



Between gleams and sparkles: people's images and imaginaries in cinema¹

Entre clarões e lampejos: imagens e imaginários dos povos no cinema



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¹This article is the result of research for master's thesis, defended in 2016, within the scope of the Graduate Program in Social Communication of UFMG, and performed with funding from the Foundation for Research of the State of Minas Gerais (FAPEMIG).

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Abstract: this article investigates how the cinema politically assimilates the faces, bodies and voices of those who live in urban peripheries in Brazil. If “the people are exposed,” as Georges Didi-Huberman argues, we seek to understand what types of exposure are produced and assembled by Brazilian cinema in different time periods and contexts. For such, we analyze selected scenes of films made in Brazil between the 1970s and the 2010s. Considering the arrival of cinema in peripheral communities, we reflect about the constitution of the images and imaginaries of peripheral peoples when they become the subjects of their own appearance.

Keywords: cinema; periphery; peoples; images; imaginaries.

Resumo: este artigo investiga como o cinema acolhe politicamente os rostos, corpos e vozes daqueles que habitam as periferias urbanas no Brasil. Se “os povos estão expostos”, como nos diz Georges Didi-Huberman, buscamos compreender quais formas de exposição são produzidas e convocadas pelo cinema brasileiro em diferentes épocas e contextos. Para isso, analisamos algumas cenas de filmes realizados no Brasil entre os anos 1970 e 2010. Diante da chegada do cinema nas comunidades periféricas, refletimos sobre a constituição das imagens e dos imaginários dos povos quando estes passam a ser sujeitos de sua própria aparição.

Palavras-chave: cinema; periferia; povos; imagens; imaginários.

A political issue that has always crossed Brazilian cinema to a large extent – especially in the documentary field, from the 1960s – revolves around an offer that would be in the filmmaker’ hands, in his relationship with the subject filmed: how to *give* voice and visibility to the other? – as Jean-Claude Bernardet (2003) pointed out in his classic book on relations between filmmakers and the images of peoples, originally published in 1984. The sayable and the visible are, in this sense, something that should be granted. Another question, which goes towards this one, and perhaps houses it within itself, is presented by Georges Didi-Huberman (2011a, 41): “How to make people appear and take shape?” The other, then, does not correspond immediately to a passive place: *he appears, takes shape*.

With this in mind, in this article we return to past and present images, in Brazilian cinema history, to rediscover and identify the ways of appearance and enunciation of peripheral³ peoples, as well as the power lines that cross them. Between the dazzling spotlight brightness and the mute night darkness, using Georges Didi-Huberman’s terms, they continue to resist in their luminescence. However, their intermittent, nomadic and momentary appearance does not happen always in the same way. Guided by the political philosophy of Didi-Huberman (2011a, 2011b), in view of the relations between the visible and the sayable according to Jacques Rancière (2009, 2012), we seek to understand the way in which the manifestation of the word and the image, granted to the peoples or appropriated by them, is modulated by the films, as well as the way in which the cinema made in (and by) the peripheries is crossed by the demands of the subjects that inhabit them. In this sense, instead of outlining a panorama or developing a comprehensive historical contextualization, we retrieve occasional scenes from films and videos made between 1970 and 2010 in Brazil, as those who pursue small sparkles. Once the scenes have been selected, we carried out immanent analyzes, attentive to movie framing and editing operations, but also to what happens in the encounter between the filmmakers and those filmed.

Four scenes of appearance and enunciation of the peoples in cinema will be presented. First, in order to think about the way in which cinema gives the peripheral subjects a view, from an affirmative but silent appearance. Second, to analyze how cinema is able to question them and accept their questioning. Third, we seek to understand how, where peripheral subjects want to exceed the

³We chose to preserve the spelling of “peoples,” while recognizing the importance that the term “people” had in Brazilian social thought, connected, above all, to the desire to consolidate a national identity and direct a political action with the popular classes. We understand that saying “peoples” today is an attempt to give back the possibility of being many, in their singularity and difference, to those whose faces, names and voices have been systematically erased.

representations commonly offered to them, the world (fractured by political, racial, and social differences) often interrupts the desire for encounter and dialogue. Before presenting a fourth scene, which is interested in the possibility of peoples appearing in community, we use historical and theoretical analyzes produced by researchers on cinema and audiovisual studies in Brazil, approaching criticisms and texts developed by peripheral youths, allowing both the look and the thought produced on city peripheries to stress and potentize our understanding of Brazilian cinema and the continuous but non-linear relationship between filmmakers, images and voices of peripheral peoples.

