Divine mediations: pentecostalism, politics and mass media in a favela in Rio de Janeiro
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The open-air deliverance I described in the introduction featured a number of men who presented their emotional testimonies. They were primarily concerned with telling about their life of crime and violence before they accepted Christ as their Savior. During the same service, the church-members showed images of an over-populated prison where they had also held a service. They ended with the deliverance of several men and women from the morro. In this ritual performance the Pentecostal church was portrayed as the liberator of the evil of the favela and of Brazilian society at large. Pertinently, this portrayal presents an apparent paradox. While the Pentecostal churches aim to depict themselves as agents that deliver the cariocas from evil, they can only do so by reproducing these anxieties themselves. The promise of ending violence by means of massive evangelization in the city is dialectically related to the representation of the city as an evil place. During the whole service most of what we heard was about crime and violence and most of the images we saw were of prisoners. This paradox prompts us to rethink the relation between religion, mass media and violence.

The link between religion and violence is commonly described in two ways. The first links the two by focusing on the upsurge of armed conflict, terrorism or genocide under the banner of religion; the second links the two by focusing on the possible smoothing out of conflict through religious doctrine and practice.

Most religious societies, in fact have interpreted their experience of the sacred in such a way as to give religion a paradoxical role in human affairs – as the bearer of peace and the sword. These apparently contradicting orientations reflect a continuing struggle within religions – and within the heart of each believer – over the meaning and character of the power encountered in the sacred and its relationship to coercive force or violence (Appleby 2000: 27).

This chapter seeks not to elucidate but to complicate the relationship between religion, mass media and violence by pointing out the ways in which mass mediated images of violence are integrated into Pentecostal media in Brazil.126 The images that refer to Biblical narratives are produced for the purpose of imagining the religious trajectory of

peace, with the ulterior purpose of persuading people to think of society in Pentecostal terms. The imagination of the violence in Pentecostal terms offers a model from which to understand the origin of violence and a model to act against it.

In Latin American contributions to studies on Pentecostalism, it has been argued that the Pentecostal doctrines and practices offer spiritual interventions in harsh social conditions. Leonildo Campos, for example, argues that the neo-Pentecostal rituals of the Igreja Universal are so popular because they offer people tools to deal with their social conditions. The Pentecostal rituals and practices of the Igreja Universal have a strong ‘magical’ character that people employ to conceptualize and combat the dangers and risks of daily life (Campos 1997):

The rites, practices and vision of the world in the Igreja Universal, prompt us to think that the relations between magic and religion are often much better defined by continuity and complementarity than by exclusion. Possibly, in this Igreja, the visibility of the magical and the tension between the two poles are more readily perceptible because its target-audience consists of people in extreme situations. Those individuals experience the uncertainties of urban life intensely, in the framework of a capitalist economy under reconstruction, coupled with a disarticulation process of modes of living provoked by the coming of a “post-modern” style. All this provides opportunities for the use of rituals that reduce the uncertainties and restore in the individuals the belief that the world can be manipulated and is not arbitrary. (Campos 1997: 42)

One of the central rituals in the Igreja Universal, the sessão de descarrgo, emphasizes the expelling of demons who are held responsible for misery and misfortune. Although I agree with Campos that the Igreja Universal offers people rituals, routines and practices that seek to ‘reduce the uncertainties and restore in the individuals the belief that the world can be manipulated and is not arbitrary’, the question remains if the Igreja Universal does not actively reproduce these anxieties itself? The Igreja Universal actively invokes images and narratives of violence that must ineluctably confirm the violent nature of Brazilian society in order to present itself as a powerful institution that counters it. The apparent paradox is that it can never fully accomplish a sense of peace, an end of uncertainty.

In this chapter I will discuss several representations the Igreja Universal employs to enforce a Pentecostal imagination of the batalha espiritual (spiritual battle), the metaphysical battle between God and the devil. A discussion of these representations will

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clarify how the Igreja Universal attempts to weave together different visual tropes to represent Brazilian society as inherently violent. Particularly the representations in the *Folha Universal*\(^{128}\) demonstrate that the Igreja Universal presents violent events in Brazilian society as diabolical evil, which can only be stopped through the mediations of Pentecostal pastors and politicians (Montes 1998; Birman 2006). The example of this newspaper will not only demonstrate how the modes of representation are entangled, it will also demonstrate the intertextual character of the newspaper.

My attempt at unraveling images and narratives of violence represented in the Folha Universal are in line with a method of intertextual analysis put forward by Fairclough (1995), according to whom: ‘Intertextual analysis aims to unravel the various genres and discourses – often, in creative discourse practice, a highly complex mixture – which are articulated together in the text (ibid).’ The Igreja Universal has been able to put forward its compelling Pentecostal interpretation of Brazilian society because its message is intertextually framed against the background of spectacular urban violence (Birman 2005). At present urban violence is one of the popular media topics in Brazil. Not only is it blazoned daily in the newspapers and on the television news broadcast, it also often features on infotainment television\(^{129}\) and in popular Brazilian magazines. The Brazilian news media conspire to construct an image of society that is fundamentally divided between ‘the good’ and ‘the bad’. While in all these media the spectacular images of violence are highlighted, an analysis of the origins of violence is mostly less prominent.\(^{130}\) This leaves ample room for the Igreja Universal to seize and adopt the images and narratives of urban violence and to transform the dichotomy of ‘the good’ vs. ‘the bad’ into the Pentecostal dualism of ‘God’ vs. the ‘devil’. The incorporation of the mass mediated violence in the media of the Igreja Universal creates a powerful Pentecostal narrative that people may employ to narrate their own experiences with violence in Rio de Janeiro. In other words, it is not merely the media of the Igreja Universal that reproduce anxieties, it is the conglomeration of mass media which contributes to the representation of Rio de Janeiro as a inherently dangerous city.

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\(^{128}\) The complete title of the newspaper is *Folha Universal** A Journal in the service of God **. In the year of its tenth anniversary the *Folha Universal* also presented a logo with the text “Ten years journalism with faith and information” on the front page.

\(^{129}\) See also Cristina Valéria Flausino 2003

\(^{130}\) Historically the monopolization of the legitimate use of force is understood as one of the key functions of the modern-nation state (Weber 1968). In the critical news media, the Brazilian state is heavily criticized for its lack of control of urban violence.
3.1 Pentecostals Adopt the News Genre

The *Folha Universal* is one of the prominent media the Igreja Universal uses to manifest itself as a viable political option in a mass democracy. The newspaper comes out weekly and is principally distributed in the churches to the Igreja Universal. The newspaper is also used by volunteers to attract new members of the church. These volunteers distribute the paper freely in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Given the political nature of journalism - the idea that journalists should inform the public who can then enter in rational debate and influence political processes - the phenomenon of a religious journal touches upon the question of the place of religion in the formation of public opinion and politics. In Western state formations, religion has often been described as a private matter that should not enter the public domain unless in a particular rational manner. One of the consequences of this normative distinction is an apparent tension between the professional ethics of journalism and religious faith. In the United States, for example, the ideal of objective newsgathering is commonly considered antithetical to the subjective expression of religious faith (Gormly 1999: 27, Schmalzbauer 2002: 166). However, Schmalzbauer convincingly argues that in fact religious discourse and journalism cannot be easily separated. Evangelical and Catholic journalists employ different strategies to overcome the apparent opposition. Journalists translate their religious convictions into professional discourse through what he calls 'multivocal bridging languages', which combine vocabularies drawn from both journalism and religious groups (Schmalzbauer 2002: 168). Multivocality here refers to the fact that the texts may have multiple meanings, 'that are capable of eliciting more than one interpretation (Schmalzbauer 2002: 171).'

