universe. The car, traditionally associated with masculinity and status, can be interpreted, alongside the female figures, as representing the men's possible "consumption" interests.

On the fifth cover, also by Glauco Rodrigues, male presence is implied through the suggestion of an environment of seduction and conquest (Figure 11). The composition features a glass with a little drink, a pipe, two women's shoes seemingly left haphazardly, and a bottle of alcohol against an intense red-dish-brown background.





Source: Bustamante (2007, p. 51).

Figure 10. Covers of *Senhor* magazine: issues 3 and 4, authored by Glauco Rodrigues (1959).



Source: Bustamante (2007, p. 51).

Figure 11. Covers of *Senhor* magazine: issues 5 and 6, authored by Glauco Rodrigues (1959).

The absence of human figures does not prevent the construction of a visual narrative that suggests the presence of a man, possibly a “gentleman” who attended a meeting, and the atmosphere evokes a seductive imaginary. The reddish-brown hue reinforces this sensual and nocturnal motif, evoking an aesthetic associated with the bohemian and hedonistic male universe.

The sixth cover, by Glauco Rodrigues, employs a mythological figure to represent the male ideal of power and elegance: a centaur, whose human part is dressed in an extremely sophisticated manner, wearing a suit, tie, vest, and top hat (Figure 11). The choice of this hybrid figure of man and horse reinforces the duality of civilization and instinct, rationality and brute strength. The impeccable attire suggests a man belonging to the elite, while the equine part alludes to a wild and virile side. This visual composition directly dialogues with the construction of masculinity during the period, where the ideal man was simultaneously cultured and dominant, rational and vigorous, aristocratic and imposing.

The seventh cover, considered the most significant by Carlos Scliar in terms of design (Figure 12), features two faces: a male one on the left and a female one on the right (Melo, 2006). The painting created specifically for the cover stands out for its intentional use of empty spaces. The male figure occupies a larger area and looks down from above with an expression of superiority. In contrast, the woman, with red lipstick and a slightly downward gaze, appears in a reduced scale. The difference in framing and the direction of their gazes establish a visual hierarchy, in which the man dominates the symbolic and discursive field, while the female figure is positioned in a secondary role, reinforcing gender patterns that characterized the magazine's editorial language.

The eighth issue features an abstract approach in shades of blue, without an obvious visual narrative or a clearly identifiable central figure (Figure 12). In this cover, Glauco Rodrigues explores informal abstract expressionism, a stylistic choice



Source: Bustamante (2007, p. 51).

Figure 12. Covers of *Senhor* magazine: issues 7 and 8, authored by Carlos Scliar and Glauco Rodrigues, respectively (1959).



that differs from the previous covers, which often depicted the male figure explicitly (Melo, 2006). However, the magazine's editorial identity maintains an aesthetic coherence that resonates with the male target audience of the time. The absence of a human figure does not necessarily imply visual neutrality, but rather can open space for more subjective interpretations.

The ninth cover features a close-up of the face from Vincent van Gogh's painting *The Schoolboy* (Figure 13). The choice of a classical painting to adorn the magazine's cover can be interpreted as an effort to reaffirm intellectual and cultural identity, aligning with the image of the ideal *Senhor* reader: a sophisticated, cultured man who appreciates the arts. The depiction of a young student at the center of the composition may also reference the valorization of erudition and continuous learning, aspects often associated with an intellectualized form of masculinity.



Source: Bustamante (2007, p. 51).

Figure 13. Covers of *Senhor* magazine: issues 9 and 10, including a detail from Van Gogh's work and authored by Jaguar, respectively (1959).

The tenth cover (Figure 13), created by Jaguar for the December 1959 edition, is considered one of the most emblematic of *Senhor* magazine (Sarmiento, 2000 *apud* Basso, 2005). His contributions were crucial in shaping a visual identity that combined sophistication and irony in the representation of the modern man. In this cover, Jaguar depicts the magazine's ideal male figure: a middle-aged man, careful and sensitive, aligned with the profile of an intellectualized reader. The image balances pride and delicacy, symbolized by the upright posture of the man and the flower he holds: it is a portrait of both the magazine and its reader — or at least, of how both wished to be seen (Melo, 2006).

The eleventh edition, by Glauco Rodrigues, features on its cover the sun with a masculine face set against a dark blue background (Figure 14). The solar iconography, traditionally associated with power, reinforces the symbolism of masculinity as the central and guiding force. While sunlight is often linked to reason and clarity, the presence of a masculine face can be interpreted as the personification of the man as a guide — someone who illuminates and determines the directions of knowledge and culture. This reading resonates with the readership, which, in a way, sees itself as the protagonist of modernity, a central value of the magazine.