Scenes to think of a political appearance of people, with cinema



Figure 1: First scene – appearances, opacities. Frames of the film *O homem que virou suco* [The man who turned into juice (free version)] (1979) by João Batista de Andrade.

In *O Homem que virou suco* (1979), by João Batista de Andrade, Deraldo, a northeastern poet who comes to São Paulo looking for work, is mistaken for a multinational company's worker who kills the boss in an awards ceremony. In a particular film scene, the poet is sought by the police in the slum where he lives to be arrested because of the crime he allegedly committed. Without any identification document that could prove the mistake and pressured by the police, Deraldo decides to run away through the slum alleys and hide. Then, some policemen start a search that ends up being unsuccessful, because night darkness comes and without public lighting the small streets, between a tight jumble of houses, hamper their movement.

In this scene, police men search for the poet in the slum using a large flashlight. The movie shows the police car moving and then its counter-plan: slum dwellers' faces and bodies illuminated by the flashlight brought by the police. On the cinema screen, each beam of light presents looks and gestures of those who, seemingly helpless, can do nothing before the police persecution. When illuminated, however, instead of running away or hiding, the locals remain standing where they are, sometimes holding their out-of-frame gaze, sometimes looking at the camera. Sometimes, unlike feeling threatened by the lighting on their faces, some dwellers seem to feel embarrassed and giggle at the camera. The lighting brought by the police is thus mistaken with the one produced by the film shoot (at the same time that it detaches from it). Before the world, cinema not only houses the representations that circulate within itself, but falls upon them, changing and reinventing them. In this scene, when the shoot lighting illuminates slum dwellers' faces, men and women hold their gaze affirmatively, but remain silent, mute, only letting themselves to be seen.

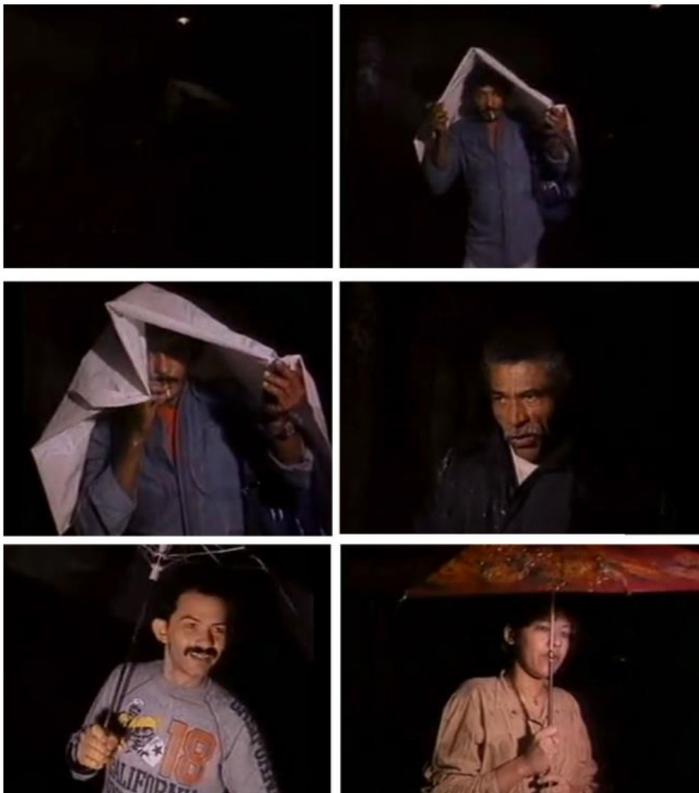


Figure 2: Second scene – questioning, limitations. Frames of the film *Santa Marta: duas semanas no morro* [Santa Marta: two weeks on the hill – free version] (1987).