Evangelical editors of the Folha Universal employ a similar strategy of multivocal bridging, though inverted. The Igreja Universal uses the Folha Universal to 'codify the news in order to integrate it into a larger narrative.' This larger religious-political narrative consists largely of the idea that socio-political action in this world is part of a

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111 See also Habermas (1989) and Garnham (1992) for a discussion on the function of journalism in the public sphere.
112 Casanova 1994
113 See also Hoover (1998)
114 Stewart Hoover argues that in the context of North American journalism this is also because religious practice and organization is changing itself. Hoover 1998: 35
115 One of the three languages Schmalzbauer distinguishes as multivocal is that of 'justice and peace'. The language of peace and justice is an articulation of ethically engaged journalism and religious activism. This categorization fits in well with the social-religious language in the *Folha Universal*. See also Sá Martino 2002.
divine plan in which the Pentecostal politician and believer may participate. While Sá Martino shows that the Folha Universal is instrumental to the political endeavors of the Igreja Universal, he makes a sharp distinction between a religious and a non-religious construction of reality. In my opinion this obscures the fact that while religious discourses can be very dominant, they are never completely self-contained or totalizing.\textsuperscript{137} Cogently, Sá Martino seems to underestimate the importance of images and photos in such a construction of reality (Morgan 1998). Images and photos take up a central position in the Folha Universal. To regard them merely as illustrations of the text would be to miss the point. Since images are in essence multivocal - they have no fixed or definite meaning - they facilitate the convergence between the social reality presented in the Folha Universal and the social reality presented in other media. They are in essence bridging languages. Take for example the headline of the Folha Universal of the 16\textsuperscript{th} June 2002 (fig. 19): ‘Brazil is the most violent in its use of firearms’. The small article beside the photo that shows a rifle, guns and ammunition, explains that Brazil is on top of the list of sixty-nine countries that has the most crimes and is in the top five countries where homicide is committed by use of fire-arms (83.39 percent). A smaller photo of a collection of weapons with a police sign placed behind it accompanies the photo of the rifle. Such a display of weapons is part of the common visual representation of a successful police operation in which weapons were confiscated from criminals. Similar photos appear in all kinds of newspapers and television programs in the city on a daily basis. In conjunction with the photo of the ‘smoking rifle’, this photo must confirm that firearms are indeed used in homicide.

However, the photos in themselves are not sufficient to construct a Pentecostal perspective on the world and the text itself also does not appear to be explicitly Pentecostal. At first sight, this front page of the Folha Universal looks very similar to other newspapers in Rio de Janeiro. In general the size and paper of the journals are very much alike and the lay-out and topics of the front page are also very similar. All front pages address socio-economic problems in Brazil: the great gap between rich and poor, the high unemployment, the violence in urban areas and so forth. Apart from these common front page topics, the greater part of the Folha Universal presents information that is evangelical in content: testimonies of people who have joined the Igreja Universal.

\textsuperscript{137} See also Asad 1993. Sá Martino present believers (fieh) and non-believers as given categories, with their own distinct habitus. Such a perspective leaves very little room for change, ambivalence and discontinuity on the part of the people who frequent the churches and little room for continuity of different mediated signs and symbols.
and have witnessed their lives change for the better, words of instruction from pastors, photos of churches filled with faithful followers. Given this distinction, one might think that journalism and evangelism are neatly separated in the journal. A closer reading, however, unequivocally reveals that the news items on the front page are placed in a particular relation to Pentecostal doctrine further on in the newspaper. For example at the end of the small article in the Folha Universal of 16 June 2002, we are directed to read page 1B of the same newspaper where the same text is repeated. More data on violence has been added, including a list of firearms that have been encountered in the hands of the infamous drug gangs in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. At the bottom of the page in a separate article a Bispo of the church explains that even though there are various circumstances related to violence - addiction to drugs and alcohol, social inequality, unemployment, adultery - the fight against violence should commence at the level of the family and the church: 'Human Beings have in them goodness and badness, and if the child learns the path of goodness, of faith in God, of justice and of truth, teachings that should be inculcated by the parents and are preached in the churches, certainly we would have a world of peace. That is why we are going to ask God to free us of evil. May God bless everyone.' The words of the Bispo place the journalistic accounts of the former pages in the Folha Universal in a Pentecostal perspective. He believes the violence must be seen in the light of a spiritual battle between God and evil and an attempt to counter the violence in Brazil should commence with knowledge of the Bible and faith in God. The structure of this narrative is reproduced in practically every Folha Universal that opens with news on violence.

Here, the concept of genre may shed light on the manner in which the Igreja Universal is able to portray the spiritual battle between God and the devil in its newspaper. While genres are open ended by definition - and therefore can contain intertextual images and narratives - they must display a certain coherence in form and content over time to be meaningful to both producers and consumers (McQuail 1994: 263). The news genre has several particular characteristics that distinguish it from other genres. The moral-political reading of news reports is largely dependent on 'neutrality' and 'facticity'. To produce 'facticity' news reports must display consistency in form and content - for example they must display a recognizable order in the events that happened recently and this must be presented as facts not as stories open to interpretation. In the

\*139 See also Sá Martino 2002; Kramer 2003; Birman 2006
Mass Mediating the Spiritual Battle

The layout of the newspaper is also very important. The headlines on the front page present the news that is deemed most important that day, framed in such a way that the reader is presented with the core issue immediately, often accompanied by a photo that features the object under scrutiny. Photographs are not merely illustrations of the headlines and texts, they are enormously important in 'factualizing' the news, as Susan Sontag (2003) has reminded us. Most people only experience news events as 'real' after having seen the images that portray them. Given the consistency of the form of the newspaper, the Igreja Universal can employ the news genre to present its evangelical message on violence as 'factual'. The violence is portrayed as factual on the front page after which the reader is directed to another page where 'the news' is employed to factualize the evangelical message. Photos that portray perpetrators, victims and symbols of violence in Rio de Janeiro are essential to this process. Both on the front page and in the rest of the newspaper the photos confirm the reality of a violent society. Before I discuss several other examples from the Folha Universal, I want to demonstrate how the 'factuality' of the news on violence is constructed and confirmed in relation to other news media in Rio de Janeiro.