The twelfth cover, by Glauco Rodrigues, from February 1960, features a man dressed as a *Pierrot*, with a conical hat tilted on his head (Figure 14). He appears leaning back, almost fallen, conveying an impression of intoxication, with lost eyes and a slight smile. His colorful attire references the carnival universe, suggesting a male figure that distances itself from the rigidity traditionally associated with serious and austere masculinity. However, this representation may be linked to a bohemian dimension, often romanticized within the masculine context of the period.



Source: Bustamante (2007, p. 51).

Figure 14. Covers of *Senhor* magazine: issues 11 and 12, both authored by Glauco Rodrigues (1960).

The thirteenth cover, also created by Glauco Rodrigues, is “exclusively typographic”, explicitly indicating that “SR.” is an abbreviation for “*Senhor*” (which many people did not notice). Since then, the covers have been identified with the full name of the magazine (Figure 15). This choice can be understood as a graphic experiment but also as a reflection of the magazine’s visual identity, which was not limited to the figurative representation of masculinity but also explored its presence through design and language.

The fourteenth cover, from April 1960, by Glauco Rodrigues, features a man wearing a shirt, shorts, sunglasses, and a pipe, walking toward a sign pointing to Brasília<sup>9</sup> (Figure 15). The composition suggests a traveler, a modern explorer heading to the newly inaugurated capital on April 21, 1960. The choice of Brasília as the destination reinforces the connection between the male figure and the ideals of progress and modernity, recurring themes in the narrative constructed by the magazine, and aligns with the events of the period.



Source: Bustamante (2007, p. 51).

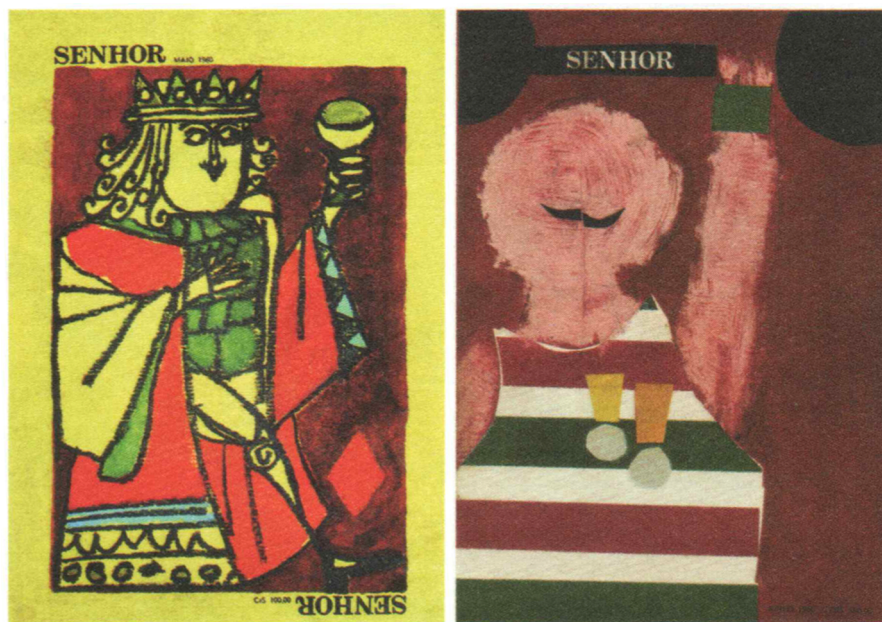
Figure 15. Covers of *Senhor* magazine: issues 13 and 14, both authored by Glauco Rodrigues (1960).

The fifteenth cover, by Glauco Rodrigues, presents a reinterpretation of the King card from a deck, a symbol of power and strategy (Figure 16). This representation associates masculinity with leadership and decision-making. The use of the King icon, adapted to the magazine's graphic context, emphasizes *Senhor's* dialog with the idea of a reader who sees himself as the protagonist — the most important card in the deck of his social, professional, and intellectual life.

The sixteenth cover, by Bea Feitler, dated June 1960, features a weightlifter lifting a barbell with one hand and displaying two medals on his chest (Figure 16). This is the first of only three *Senhor* covers created by a woman, Bea Feitler. The image evokes physical strength and athletic performance, elements traditionally valued in the construction of masculinity. The figure of the medal-winning athlete symbolizes the valorization of male performance, whether intellectual or physical, which also expresses a “mix of exhibitionism and charm” (Melo, 2006, p. 116).

<sup>9</sup> Brasília is a planned city, inaugurated in 1960 as the new capital of Brazil.





Source: Bustamante (2007, p. 51).

Figure 16. Covers of *Senhor* magazine: issues 15 and 16, authored by Glauco Rodrigues and Bea Feitler, respectively (1960).

These covers reinforce the visual and conceptual coherence of *Senhor* magazine, which, throughout its editions, built a multifaceted masculine imaginary, always centered on the figure of the man as a reference of power, culture, and sophistication. The various graphic and narrative approaches used on the covers demonstrate how the publication articulated visual elements to engage with its target audience, establishing itself as a space for affirming masculinity within the Brazilian editorial context of the period.