Almost ten years later, in 1987, shortly after *Cabra marcado para morrer* [Twenty years later] (1984), Eduardo Coutinho produced the documentary *Santa Marta: duas semanas no morro* (1987), in which, as the title suggests, the filmmaker films the Santa Marta hill, in Rio de Janeiro, for a few days. The film was made with the resources of a competition of the Ministry of Justice for the production of a video about violence in Rio de Janeiro's slums. As Consuelo Lins comments, unlike *Cinema Novo* filmmakers, Coutinho registers the slum attentive to the dwellers' daily life, and "replace the slum universe as a matter to be thought by the Brazilian documentary" (LINS, 2004, p. 62) – scenario which will receive a lot of attention from the mid-1990s, but which had not yet been much explored by documentary cinema. According to the researcher, *Santa Marta* refuses to build types that would represent a specific group, thus undoing the direct relations between the particular and the general, so common in some productions of the 1960s and 1970s in Brazil.

The film, instead of opting for an off-screen narration that comments on the images, chooses to give way to the multiple voices of the dwellers that inhabit the hill, presenting us with a variety of faces, speeches and comments that could not correspond to a proposal of identification or closed representation of a social group. As in other Coutinho's films, the filming crew appears in the scenes and agrees with the characters, showing the conditions that allowed them to encounter each other. The first film image, right after the credits, is quite dark and does not allow the viewer to see almost anything. In a similar way to the scene of *O homem que virou suco*, it is night and it is the shoot lighting that illuminates faces and bodies of the men and women who, on the way back home, are questioned by the filming crew.

In the first approach, we heard Coutinho's out-of-frame voice. He says: "Please, you could come here?" A man comes close and so the camera, in close-up. It is possible to see his face more clearly. Then, Coutinho asks: "Please, mister, where are you going to?" The man answers: "Work." The filmmaker asks again: "And where do you work?" The man answers: "Leblon," and he is asked once more: "Leblon? And what do you do?" He answers: "I am a carpenter," and he is questioned: "Carpenter?," the man goes on: "Yes." After that, the film presents a series of faces, framed almost in the same way, at the same place and in the dark, edited in sequence. They present themselves to the crew: house cleaner, worker, room cleaner, housemaid, cook, casual labor worker, mason, electrician, etc. During the film, we followed some interviews with the slum dwellers, interspersed

with their daily lives recording, wandering on the streets, as well as some of them singing at the top of the hill. The film is made with long shots, filmed from the top of the slum, and close-ups, closer to the people.

The interviews are edited in very short excerpts interspersing different voices, in a very fragmented way. Gradually, the movie reveals a greater approach with some characters, offering opportunity for them to talk a little more about their lives, personal issues, and also about the violence suffered on the periphery. Unlike Coutinho's later works, the edition ends up fragmenting the speeches excessively, which become very brief and connected by some themes or topics.

At one point, the microphone is given to one of the hill dwellers. When interviewing a police officer who had previously been interviewed by Coutinho, she says:

Let me ask you something, you say that there is not much violence, but, for people who live here on the hill and nearby, going to work and having to stop is violent, understood? We have to explain something, people ask where they go, because this is getting into our personal lives and that is not even authority, you know? It is becoming something, a power, a person who has the power to question the other, not letting people visit each other, enjoy the company of each other, love each other. (excerpt from SANTA ..., 1987)

The woman with the microphone stands in front of the policeman asking the question, but Coutinho is beside her, listening to the conversation. In turn, the policeman answers a little embarrassed, perhaps because of the film shoot, the filmmaker or, even due to the black woman who asks the question in front of the cameras.

What is interesting for us to think about with this movie, one of the first documentaries which approach Rio de Janeiro slums interested in listening what their dwellers have to say, is the woman questioning the police officer on the "power to question the other." Her speech seems to return immediately to the beginning of the film, to the filmmaker approach, while Santa Marta's dwellers go to their work and are detained, questioned by the film shoot.