3.2 News on Violence, the Construction of a Moral Dichotomy

Anyone who visits Rio de Janeiro will be warned of the dangers of the city. The image of Rio de Janeiro as one of the most violent cities in the world is primarily related to the violent encounters between drug traffickers - traficantes - and policemen. The favelas in Rio de Janeiro are especially widely known for the violence that takes place as a result of their function as local centers of narco-tráfico, the sale of cocaine and marihuana. For obvious reasons, one of the most important political issues for the press and the state government is a segurança pública, the 'public safety'. As journalists are happy to remind the governors, the recurring armed violence in and around favelas demonstrates the incapacity of the state government - the police - to regain the monopoly of violence in the favelas. However, the proliferation of news on violence has other unintended consequences. The constant production of news about chaotic violence, robberies and

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140 See Chapter One for background information on criminality in the city.
141 This monopoly is mostly in the hands of drug gangs that protect their territory by force.
assaults strengthens (and structures) the existing fear of violence among the population. As Alba Zaluar states about violence:

It has become part of the day-to-day conversations in the home, in the street, in the school, in the commercial establishments, in the newspapers, on the radios, on all the channels of the television, in the judicial inquiries and processes, everywhere one wants to discuss what happened or could happen. It has incorporated itself both in the informal practices, pertaining to the field of tacit agreements of day-to-day life, which are not made explicit in any code but are fully accepted by people in their social interaction, acquiring an invisibility of that which is “natural” or habitual, and in the sphere of the institutions created to defend the law (Zaluar 1998: 246, translation mine)

Several Brazilian authors have argued that the Brazilian mass media play an important role in the production of what Soares has called the ‘culture of fear’ (cultura de medo). Marcia Leite argues that the appearance of violence on television and in journals reproduces an image of the city as in ‘state of war’ (Leite 1995), every time when the telejornais, newspapers and magazines announce that the poder paralelo, with their soldados has attacked the city and left it in a state of panic. The telejornais reproduce the images and narratives of crime and violence within the socio-political field that is highly influenced by commercial motives (Rondelli 1994; Coimbra 2001). As Rondelli also argues, violence and crime form part of a market of images and narratives that telejornais appropriate discursively for commercial use. The telejornais have become news shows that seek to affect the viewer emotionally through its dramatizations and spectacularization. ‘It is difficult to deny that there is a repressed and voyeuristic curiosity among the public for violent episodes, the media respond to this demand, … (Rondelli 1994: 99).’ Not only do the telejornais disassociate crime from the socio-economic and historical circumstances in which it is committed and present it in a dramatized form, they also attempt to organize reality according to clear-cut definitions: In the case of violence, the media do not only define, but also organize the world from the perspective

144 Marcia Leite talks specifically about ‘Operação Rio’ when military forces occupied several morro in Rio de Janeiro, the civil movements that followed and the way the press represented the events in the city. See also: Cecilia Coimbra 2001.
145 Telejornais are news programs on the television.
146 To exemplify their power, the Brazilian press coined the term for criminal organizations: O Poder Paralelo (the parallel power). The term parallel power, or parallel polities as Elizabeth Leeds calls it (1996), indicates the existence of parallel systems of power that operate, sometimes in competition with each other but also often in accord. This is largely the result of the incapability and the unwillingness of state institutions – particularly the police – to change the situation (Leeds 1996).
147 Armed men who are part of the criminal organizations involved with drug trafficking are called soldados – soldiers – by the organizations themselves.
of the moral dichotomy of good and bad, designate their attributes, name their practitioners, sentence the punishments...'(ibid).

Many Brazilian newspapers follow this trend of the spectacularization of violence common to the telejornais. Spectacularization is not confined to the tabloid newspapers only, 'serious' newspapers like *o Globo* or the *Jornal do Brasil* also indulge in spectacular accounts of violent events. Jovchelovitch argues that in these journals and magazines 'the Brazilian streets' are represented as a violent, chaotic domain ruled by criminals and drug traffickers. Her analysis stems from an analysis of five Brazilian journals including the *Jornal do Brasil* and the popular weekly magazines *Veja* and *IstoÉ* in 1992 and deals primarily with the symbolic construction of public spaces in Brazil (Jovchelovitch 2000: 98). Coimbra also analyzed five newspapers, including the *Jornal do Brasil* and *O Globo* before, during and after the military interventions in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro in 1994. Steerin g the same course as Rondelli, Coimbra argues that the language of Brazilian newspapers is largely organized on the basis of the dichotomy of 'the good' and 'the bad' (Coimbra 2001: 36). While both authors point to the spectacularization of the news, they barely touch upon the importance of the photos and images that portray perpetrators and victims of violence. This is remarkable given the fact that these images literally give face(s) to the dichotomy.

During my fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro there were several violent events that haunted the newspapers of the city for weeks.149 Here I wish to refer to two cases that produced powerful icons of mass mediated violence in Rio de Janeiro. One of them was the murder of Tim Lopes, the *Globo* journalist, who was killed, quartered and burned by traficantes when he tried to film drug deals with a hidden camera on 2 June, 2002. The other was the murder of a drugs baron by his rival, Fernando Beira-Mar, inside the maximum security prison Bangu 1. Both events reproduced powerful symbols of urban violence. Especially the repeated reproduction of the faces of the protagonists on the front pages of the newspapers – and in magazines and on television - established them as the icons of perpetrators and victims of urban violence.

Tim Lopes had been missing for more than a week before the police was convinced he had been murdered. Besides the earlier reports on his disappearance, the headline of the newspaper *O Globo* on the June 10 was: 'Tráfico, sentenced, tortured and

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148 A popular newspaper like *o Povo* could be an example of a Brazilian tabloid.

149 During the year 2002 I collected the *Jornal do Brasil* or *O Globo* on a daily basis. I base my generalizations on the representation of violence on that year, taking into account that Jovchelovitch (2000) and Coimbra (2001) have come up with similar conclusions as I have.
executed Tim Lopes.' In the weeks and months thereafter, Tim Lopes became the martyr of drugs related violence in Rio de Janeiro. His name and face reappeared again and again in association with news reports concerning his violent death: in relation to memorials organized as protest against the violence; 150 after the DNA identification of his bones (found in an illegal burial site in a favela); 151 after his burial; and after the capture of the alleged killer 'Elias Maluco', 109 days after his death. One photo of Tim Lopes in particular was used repetitively during several months. This photo was carried on the banners of demonstrations (fig. 20) and displayed during his funeral wake (fig. 21). As such this photo became the iconic representation of the fight against drugs-trade-related violence.

Around the same time, another man's representation became the icon of the violence committed by the drugs gangs. On 11 September, Fernando Beira-Mar, the alleged head of the drugs-faction Comando Vermelho that killed Tim Lopes, instigated a rebellion inside the maximum secured prison Bangu 1 and brutally killed the leaders of another drugs faction also imprisoned there. 152 The Jornal do Brasil of 12 September opened with the headline 'Trafico terrorizes Rio', 'Beira-Mar commands rebellion and deaths in Bangu 1', accompanied by a photo of a sign with CV on it, hanging from the prison wall (fig. 22). 153 O Globo presented a similar photo with the headline: 'Beira-Mar takes command of the parallel power and terrorizes Rio.' By his actions Fernando Beira-Mar allegedly not only confirmed his domination over the Comando Vermelho, he consequently acquired the status of a media star. In many broadcasts and newspapers of September 2002, Beira-Mar was presented as the icon of the tyranny of the drugs gangs and the incapability of the State to counter the actions of criminal organizations. See, for example on the cover of Veja 18 September 2002 (fig. 23). Beira-Mar is portrayed unshaven, against a red background that only serves to enforce his evil appearance. The caption beneath the photo says: 'He mocks the law' and 'Fernando Beira-Mar is the proof that the Brazilian State does even not succeed in maintaining a criminal isolated inside a prison.' 154

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150 O Globo 15-6-2002 and 17-6-2002
151 Jornal do Brasil 6-7-2002
152 The opening quote of this essay refers to the murder of prisoners by Beira-Mar.
153 CV stands for comando vermelho.
154 In the wake of these two cases other representations can be mentioned. Take, for example, the headline of O Globo after traficantes had fired hundreds of shots at the city hall: "Assault with 200 shots challenges the power in Rio". This headline was accompanied by a photo of President Cardoso holding bullet shells in his open hand O Globo 25-6-2002


Brasil é o mais violento no uso de armas
Pesquisa mostra que país é um dos campeões em assassinos por armas de fogo

Fig. 19.