Despite its appeal to modernity, both in content and design, *Senhor* magazine reinforced patriarchal values rooted in the Brazilian society. This was expressed through the themes selected, the tone of the texts, and, most notably, the covers, which encapsulated a discourse aligned with the interests of the male elite. Directed, edited, and primarily illustrated by men, the publication not only reflected but also normalized a worldview centered on the male figure as the holder of symbolic, cultural, and material power.

The notion of masculinity promoted by *Senhor* adhered to a hegemonic model, in which the white, educated, and economically privileged man was presented as the universal reference of the human experience. According to Kimmel (1998 cited in Voks; Silva, 2022), societies construct normative ideals of masculinity that become cultural standards. In *Senhor*, this ideal appears in the protagonists of the texts and in the iconography of the covers, which delineated a canon of the modern man. Despite addressing modern and progressive ideas, the magazine maintained rigid class and gender boundaries, limiting who could be represented and to whom it was addressed. Thus, it reaffirmed an exclusionary imaginary, aimed at the intellectual and male elite of the period.



The analyzed covers continue to symbolically reproduce patriarchy, even when they appear to be distanced from the more obvious stereotypes of masculinity. The recurring presence of male figures portrayed as references of authority, intellect, or sophistication illustrates how the publication constructed an imaginary of masculinity aimed exclusively at a bourgeois male audience. This phenomenon is directly related to the power dynamics that shaped Brazilian society.

As Oliveira (2004 cited in Voks; Silva, 2022) argues, middle-class men, by seeing themselves as universal human beings, naturalize their privileges and fail to recognize how gender, race, and class affect their own experiences and those of those who are systematically excluded. *Senhor*, operating within this logic, reflected a discourse that legitimized this universalizing perspective and reinforced it through its editorial identity.

Based on the analysis by Voks and Silva (2022) of *Cláudia* magazine, which illustrates how, decades later, another publication still reinforced the maintenance of the patriarchal system, similarly, *Senhor*, decades earlier, reflected this same logic of subalternization. In this logic, men were represented as possessors of bodies, territories, and resources, while patriarchy operated as a system that ensured this ownership, functioning both as a social norm and as a mechanism for reproducing this hierarchical structure (Voks; Silva, 2022).

This principle manifested in *Senhor* not only through the systematic erasure of women and other social groups on its pages but also in the reaffirmation of men as the almost exclusive possessors of culture and knowledge. This narrative, constructed in the silence of the cover images of these 16 editions, reinforced a notion of man defined by the possession of knowledge and cultural capital, establishing invisible barriers that restrict access to these spaces for those who do not share the same social profile.

## **SENHOR MAGAZINE: BETWEEN MODERNITIES AND CULTURAL TENSIONS**

Modernism, as a global movement, is often associated with technological progress and the idea of a “better life through technology” (Tunstall, 2023, p. 50, our translation). However, this narrative conceals the harms caused by mass-produced technologies, which perpetuate inequalities and exploitation, especially in colonial and post-colonial contexts. In Brazil, this hegemonic modernism took on specific contours, particularly from the 1930s onward, when the state began adopting modernist aesthetics as part of a national-developmental project (Niemeyer, 2002).

However, modernity in Brazil was not limited to the reproduction of European models. Alongside expressions of functionalist values, there was a movement to recover and update elements of Brazilian culture, aiming to reconcile tradition and innovation. This process was driven by contact between artists and intellectuals with European avant-garde movements, resulting in a diversified aesthetic production that encompassed visual arts, literature, music, and graphic design (Niemeyer, 2002).

As central platforms for the circulation of ideas and cultures, magazines are cultural products and agents that shape values and world narratives. Through them, discourses have been constructed, either to resist Eurocentric universalism and propose situated and plural interpretations of design practices, or simply to serve as another reinforcement of colonialities, with local touches.

*Senhor* magazine emerged in this context as a space for experimentation and innovation, challenging the boundaries between high culture and popular culture. It was a cultural magazine rooted in a modern behavioral stance, reflecting the social and cultural transformations of the period (Melo, 2006). Therefore, it played a mediating role for local and global references, articulating cultural debates, particularly in the field of literature, and political discussions focused on Brazil's progressivism in the context of global transformations.

In addition to producing vibrant expressions of artistic modernism, the magazines of this period impacted attitudes and behaviors beyond the elites (Cardoso, 2022). This impact, during the 1950s and 1960s, when Brazil underwent an accelerated process of industrialization and urbanization, deeply reflected in the country's visual and material culture. Within these movements, avant-garde projects aimed at approaching popular culture developed, supported by symbols of nationalism. *Senhor* magazine positioned itself as a space for experimentation and critique, even if subtly, of this movement (Basso, 2005).