O paraíso não é aqui (2003) is a five-minute short video, conducted by six youths who participated in a workshop of the Kinoforum Cultural Association in Paraisópolis, on the outskirts of São Paulo/SP. They are: José Lusimar B. de Souza, Lucenilda dos Santos de Santana, Maria Borges, Nelcivam dos Santos de Santana, Renato de Paula Ferreira and Tiago da Silva Neves. The video begins with a medium

close-up, framing the famous buildings of Morumbi neighborhood that are close to Paraisópolis and then, zooming out, frames a slum small alley in the foreground, with the buildings in the background. The video is structured by a radio locution that accompanies the images, building a small fictional narrative of a character who goes by car on the slum streets, listen to the radio at home, visit a charity event, and so on. Some interviews with Paraisópolis' dwellers are interspersed with those images, and a single interview conducted on the street with a woman who appears to be a real estate businesswoman in the South Zone of São Paulo.

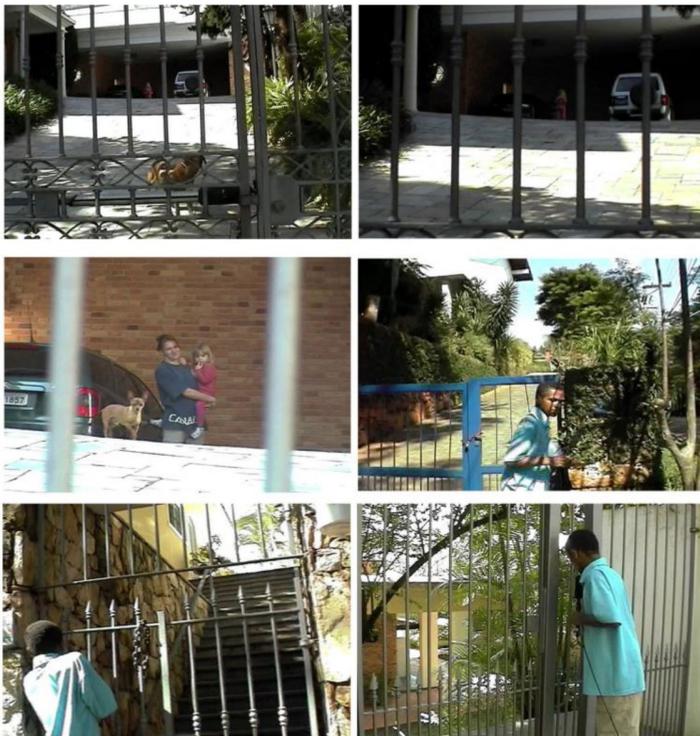


Figure 3: third scene – counting on cinema, irritating the world. Frames of the film produced by Paraisópolis' youths, *O paraíso não é aqui* [Paradise is not here (free version)] (2003)

Among some slum and Morumbi's buildings shots, there are moments in the video where we see a young black man holding a microphone in front of the doors of houses in the South Zone of São Paulo, trying to carry out some interviews. At one point, the video brings the image of a large house grille gate. Then, there is an out-of-frame voice, saying: "Hi, good afternoon, may I speak with you, madam?" A muffled voice answers loudly: "No!" The young man insists: "It will be just for a minute", and she says: "No, no, no." We see a child standing in the garage looking at

the camera and the woman we had just heard calling the child to enter, appearing in the background. The young man insists, justifying himself: “We’re doing a video, we just wanted you to talk about ...” Then, a medium close-up shows the woman more clearly, now with the child on her lap. The young man continues: “It will be quick, you do not even need ...” The woman then interrupts the young man and repeats: “No, no, no, no worries, okay?”, and continues with the child on her way to enter the house, but the young man persists, a little distressed: “No, it will be very quick, we’re just making a video, actually ...” The woman, who has already left the camera field of view, says: “Ah, okay, but it is not possible.” Before the scene ends, it is possible to hear the young man shouting behind the camera: “It will be quick, madam!” And once again the video shows an interview in the slum where two men make a complaint about the precarious situation of the place where they live. At the end of the video, right after the credits, we see a series of images of the same young man with the microphone, each time at a different gate, trying to get an interview, unsuccessfully.