Comissão cobre prisão de 'Elas'

Fig. 20.

Fig. 21.

TRÁFICO ATERROIRIZA O RIO
'BEIRA-MAR' COMANDA REBELIÃO E MORTES EM BANGU I

Fig. 22.

Fig. 23.

ELE ZOMBA DA LEI
Fernandinho Beira-Mar é a prova de que o Estado brasileiro não consegue sequer manter um bando isolado dentro da prisão.

Fig. 24.
Retrospectiva 2002

Fig. 25. Bispo Crivella as savior of the violent society.
While it remains highly unlikely that Beira-Mar in fact terrorized the whole city, he appeared in all the media again and again and became the symbol of the drugs-trade related killings. Together with Tim Lopes his face represented the violence related to the tráfico in Rio de Janeiro in 2002.

One of the best examples of the intricate relationship between the threat of the violence of traficantes and the mass media is perhaps the instance in which the mass media in Rio de Janeiro spread the rumor that shops would be attacked. In the early morning of 1 October 2002, one week before the state and federal elections, traficantes ‘ordered’ all shopkeepers to remain closed for the day. This order was an attempt to provoke politicians who had stated they would step up the fight against organized crime once elected. Early in the morning, a couple of men had spread the rumor that the shops that would stay open would be attacked. After the first shops stayed closed in Tijuca, media coverage of this fact ensured that the rumor spread rapidly all over the city after which even more shops closed setting off a chain reaction. Many shops, schools and other institutes located near the morros known to be commanded by traficantes closed their doors. Few shops were attacked, but the mass mediated rumors had done most of the work. The day after the newspapers and telejornais confirmed what they had magnified themselves, the whole city had been paralyzed by fear.155

If Brazilian newspapers and popular magazines do indeed construct an image of society that is fundamentally divided between ‘the good’ and ‘the bad’, it is entirely comprehensible why and how the boundaries between journalism and evangelism are blurring. The gap between evangelical and journalistic language on violence is being increasingly narrowed when narratives and images in all Brazilian media are structured to confirm the straightforward dichotomy of ‘the good’ and ‘the bad’. In that case the evangelical representation of the battle between God and the devil is facilitated by a common representation of violence. To demonstrate how the editors of the Folha Universal are able to incorporate the common representations of ‘the good’ and ‘the bad’, I will discuss a montage156 of Marcelo Crivella and give several other examples of the intertextual appearance of spectacular violence.

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155 See the headlines of the newspapers O Dia and O Globo of 2 October: O Dia printed ‘medo’ (fear) with photos of closed shops and O Globo printed ‘Rio refém do medo’ (Rio hostage of fear) with similar photos.
156 Andrew Tolson describes the media technique of montage in the following manner: “As a type of syntagmatic structure, montage works through juxtaposition. These juxtapositions may be emphasizing conceptual similarities or contrasts... but the crucial point is that the connections between the signs in a
3.3 Incorporating Spectacular Violence

In the same month that all the headlines discussed the murder of Tim Lopes and the alleged power of the tráfico, the Folha Universal presented a series of headlines on the topic of urban violence. In the first week of June it opened with a headline: ‘Tráfico of drugs exploits seven thousand under-aged in Rio.’ This headline was accompanied by a photo of three handcuffed youngsters with their faces against a wall (fig. 24). In the third week of June, the Folha Universal opened with the headline: ‘Brazil is the most violent in its use of fire-arms’, with a photo of a rifle and other weapons (fig. 19). The fourth week of June the Folha Universal opened with the headline: ‘Middle class is violent as well’ and below: ‘The relationship between the richest and poorest neighborhoods is not confined to their proximity.’ In the text accompanying the headline, Bispo Jeronimo Alves explains that violence can be attributed to ‘the lack of knowledge of the Word of God.’ As is the case in other issues of the Folha Universal, we are directed to read more on page 1B. There the Bispo has written in his article:

The cruel assassination of Tim Lopes, leaves us with a sad and shocking reality: violence has taken over the large urban centers...we know it is not culture, employment or housing that will transform the life of a people imprisoned by a super-human force, what will counter this pattern is the power that comes from God...The lack of knowledge of the Word of God, which lets us meet Christ and leads us to a full, worthy life, has brought our nation to this harsh reality. “Blissful is the nation whose God is the Lord”, is what the Bible says in Psalms 33.12.

With this message the Igreja Universal seeks to explain violence as a reflection of a spiritual- rather than a socio-cultural struggle - and simultaneously attempts to counter the idea that people in the favelas are solely responsible for crime and violence. However in order to substantialize the spiritual battle between God and the devil, the Igreja Universal incorporates powerful media symbols of ‘the good’ and ‘the bad’ - the victim ‘Tim Lopes’ and the perpetrator ‘the tráfico’. In a separate article, a Bispo of the Igreja Universal explains that since there is not one single social factor that explains or counters violence, it is clear that only God can save the nation. The apparent paradox is that the Igreja Universal does present Pentecostal politicians who should save the nation from the perils that haunt it. Yet, pastors like Marcelo Crivella resolve such an apparent
paradox\(^\text{157}\) by presenting themselves as mediators between the spiritual and worldly realm, as instruments of God. This argumentation opens up a path by which to present pastors as powerful figures in the fight against violence, both on a spiritual and worldly level.

An example of the way violence related to the tráfico is incorporated in the political project of the Igreja Universal comes from the first Folha Universal of 2003.\(^\text{158}\) This edition offers the reader a *Retrospectiva 2002*, a retrospective of the events of the year 2002. The Retrospectiva 2002 presents a large montage of photos of (in)famous celebrities of the year (fig. 25). In the montage we see both victims and perpetrators who were involved in violent confrontations and violent crimes. Among others we see Tim Lopes, Osama Bin Laden (and George Bush) and the daughter of the family Von Richthofen, who killed her own parents with the help of her boyfriend and his brother. All these celebrities represent violent stories that were told over and over again in all the Brazilian news media in the year 2002.

In the middle of this montage we see Bispo Marcelo Crivella making the 'victory sign'. On the side of the montage is written: *Mundo vive o final dos tempos?* (Is the world living the end of time?) and the article below the montage ends with the phrase: 'Could it be that the apocalyptic beasts have been released? Only the faith in our Lord Jesus can liberate humanity from so much evil.'\(^\text{159}\) In the text beside the montage there is also a substantial reference to Fernando Beira-Mar, the traficante I discussed above. In the text alongside the montage Beira-Mar is described as the bandit who held ‘the people’ hostage in the arms of the *poder paralelo*. This means that besides Tim Lopes - the victim - evil also assumes a face, namely that of Beira-Mar. Second, the format of the montage itself proved to be a popular way of creating a retrospective of the year. Take for example the *IstoÉ* of 25 December 2002 (fig. 26). On the cover we see a very similar montage of photos of the main characters of 2002: George Bush and Sadam Hussein, joined by Fernando Beira-Mar. Inside the *IstoÉ* another symbol of the violence of the tráfico that also appears in the Folha Universal is presented: Tim Lopes, the murdered journalist. However, the striking difference between the montage in the Folha Universal and the montage in the *IstoÉ* is the relationship between the different signs and the central character. In the *IstoÉ* it is Ronaldo, the star soccer player, and Lula, the elected

\(^{157}\) For further reading on the socio-political discourse of the Igreja Universal, specifically the way it emphasizes the Biblical character of social policy, see also Kramer 2001

\(^{158}\) Folha Universal 5 a 11 Janeiro de 2003.