The heterogeneity of *Senhor's* graphic design expressed the tensions between tradition and modernity on both local and global levels, embodying a Brazil in transformation. Although linked to modernism, the magazine was not confined to reproducing foreign models, reflecting a multifaceted and uneven modernity. For some, it pointed toward socialism; for others, it aligned with the interests of elites and the developmentalist national agenda.

While promoting progress and consumption, it also deepened inequalities. On one side, an elite with access to cultural goods and planned neighborhoods; on the other, a marginalized population excluded from the benefits of this development (Niemeyer, 2002; Basso, 2005).

The modernism promoted by *Senhor* prioritized experimentation, rejecting the mass model of central countries that, although promising universal progress, perpetuated inequalities. The concept of alternative modernity emerged as a response to these tensions, proposing flexible ways of relating to the world. *Senhor's* graphic design reflected this vibrant thinking, oscillating between the boundaries of modernism and sometimes challenging it. By integrating local and global elements, the magazine not only engaged with the society's ethos but also contributed to the construction of a pluralistic modernity.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on the analysis of the graphic, textual, and editorial elements of *Senhor* magazine, in articulation with its sociopolitical and cultural context, its role as an artifact of graphic memory and cultural mediator was understood. As the results

indicate, although innovative in editorial design and visual language, the magazine constructed a discursive space aimed at an intellectual and elitist audience, promoting a specific vision of Brazilian modernity. *Senhor* articulated a sophisticated imaginary of masculinity and culture, aligned with foreign references, but also reinforced class and gender hierarchies. Despite representing the cultural and political transformations of the period, its discourse was confined to a normative ideal, excluding other experiences and reinforcing structural inequalities.

As a graphic memory artifact, *Senhor* magazine is a document that subtly captures values and oppressions that have historically persisted within the Brazilian social fabric. In the realm of representations, images are not merely neutral illustrations of reality; they participate in the construction of the collective imaginary. In the context of *Senhor*, this logic manifests in the systematic absence of any representation that diverges from ideals of white, elite, and culturally privileged masculinity. Throughout its editions, the publication did not leave room for the plurality of masculine experiences and lives in Brazil, confining itself to a normative ideal of man that reinforced gender, race, and class inequalities. The thematic selectivity of *Senhor* — focused on literature, visual arts, sophisticated behavior, and intellectual debates — dialogued with a literate and elitist audience who saw themselves as protagonists of modernity.

More than a mean of entertainment or reflection, the magazine functioned as an instrument of social distinction. The language, references, and construction of an ideal reader highlight this aim: to establish a discursive space that reaffirmed masculinity as an exclusive domain, ensuring the reproduction of the patriarchal model. *Senhor* thus becomes a testament to how visual and discursive representations uphold (and continue to uphold) exclusionary and hierarchical social structures.

By analyzing the magazine from a critical perspective, we find that, despite its modern and innovative proposal, *Senhor* did not break away from patriarchal values. By reaffirming the white, literate, elite man as the centerpiece of representations, it reinforced hierarchies that marginalized other groups from cultural visibility. Its legacy, therefore, goes beyond its graphic and historical impact, as it reveals how visual culture functions as a device of power: shaping perceptions, consolidating privileges, and perpetuating structural inequalities. The magazine exemplifies how aesthetically progressive projects can, simultaneously, uphold exclusionary structures under an appearance of modernity and sophistication.

This work contributes to studies of graphic memory, editorial design, and visual culture in Brazil by exploring the extensive material available to understand the aesthetic and intellectual dynamics of the period. By proposing new readings on the relationship between graphic design and sociopolitical processes, it highlights how the visual choices of *Senhor* magazine reflected class and gender hierarchies, as well as the intentions of its creators. Thus, the study enriches the field of design history by incorporating an approach that extends beyond aesthetics, considering the cultural and political meanings embedded in the editorial practices of the 1960s.

Despite its contributions, the study faced limitations that impacted the results. The selected time frame (1959–1964) allowed focus on the initial phase of the magazine (1959 and 1960), but prevented analysis of subsequent developments. Choosing the first 16 editions was also challenging due to limited access and the lack of digitization. Another limitation was the scarcity of recent studies on *Senhor*, as the available literature predominantly dates from the 2000s and has restricted access. Additionally, the inability to consult all editions compromised the comprehensiveness of the analysis.

For future studies, it is recommended to deepen the research in various directions. One possibility is a comparative analysis of *Senhor* with other contemporaneous magazines, especially Latin American ones, to investigate how different publications articulated discourses on modernity and cultural identity. The scope can also be expanded to include issues of race, gender, and class, analyzing how these aspects were addressed or silenced visually and textually. As a further step, a systematic analysis of *Senhor's* level of innovation is proposed, considering its impact on Brazilian editorial culture and its dialogue with international magazines from the same period.

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