In this case, it is not a matter of thinking only of what the peoples’ speeches about themselves change when peripheral filmmakers make their own records, and when the asphalt filmmakers decide to film them. The issue is still prior to this and is related to the limits of records and meetings, when a periphery dweller decides to leave the hill and seek representations other than his. In *O paraíso não é aqui*, the cuts, with each interdiction that restrains the possibility of dialogue, immediately take us to the slums alleys and suggest that, no matter how much they carry the camera, the “power to question the other” is still located on the other side of the hills, especially when it is a black boy who is at the door of a white middle-class family’s house to ask for an image, a speech, an apparition.

“Talking about me is easy, being me is difficult”⁴: from the community production of images to the invention of imaginaries

The performance of associations and NGOs in peripheral communities, such as the one that resulted in *O paraíso não é aqui*, comes, in a certain way, from a process that can be traced back to the 1980s in Brazil, when the so-called “popular video” takes shape, intimately connected to the actions of social and popular movements and thought primarily as an instrument of intervention in social reality.

⁴ Here, we refer to the homonymic title of a text published on the *Revista do Video Popular* [magazine] by young filmmakers of the Via Campesina Audiovisual Brigade. Cf. Canova, Alvarez and Gomes (2010).

Close to the proposals of the militant video that took shape in Brazil in the late 1960s and which sought to oppose massive television production, the popular video movement sought to enable the camera to be used by the popular classes that could, with it, make their own images.

Nevertheless, the filmmakers linked to the popular video were not only composed of popular groups, as Luiz Fernando Santoro (2014) points out, since, to a large extent, the videos were made by professionals integrated with those who participated in the movements, either social or not. More important, according to the author, was that the video was a production “of social movements’ interests.” Although the question of participation in this context was fundamental and met a large part of the demands of these movements, as the researcher Clarisse Alvarenga observes, the effective participation of communities in producing the videos ended up not materializing and the productions began to weaken slowly, culminating in the closure of the Brazilian Association of Popular Video (ABVP) in 1995.

According to Alvarenga, from that decade, the camera will effectively pass through the hands of the community through cinema, communication and education professionals, no longer linked to social movements. Then, the popular video gives way to what Alvarenga (2004, 63) understands as “community video,” when “several projects that came from the popular video phase begin to renounce the camera, transferring it into the hands of social groups.” Workshops carried out in the communities are then designed to explain the functioning of the video camera, allowing students, almost always young people who have free time and are not tied to unions or political parties, to produce their own images. In addition, autonomy in relation to social movements makes it possible for filmmakers to work with a great deal of freedom on issues related to the videographic language, or to those with regard to their own point of view about the reality they experience.

It is possible to perceive an increasing desire for autonomy in relation to the mediators of the process of videographic production democratization in the communities. This aspect is evident in an excerpt from an email that the researcher Rose Satiko G. Hikiji receives from one of these young filmmakers and mentions in one of her texts. She comments:

At various times, I have heard questions about the anthropologist/documentarist who wants to talk *about* them [the young filmmakers living on the peripheries], *about*

the movement where they are protagonists. At such times, they state that they can speak, and, in fact, they speak for themselves. This posture – in which dialogue is sometimes impossible – refers to what Bill Nichols has identified as “first person movies,” self-representations produced by those who have traditionally been objects of anthropological studies. (HIKIJ, 2014, p. 154)

If, as we have pointed out, the question accompanying the documentaries produced since the 1960s in Brazil was “how to give voice to the other?”, today, although this question continues to resonate, it seems to gain new modulations. To a large extent, “we” and “other” of the speeches are no longer the same. When the youths say: “We want to speak for ourselves” or “the skid row will no longer need intermediaries,” the affirmation of the desire for being themselves, bearers of their own words, is pressing and refers to the desire for even being able to exceed the exclusive possibility of self-representation, as we have noted in *O paraíso não é aqui*.