\(^{159}\) Folha Universal 5 a 11 Janeiro de 2003, translation mine
president, who stand central. Ronaldo was one of the goals scorers who had led the Brazilian national team to victory in the world championship that year.

In the montage of the Folha Universal, the centrality of the 'national hero' attains a particular Pentecostal twist. In the middle of this montage we see Bispo Marcelo Crivella making the 'victory sign'. This juxtaposition of images and texts highlights the way the Igreja Universal aims to present itself as a powerful force opposing violence in Brazilian society. The pastors and Bispos of the Igreja Universal are important to their political endeavors. Pastors such as Marcelo Crivella are presented as mediators between the spiritual and worldly realms. They are presented as powerful figures in the fight against violence, both at a spiritual and worldly level. However, their capacity to wield power is projected onto an intertextual background of dramatized violence that is produced by the Brazilian media in its totality. In the next section I will discuss in detail how it is possible for Crivella's image to contain both his worldly and spiritual powers to redeem Brazilian society of violence. His positions as senator in the federal government and as Bispo of the Igreja Universal mirror and enforce one another, his religious capacity creates a powerful status in the field of politics and *vice versa*.

3.4 Marcelo Crivella, Pastor-Politician

Pastors play an important part in the political aspirations of the Igreja Universal. In 2002, Bispo Marcelo Crivella, nephew of the founder of the Igreja Universal, was elected senator for the state of Rio de Janeiro. The background of his success was partly the result of the highly hierarchical bureaucratic structure of the Igreja Universal and the steady influx of money and rally-work from their members.\(^{160}\) However, equally important to his success was his mass mediated image. In his work on televangelism in the US, Quentin Schultz argues that charismatic TV preachers represent the latest version of personality cults that have always been part of Christianity (Schultz 1991:

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\(^{160}\) It tries to influence the political affinities of its members in cultos and by means of their mass media. See also Fonseca 1998 and Conrado 2001. Marcelo Crivella was one of the three elected senators for the state of Rio de Janeiro to take his seat among the total of eighty-one senators in Brasilia. Fifty-five politicians who are affiliated to the Igreja Universal and to other Pentecostal churches take seat in the Congreso Nacional - the Brazilian chamber of deputies. Within the Congreso Nacional these fifty-five evangelical deputies form what is called the bancada evangélica, a Protestant/Pentecostal coalition in the Congreso Nacional.
Television has created a possibility to channel religious charisma in such a way that people become 'religious authorities' in only a matter of time. Such authority also lends itself well to the political endeavors of church leaders.

Michael Warner argues that bodily representations of political candidates have become indispensable to achieving the kind of mass identification that is required for political success. As public figures, political candidates have become mass media 'icons' not unlike other celebrities (Warner 1992). While Warner speaks mostly of 'the West', Geert Banck's work on personalism and body politics in Brazil demonstrates that the mass mediated image of the Brazilian politician is firmly embedded in the political process:

The photographer's lens, by making the fluidity of a meeting independent of place and time, magnifies and casts into solid images the centrality of personal relations in Brazilian political culture. The photographer and camcorder operator have thus strategic backstage roles in the rituals of public meetings. They are however, not merely a technical presence. They are, be it at another level as much part of the political domain as the politicians themselves. In a political culture like the Brazilian, with its code of personalism constantly weaving itself into the public representation of institutional politics, they are strategic decoders and 'amplifiers'. They produce, select, multiply and distribute the iconography of power, mostly in accordance with or commissioned by politicians (Banck 1998: 29-30).

The political endeavors of the Igreja Universal have been greatly facilitated by their appropriation of visual mass media. Since certain pastors of the Igreja Universal appear repeatedly in the mass media of the church, their images have been widely publicized. A good example of this is the way during and before the elections, adherents of the Igreja Universal hung images of their campaigning Bispos throughout the morro (see fig. 27 and fig. 28).

In general, the public image of the pastors of the Igreja Universal is carefully managed. When they appear in church, in photos or on television they are always neatly dressed in similar fashion. Given their exemplary function for others, pastors of the Igreja Universal can be seen as 'living icons', as Kramer has argued. Their shirts, suits

161 I do not share Schultze's concerns for the possible dangers of such personality cults for either the churches or the society. Schultze, for example speaks of the dangers of the selfishness of the TV preachers and of the dangers of the diminishing authenticity of the presentation of the pastors who become 'characters' (Schultze 1991: 92-95).

162 In her paper "The Holy Spirit on Air: Charismatic Spirituality and the Ghanaian Broadcast Media" presented at the ASSR seminar 'Religious Technologies' May 31 2005, Marleen de Witte demonstrates the importance of the body-image of the pastor in the expression of religious authority in Ghana.

163 Kramer takes up this notion from Coleman (Coleman 2000: 150 cited in Kramer 2005.)
and ties as well as their expensive watches display the success of their prosperity gospel. As such, 'their outer appearance expresses their own inner victory and spiritual blessing' (Kramer 2005: 13). Especially those Bispos who regularly appear on television and in the magazines have become mass mediated icons of the Igreja Universal. Among the Bispos of the church, Marcelo Crivella occupies an extraordinary position. Apart from being a Pastor, he works as an engineer, a gospel singer, an architect of social projects and a politician. Given his multiple talents and positions, Birman identifies him as 'the perfect pastor' who simultaneously embodies social, political and financial success (Birman 2006). As the 'perfect example' of a man of faith, he represents the success people can achieve, providing they regularly attend the church. While the image of Crivella embodies his spiritual, social, political and financial success, the simultaneous presence of these multiple capacities is only possible through an elaborate intertextual web of visual media (genres) in which he has featured. In order to explain why and how his image has attained a powerful political meaning, I will make a comparison between an electoral pamphlet in which he appeared and a magazine for obreiros of the church.

The comparison will demonstrate that while the image of the Bispo features in different media, his multiple capacities vary according to the different media genres, which each have their own mode of address and presumed public. In the political pamphlet, the Igreja Universal is nowhere mentioned, nor is their hide nor hair of an image of him during exorcism. Presumably this can be attributed to the ideological separation between state and religion in Brazilian political culture and to attract voters who do not attend Pentecostal churches or do not primarily identify with his religious work. Nevertheless, images of his involvement in both worldly and religious matters are essential to his political status and that of the church. While his spiritual and social work are represented separately, echoes of his other identities resonate in every separate

164 During my fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro, I encountered many people who spoke of the Pastors and Bispos of the Igreja Universal as exemplary men of faith, whose careers and public performances could be taken as guidelines for appropriate behavior.