In a text published on the book *Documentário no Brasil: tradição e transformação* [Documentary in Brazil: tradition and transformation], Francisco Elinaldo Teixeira (2004) comments on a response by João Moreira Salles when asked about “documentary filmmakers’ face in Brazil”, interesting for us in this sense. According to Teixeira, Salles’ argument was as follows:

In general, Brazil that appears in documentaries is always a very different Brazil from the one in which the documentarist lives. With the exception of Arnaldo Jabor’s *Opinião pública* [Public opinion], the Brazilian documentary filmmaker does not film himself. Even because it is easier to film what is different. This is a pity, since the Brazilian documentary still needs to talk about the middle class and – why not? – about the elite. (TEIXEIRA, 2004, p. 65)

Contrary to documentarists well placed in their work, comfortable in finding what is different to them, it seems that for Paraisópolis’ youths, and many others, filming themselves is the only existing possibility. If we go, as Teixeira comments (2004, p. 64), “from the imperative of ‘speaking for the voiceless’ to the imperative of ‘giving voice to the other,’” there still seems to be a long way to go with regard not only to possibilities of representation, concession or restitution of something missing, but also to the urgent need for apprehension of words and images, as a gesture or an affirmative and conscious action of those who decide to appropriate something that was never “legitimately” theirs. Instead of “giving

voice to the other,” as a formulation that assigns possession and concession, it may be the case of thinking of what effectively means an “apprehension of words” in contemporary Brazilian cinema as an appropriation of the peoples who often have to get them by force.

In a text written by directors of community videos and published on the book *Audiovisual comunitário e educação: história, processos e produtos* [Audiovisual community and education: history, processes and products] (2010), in which they are very critical in relation to the activities of NGOs that offer workshops on the peripheries of São Paulo – well characterizing the zone of conflict in which the video is installed when it travels through other spaces –, the young André Luiz Pereira, Daniel Fagundes, Diego FF Soares and Fernando Solidade Soares, from the Alternative Communication Nucleus (NCA), comment:

In our view, the advent of video on the peripheries of São Paulo is similar to the arrival of Portuguese paraphernalia in indigenous communities: a mirror in exchange for a plot of land; a camera in exchange for advertisement. The ax that cut the Brazilwood much amputated the tradition and the ancestor values. [...] From the *oca* to the slum, from mirrors to video cameras, the process is repeated, the communities grow, and for those who live in the extreme, the extremity is what they have (from the leftover food to the technological waste). (PEREIRA *et al.*, 2010, p. 331)

[...] it is necessary to evaluate the work carried out by the NGOs with the audiovisual element on the peripheries. In the case of São Paulo, we realized that, although they enabled us to produce images, they did not allow us to produce imagery. The most recurrent discourse is that of self-representation: “We will enable the poor to show their community as the media does not show.” But the big question is: is it enough that someone accustomed to misery takes a camera and record their daily life for it to be modified? (PEREIRA *et al.*, 2010, p. 335)

In *Cinco Vezes Favela, agora por nós mesmos* [Five times slum, now by ourselves] (2010), by Cacau Amaral, Cadu Barcellos, Luciana Bezerra, Luciano Vidigal, Manaíra Carneiro, Rodrigo Felha and Wagner Novais, some young participants of workshops in Rio de Janeiro’s slums direct a movie that, due to a variation of perspective, should confront the 1962 feature film, to which it makes direct reference. The movie *Cinco Vezes Favela* (1962), by Mark Farias, Miguel

Borges, Joaquim Pedro de Andrade, Carlos Diegues and Leon Hirszman, produced by filmmakers of the Culture Popular Center (CPC) of the National Union of Students (UNE), brought the periphery from an external and socially situated perspective: that of young white middle-class filmmakers. Now, slum dwellers would be responsible for producing their own images or, at least, they would be responsible for directing the five episodes that compose the movie.

However, *Cinco Vezes Favela, agora por nós mesmos* seems to little meet the demands of the NCA youths earlier mentioned. Daniel Fagundes, one of the group members and who is also the author of that text, wrote a vehement critique of the film, published on the *Revista do Video Popular*, which is called “5x more of the same: it would be funny if it was not sad, it would be sad if was not caricature.” He says:

Once again, the slum preferred to caricature their miseries instead of discussing them from a political point of view. And wanting to confront Leon Hirszman’s 1962 beautiful work with this re-reading is the most ridiculous thing. [...] format, language, aesthetics proposed innovations, that is, nothing that Fernando Meirelles would not do. And this is not what I understand as qualified work built by people living in slums in Brazil. (FAGUNDES, 2010, p. 8)

The main issues criticized by Fagundes are the lack of originality and the persistence of production and circulation of an image that meets the demands of the hegemonic exhibition spaces. Filmed and edited by professionals with experience in cinema field outside the slums, the film deletes the marks that should insert it into its production context and, in a way, limits directors’ creativity. Since there are five episodes, directed by different youths, it was necessary that an aesthetic homogeneity was constructed by the film technical crew, giving cohesion to it as a whole. As Cezar Migliorin (2010) comments:

The slum, which in the discourse of the film, intends to distance itself from stereotypes and not to determine this or that way of being, is determinant of a place of speech, in an impassable paradox [...] The problem of politics, as we know, is not the legitimization of this or that identity as a place of speech, but the possibility of subjects and groups to transfer their places of speech, and they can enunciate in the gaps in which they cease to be equal to themselves – “themselves” being imposed on them by prejudices, or “themselves” that legitimizes them. Politics is precisely that transference, this passage from what someone says I am, or what I should be,

to something else, to another space not yet mapped. In the claims presented by the movie, there is not anything that is not given in society. (MIGLIORIN, 2010)

Migliori's precise formulation, clearly inspired by the political philosophy of Jacques Rancière (1996), meets the demands of the youths of the NCA. It is not enough that they have access to the cameras if what can be produced with them only takes them back to an identity reiteration, enough to legitimize their speech acts or, still, if the construction of a self-representational gesture is always elaborated from the images and words that are offered to them, from outside to within the communities. In this sense, what these young people claim is close to what Rancière (1996, p. 48) calls "political subjectivation," which Migliorin indirectly refers to in his text.

According to Rancière, "subjectivation" is something that differs, substantially, from "identification." It is precisely what inscribes a difference between a body and a voice, which constitutes the interval between two or more identities. In other words, "subjectivation" directly produces a non-identification between, for example, the speaker, recognized by the names attributed to them, and *that* which is said and supposed to be linked to these nominations. According to Rancière:

"Workers" or "women" are identities apparently without mystery. Everyone sees *who* they are. Now, political subjectivation removes them from this evidence, placing the question of the relationship between *who* and *which* in the apparent redundancy of a proposition of existence. [...] All political subjectification is non-identification, extraction of a place from the naturalness, the opening of a space of subject where anyone can be counted because it is the space of a counting of the uncounted ones, of the relationship between a plot and an absence of plot. (RANCIÈRE, 1996, p. 48-49)

Being defined from a fixed identity and a unique name ("worker," for example) could deactivate a possibility of speech, that is, define someone who does not deserve to be listened and therefore unable to be interlocutor. However, when many words circulate ("worker," "filmmaker," "rapper," "actor," and "illiterate," for example), the distributions of speech places and occupations in space can be reconfigured and difficult the work of counting and classification established by the police order⁵. The "counting

⁵ Fundamentally, the author makes a distinction between what he means by "police" and "politics." The "police" deals with an ordering engendered by power relations, which determines certain ways of being, saying or seeing that are understood in a consensual way. The "politics," on the other hand, is what breaks and redistributes the police orders.

of the uncounted ones” or the “division of the sensitive one” issue (RANCIÈRE 1996, p. 48) is the basis of his thinking and grounds the very litigation that, for him, institutes politics.

The counting of the words that are heard and that leaves behind those that are perceived only as noise refers to what Rancière understands as the constitutive damage of politics: a counting of the “parts” of the community that is based on the calculation error, on a false counting that is replaced by a supplement. Therefore, what is understood from this is that language is not conceived as an instrument which the political animal uses, but it is what is at the center of the political dispute; it is which someone fights for. Thus, it is not enough for those who, until then, had no access to language, for example, to have it without removing them from identification with a predefined identity.