165 The fame of some Bispos is not unlike that of other religious celebrities of Brazil, for example, Marcello Rossi (D'abreu 2002) However, even though the repeated display of Bispos as multitalented men of faith has made them famous, their iconicity remains ambivalent. Considering the iconophobia (Morgan 1998) inherent to the Pentecostal doctrines of the Igreja Universal, the Bispos are presented as "examples" rather than as objects of devotion. See also: de Witte: forthcoming.

166 For a good discussion on the discursive formations of publics see Michael Warner 2002 'Publics and Counterpublics' in Public Culture 14(1): 49-90

167 Birman convincingly argues in relation to his social project Projeto Nordeste.
representation of the Bispo. As such his image has become a container of different capacities that can be used strategically in accordance with various worldly domains.

The first example is a representation of Crivella on the political pamphlets (fig. 29). The pamphlet shows a picture of him neatly dressed in shirt and tie. His sleeves are rolled up to demonstrate what is written below 'Esse Faz' (this one does it). Crivella smiles cordially at the camera. The right side of the pamphlet shows a photo of Crivella with his family. This photo bears several meanings that fit in well with both the political and religious discourses of the Igreja Universal. It demonstrates that Crivella is a faithful father who takes good care of his family. The Igreja Universal has continuously put forward the demise of the patriarchal family as the central reason for individual and social problems in Brazil and much of its doctrine and practice is geared towards its restoration. Each week the Igreja Universal holds special services for the family (Reunião da Família) at which people focus on the power of the Holy Spirit to heal marital conflict, protect loved ones and improve family life. One of the important visual tropes by which the Igreja Universal seeks to link collective deliverance to socio-economic progress is the images of enormous churches packed with people. Every Folha Universal, video or TV broadcast by the Igreja Universal shows visual representation of crowds of believers. An example of such a visual representation comes from the Folha Universal of 6 October (fig. 30). This photo of a reunion dedicated to the family in the ‘Cathedral’ in São Paulo, shows a huge crowd of people holding hands, facing the altar and praying.

In the right upper corner of the photo of the reunion in the ‘Cathedral’ in São Paulo, is placed a small photo of the Bispo who has led the service. This photo is there to confirm the role of the Bispo as mediator of the power of the Holy Spirit to heal these families. The photo of the family below that of the mass-reunion confirms the power of the church. The text beside the photo comes from a personal testimony of a 45-year-old mother who claims: ‘My home was restored by the power of God.’ This recurring visual representation of the healed family sheds new light on the representation of Crivella and his family (fig. 29). Uncontrovertibly, the picture of Crivella seeks to demonstrate the sincerity of Crivella in the political domain. His responsibilities to his family reflect his responsibilities to the nation and, as such, his appearance as loving father and husband must confirm his ability to take care of ‘the people’ (o povo) in similar ways. Yet,

On the political pamphlet he is not addressed as Bispo but simply as Marcelo Crivella. This is indicative of the form of the political pamphlet. Many politicians in Brazil are ‘personalized’. President F.H. Cardoso was often simply addressed as Fernando Henrique and the same can be said about the current president: ‘Lula’.
simultaneously the picture of Crivella with his family is supposed to confirm the power of the church, especially its Bispos, to restore the patriarchal family according to Biblical norms. The representation of these masses serves as a confirmation of the spiritual power to heal people through the ritual of mass exorcism. Subsequently these visual representations of masses legitimate the political endeavors of the church. The implicit promise in the images of the filled churches around the globe is the church’s capacity to ‘heal’ the collective soul of the nation in much the same way it heals the family.

The omission of his spiritual role in the Igreja Universal in the political pamphlet is not arbitrary. While Marcelo Crivella was often represented in the mass media during the campaigning period, he was rarely portrayed performing his function as pastor and there were no photos of him during church services. This is remarkable considering the fact that part of his political success is directly related to his religious position in the Igreja Universal, where he also functions as a powerful mediator of the power of the Holy Spirit. The few photos of Crivella in the function of liberator of demons were presented principally outside of the context of his electoral campaign. Take, for example, a photo of him on the cover of the Obreiro Aprovado (2000) on which the Bispo exorcizes a woman in a church of the Igreja Universal in ‘Africa’ (fig. 31). The intended readers of the magazine are the obreiros of the Igreja Universal. The photo shows Crivella in the process of treating a possessed woman. The text at the bottom of the cover reads: ‘Demons, could they be the cause of humanity’s evils?’ One of the articles, which argues how possession by evil spirits leads to ruined lives, features more photos of Crivella acting as deliverer from evil during a massive church service. Underneath one of the photos is written: ‘On the African continent, cradle of macumbaria’ and witchcraft, in the concentrations of faith in the stadiums there are many prayers for deliverance. People open their heart to the Lord Jesus and initiate a new life, free of evil spirits (ibid: 31)’. The image of this exorcism links up with the spectacular exorcisms in the churches of the Igreja Universal. Clearly the photo also confirms the direct link between African and Brazilian spirit possession practices. The gestures and bodily features of both Crivella and the woman are similar to those in the churches in Brazil and as such can be seen as a visual language that links the church to an imagined ‘Africa’. Since ‘Africa’ is commonly identified as the continent where the Afro-Brazilian religions are rooted, Crivella’s exorcism highlights the power of the church to fight evil at its roots as well as Crivella’s power to mediate the power of the Holy Spirit around the globe (Birman 2005).

Macumbais, the word used when evangélicos refer to Afro-Brazilian religious practices in Rio de Janeiro.
Fig. 27. Billboards of Crivella at the entrance of the morro.

Fig. 28. Two obreiros at their biroshka in Cantagalo
Fig. 29. 

Fig. 30

Fig. 31. Crivella performing an exorcism
Mass Mediating the Spiritual Battle

These photos demonstrate that while his spiritual role as Bispo in the Igreja Universal is not mentioned or demonstrated in the political pamphlet, his image also conveys his powerful ability to mediate the power of the Holy Spirit.

3.5 Watching the News

Television occupied a central position in most of the small living-rooms I visited in the morro de Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho.170 Though many people read the headlines on the newspapers that were pinned to the bancas in the streets of Copacabana and Ipanema, no such banca was present in the morro. Very few people regularly bought newspapers. Many people in the morro watched 'as notícias' (news programs). By notícias people generally meant daily news-programs (telejornais), which report local, national and international matters but also ‘reality programs’ such as those that show crimes, police operations and other urban matters. Two popular programs in the category ‘reality programs’ when I was there were Brasil Urgente, shown on TV Bandeirantes, and Cidade Alerta shown on TV Record.171 Both programs offer live and recorded images of ‘real’ shootings, accidents, car chases, and similar events. The journalists who hosted these programs repeatedly presented dramatized accounts of the violence that was recorded or followed live.

While I will not go into the television watching practices in depth in this chapter, it is important to acknowledge that the batalha espiritual against the devil is also exercised in the domain of reception of mass media.172 In practice, this means that members of Pentecostal churches often expressed their worries about the content of television programs. Many claimed there were certain restrictions on viewing particular non-Pentecostal programs, programs that were considered non-Christian, ‘of the world’. Often these were the programs that showed nudity, sex or sinful behavior according to Pentecostal doctrines. Though these restrictions circulated among most of the evangélicos in the morro, it certainly does not mean none of these people ever watched the programs they condemned. Yet, in their discussions of these programs they

170 See Chapter Seven for more information on the role of television.
171 Rede Record is the broadcast network that is owned by the Igreja Universal, see also introduction and Chapter Seven.
172 I will discuss this in Chapter Seven.
expressed restrictions on viewing and listening that amounted to self-disciplining practices concerning the mass media.

Contrary to the programs which were considered suspect, noticias were never mentioned as dangerous in any way. In my conversations and interviews with evangélicos, noticias were presented as fairly natural representations of ‘the world’ that were harmless in terms of Pentecostal/moral content. They were not discussed as programs made by particular networks, as was the case with, for example, the telenovelas of TV Globo, nor were they made part of discussions about their religious validity in relation to the Bible. They were certainly not discussed as cultural constructs filmed and edited by people who make choices about how to present certain events on the bases of conventions of style and format.

People who attended the Igreja Universal often complained about the immoral content of Globo television programs, but criticism of Rede Record rarely passed their lips. The Igreja Universal owns Rede Record, but this does not mean the network offers Pentecostal programs only. TV Record broadcasts all types of programs ranging from noticias and sports to telenovelas and movies. These programs show little or no relation to the Igreja Universal, apart from the program Gospel Line, which features gospel clips. Programs of the Igreja Universal are broadcast in the early morning, the afternoon and late at night. Its programs, for example Ponto de Luz, generally follow the format of a talk show in which a pastor addresses the spiritual problems of his guests, followed by with recorded testimonies of others. These evangelical programs advertise the Igreja Universal as a church that offers spiritual help for many different individual problems: insomnia, stress, fear and anxiety. In the programs these individual problems are portrayed as signs of demoniac possession. To get rid of them people are advised to come to the Igreja Universal where they can be delivered of their oppression through exorcism (Descarrego).

The other programs on Rede Record showed little or no sign of this evangelical endeavor. At first, I was surprised that the program Cidade Alerta - which brings live and recorded news of crime, violence and accidents - was one of the few non-evangelical programs on Rede Record in which a message of an evangelical nature appeared. During Cidade Alerta, the images of police interventions and armed encounters in favelas were

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173 Gospel Line is a gospel music program mostly featuring singers of the record label of the Igreja Universal, see also Chapter Six.
174 Ponto de Luz is a studio program hosted by a pastor who has guests and callers, see also Chapter Six and Seven for more information on the program.
often interrupted by a word from Bispo Marcelo Crivella or another pastor of the Igreja Universal. They responded directly to these violent images with an oração – a prayer – in which they asked God to bless the people and protect them (us spectators) from harm. When I realized that this image of the Bispo was very similar to the way the Folha Universal narrativized violence by means of the montage I discussed above, I understood that the discourse of spiritual and worldly peace of the Igreja Universal (and also of the Assembléia de Deus) was efficiently enlarged against the background of the mass-mediated violence in Rio de Janeiro. The image of the Bispo who responded directly to 'real' crime and violence with a prayer, announcing the necessity of Jesus' interventions in this chaotic world, was not only appealing to me. Hearing the ways in which members of the Igreja Universal narrativized violence to me, I realized that the image was appealing to many of the people who lived in the city.

3.6 Interpreting Violence According to the Folha Universal

During the period I lived in the morro, I understood that the worldviews evangélicos presented to me in conversations and interviews often resembled the intertextual montages which the Igreja Universal printed in the Folha Universal and broadcast on Cidade Alerta. They too referred to images that had been broadcast on the news to substantiate their feelings of anxiety and of Biblical truths. Take, for example, the words of Carla, an 18 year-old girl, who lived in Cantagalo/Pavão-Pavãozinho:

The things that are happening in the world, people starving, those towers that fell, the wars, various glimpses that one has of evil, all because God is returning...That day when Fernando Beira-Mar ordered all the stores to close, a heap of stores and various bars closed. There were people who went to church in despair thinking that Jesus was about to return because God is about to return. They asked, the pastor said it. They called to ask if God was returning. The pastor said he did not know, no one knows the moment when God will return.

Carla responded to my question of why she thought God was about to return to Earth, a prophecy foretold in the Bible Book of Revelations. In the quotation Carla refers to the moment Fernando Beira-Mar allegedly 'ordered' all the shops in Rio de Janeiro to close to provoke the government. She sees him as one of the mass-mediated evils of society that, alongside others, possibly signal the coming of Christ. According to Carla, people went to ask a pastor of the Igreja Universal if Beira-Mar's actions heralded the
Apocalypse. Unquestionably, his answer indicates hesitation to claim definite knowledge of when such a time will commence. Nevertheless, the Igreja Universal purposefully collaborates in the imagination of an apocalyptic society based on mass-mediatized images and narratives. Take, for example, the words of Roberto, a young man who attends the Igreja Universal:

Like the Bispo said to us: the world is not what it used to be, meaning who is ruling the world God or the devil? It is the devil you understand, the majority of the news (as notícias) is his, the bad news, understand. Lately there has only been death, death, death, understand, in the whole world: the guy who blew up the towers, countries entering into war with each other, here a prisoner killed other prisoners. You think that is coming from God? One feels evil stamped in one’s flesh twenty-four hours a day.

The reference to the prison killings is no coincidence. My interview with the young man took place not long after Fernando Beira-Mar killed his adversaries in Bangu. The evil that is stamped in his flesh, in other words, is mass-mediatized evil.

The particular way the Igreja Universal invokes other mass media to demonstrate the diabolical nature of Brazilian society is exemplified by the dramatized story of the surgeon from São Paulo in January 2003. On Monday 27 January, I was visiting my friend João in the bairro in Cantagalo in the afternoon. We went to drink a cup of coffee at the little canteen of Criança Esperança run by Dona Denise. Dona Denise had lived in Cantagalo all her life and was well respected by many people of the morro. She was also a member of the Igreja Universal in Copacabana and I often talked with her in her little canteen. The television was turned on and it showed the program ‘hora da verdade’ (moment of truth) on Rede Band, hosted by Marcia Goldschmidt. The program is a talk show mixed with some infotainment, which repeated over and over again the horrible story of a plastic surgeon, Farah Jorge. Farah lived in São Paolo and had confessed that he killed his ex-girlfriend, after which he had cut her in many pieces that were found in suitcases in the trunk of his car. I remember the overacted disbelief of Marcia Goldschmidt who dramatically gestured: ‘That someone could do such a horrible thing, why...?’ The news about this violent crime had been in all the other newspapers that week and had been shown repeatedly on different telejornais and other television programs.

We, Dona Denise, João and me, were all captured by the images of a photo of the surgeon that seemed like a ‘normal guy’ and the story of the brutal death that was told over and over again by Marcia. A crime story that was not only completely cut out
of context but also for me not easily intelligible without referring to, for example, 'madness' or 'illness' on the part of the perpetrator. Dona Denise reacted to the program with a sigh and a gesture that implied confirmation of what she already knew: 'What a devilish thing'. Then she turned to me: 'You have to be careful my son, the enemy is there waiting, but the angels of the Lord are circling around me.' Then she began to tell about a visit with her children to Rio Sul, a large shopping mall in Botafogo. Apparently she had asked someone to put out his cigarette in the food-area and the man had reacted very aggressively towards her. In his reaction, she saw it was the devil who tried to make her lose her balance, but she claimed he did not succeed because she had God on her side and did not have to be afraid: 'The Devil is waiting to bite, but I have put all our lives in the hands of Lord Jesus.' Immediately after that she continued with the story about the pastor of the Igreja Universal who was killed by nineteen gunshots only three days before on 24 January. Pastor Valdeci Paiva de Jesus, to whom she referred as Bispo, which is higher in rank than pastor in the Igreja Universal, was *deputado federal* (federal deputy) and had been elected *deputado estadual* (state deputy) in the elections in 2002 and was about to take his seat when he was killed. The police did not deny the case was a political crime because he had received threatening phone-calls after his election. 'He should not take up the position or else,' someone had threatened. Dona Denise said: 'He was almost a deputado but the devil wanted to stop him becoming one. He will not succeed, shoot this Bispo and there will come another one, we still have Bispo Crivella, Bispo Rodrigues. There will always be another one.' In the words of Dona Denise, one may hear the echo of the idea of systematic persecution of the Igreja Universal. Since their fights with TV *Globo* in the early 1990s, the church and its members describe all institutions and people who attack the Igreja Universal as puppets of the devil who try to cast obstacles in their path.\textsuperscript{175} They have strategically used attacks against them as signs that they are 'chosen people' who are being persecuted much like Jesus was (Mafra 2002). Here Dona Denise links the story of the plastic surgeon to her own experiences and the murder of the pastor and then proceeds to structure all these within a Pentecostal framework of the *guerra santa*,\textsuperscript{176} a framework that is repeated systematically in the media of the Igreja Universal.

On 23 February, almost one month after the words of Dona Denise, I participated in a culto of the Igreja Universal on Sunday night. The culto was thematized

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\textsuperscript{175} Birman&Lehmann 1999

\textsuperscript{176} 'Holy war', a term which is also often used to denote the spiritual battle between God and the devil.
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as 'busca do espírito santo' (search for the Holy Spirit). At the end of the service, the pastor took a Folha Universal that was about to be distributed and showed the headline with a photo to the church: 'Surgeon slices up and removes the skin of his ex-mistress.'

Below this heading the Folha Universal showed a large picture of the man's head with another text: 'The banality of the violence committed shocks the population more every time'. While the pastor flourished the paper with one hand, he spoke forcefully into the microphone he held in his other: 'He removed the skin of the woman, that is horrible, do you believe that is a human thing to do? I do not believe it is, I believe that is a satanic thing. Even when you hate someone you are not capable of doing that, who believes it is a demon igreja?'

Many people lifted their hands to confirm, as to say: 'without a doubt, it was a demon.'

After the cult I quickly ran down to obtain the Folha Universal of that week, which I will briefly describe here. The article on the front page of the Folha Universal describes the identity of the man and repeated what he had done to the woman. Two paragraphs farther on the article states:

Assassinations with the uttermost cruelty are filling the pages of the journals and the screens of the Television so frequently that, unfortunately, they no longer surprise us...In the wave of inexplicable violence that leaves even psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists confused, Brazil has witnessed repeated scenes of barbarism that have become part of the nation's day-to-day existence.

A small header in the text questions the origins of this violence: 'Evil or Madness?' Though it does not answer its own rhetorical question on this page, at the end the article we are directed to read further on page 1B, where the item continues. Page 1B commences with a repetition of the same text; however, several other violent crimes are also mentioned in other articles.

In these articles, other infamous violent crimes that had also filled the (tele)jornais repeatedly in periods prior to this edition of the Folha Universal are described. Furthermore, in these articles there are constant references to the different media that originally broadcasted or printed the news. The page is filled with references to quality newspapers such as the Folha de São Paulo and popular magazines such as the IstoÉ. The violent crimes that are mentioned have in common that they do not present clearly explicable motives except for rage, madness or plain evil: a baby who was thrown

177 "Cirurgião esquarteja e tira a pele da ex-amante."
178 igreja, which means church, is often used to address all the people present.
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against a vehicle, a woman who killed her nephew ‘in a macabre ritual.’ The assemblage of these violent crimes in the Folha Universal is meant to confirm that Brazilian society is extremely violent and as such it creates the contextual background in which the discourse of peace can come to full bloom. At the bottom of the page with all the violent news, Bispo Jeronimo Alves responds in an article with the header: ‘Only with God will peace come.’ In the text, which clearly speaks to the other texts on that page, Bispo Jeronimo Alves states:

In the journals the notícias are unbelievable: father kills son, son kills grandparents and some of the police, of the authorities, many of them are corrupt and do not give to society the support that it needs so much...People need to find the Lord Jesus so he may assuage the human rage, which, if not confined might lead to the extermination of the species. We, Bishops and pastors of the IURD, pray to the Lord Jesus so that He may bring peace among men. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” (Matthew 5.9). God bless you.

This last example of incorporation of mass mediated violence demonstrates that the Folha Universal, the church service and the wider mass media form a chain of information that reconfirms the truthfulness of the separate media to the audience. Dona Denise’s interpretation of the violent event prior to the printed version of the Folha Universal was structured around an already existing interpretation of violence in terms of a spiritual battle of God against the devil. Such an interpretation is constantly put forward in the Folha Universal and is also hammered home in the church service. Both the pastors in church and those who write in the Folha Universal point to the television and to other media that originally printed the news. Specifically when the pastor holds up the Folha Universal in church, his authority as pastor and the authority of the genre of the newspaper - which presents facts - combine into a powerful interpretation of the mediated violence. Any separate event or violent crime, which seems to have inexplicable motives, is easily incorporated into such a narrative structure. The words of Dona Denise demonstrate that people who attend the Igreja Universal are seduced to analyze mediated violence according to this narrative structure. Furthermore, the example of Dona Denise shows that people not only interpret the news they see and read in mass media according the structure of the batalha espiritual, they also employ it to narrate the threat of violence in their own daily life. In the next chapters we will see how people link such interpretations to life in the morro.
3.7 Conclusion

During my fieldwork it was apparent that the people in the morro often conceptualized the risk of becoming a victim of crime and violence in Pentecostal terms. They generally described crime and violence as the worldly manifestation of the *batalha espiritual* (spiritual battle) between God and the devil. They could protect themselves against evil by knowing the word of God and praying to Him by participation in the cultos or through exorcism. While I argue that the popularity of Pentecostalism is certainly related to such a conceptualization of violence, that does not mean that experiences of uncertainty or insecurity have not been related to religious doctrines and practices in the past or that they are confined to Pentecostalism. The content of Pentecostal doctrines and practices present particular modes of being through which uncertainties in the daily life in the favela can be conceptualized and, according to the adherents, also countered.

Cogently, what I have tried to demonstrate in this chapter is that Pentecostal churches do not necessarily reduce the uncertainties and anxieties of people, nor do they seem to want to entirely. Their discourse of spiritual and worldly peace is dialectically related to the reproduction of the daily news on crime and violence in the city. The Igreja Universal actively reproduces images and narratives of violence from other mass media, which together confirm the violent nature of Brazilian society. The Igreja Universal attempts to weave together different visual tropes to represent the *batalha espiritual* (spiritual battle), the metaphysical battle between God and the devil and to present itself as a powerful institution that counters violence. Particularly the representations in the Folha Universal demonstrate that the Igreja Universal presents violent crimes as diabolical evil, which can only be stopped through the mediations of Pentecostal pastors and politicians.