Dancing of desire forming community⁶



Figure 4: Fourth scene – appearing in common. Frames of the film *A cidade é uma só?* [Is the city just one?] (2011), by Adirley Queirós.

The lighting that illuminates the unpaved streets and the faces and bodies of Ceilândia’ dwellers, on the periphery of Brasília, is no longer carried by those who, even with generosity, could announce: “Behold, the people that dwell on the city’s outskirts.” Contrary to the fact that they are offered a visibility that comes from

⁶ Here, we were inspired by the formulation of Didi-Huberman (2011b, p. 55), mainly encompassing the community desire for political emancipation.

outside (from a⁷ space outside the scene that, at first, does not belong to them), the men and women filmed in these spaces begin to emit their own sparkles, affirming themselves as subjects of their own appearance. As Didi-Huberman (2011b, p. 155) would like, it is about

reforming a community of desire, a community of emitted sparkles, of dances in spite of everything, of thoughts to be transmitted. To say *yes* at the night crossed by sparkles and not to be satisfied in describing the *no* of the night that dazzles us.

As the French philosopher suggests:

We do not live in just one world, but between two worlds at least. The first is flooded with light, the second crossed by sparkles. In the center of light, as we are led to believe, those who are called by us today are churning – for a cruel and Hollywoodian anti-phrase – a few *people*, that is, the *stars* – the stars, as it is known, have names of divinities – on which we regurgitate mostly useless information [...]. But on the margins, that is, across an infinitely more extensive territory, there are many peoples about whom we know very little, so for whom a counter-information seems to be always more necessary. *Firefly people* seek their freedom of movement at night, run away from the projectors of the ‘kingdom,’ making the impossible to affirm their desires, issue their own sparkles, and direct them to others. (DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2011b, p. 155)

If we live at least between two worlds, one “flooded with light” and another “crossed by sparkles,” what Adirley Queirós’s *A cidade é uma só?* (2011) proposes is that these scintillations that come from the periphery are capable of influencing the world fully enlightened. Ceilândia, the most populous satellite city of the Federal District, also known as the most violent, is on the outskirts of Brasília/DF, the planned city, excessively filmed and photographed by artists, photographers, filmmakers and journalists. Brasília periphery and its inhabitants appear, then, not only by means of the incidence of new sources of light, whose out-of-frame space is constituted in the very periphery, but also from the articulation between its appearance and a apprehension of words that, affirmatively, produces stories,

⁷ Following André Brasil (2015, p. 91), we refer to the “out-of-frame space in which the director, the crew and the equipment use to be.” For a detailed analysis, dedicated to the relation that the film establishes with its out-of-frame space, cf. Brasil (2015).

testimonies and scenarios, linked mainly to the historical experience that crosses and constitutes them.

Sitting around a bonfire, the characters of *A cidade é uma só?* remember old songs about Ceilândia. This brief encounter allows them to retake the memories and songs of the past. Bringing them together as a small community of sharing and desire, the fire in the backyard is what illuminates the faces of the characters before the film shoot. What precedes this image, just after the title, is another night scene. This time, the streets of the city, almost without clarity, are illuminated by the lighthouse of an old *Volkswagen Santana*. The camera records the unpaved streets from inside the vehicle. Some houses are shown at the edges of the frame. Sometimes it is possible to see locals on the streets, walking or sitting on the doorstep. The soundtrack brings the sound of the radio, which is briefly tuned, and we hear JK's voice announcing:

from this central plateau, in that solitude that soon will become the brain of high national decisions ... I cast my eyes once more upon my country's tomorrow and I foresee this dawn with an unbreakable faith and a boundless confidence in its great destiny⁸. (excerpt from SANTA ..., 2010)

Initially, the way in which the spaces of Ceilândia and its inhabitants become visible through cinema is linked to the ways of inhabiting and experiencing the city. Whether from inside the vehicle or by the fire, the camera stands beside the characters to catch an experience in the peripheral space that articulates with the forces of the present and the inscriptions of the past and memory. The space filmed is constituted by the experience of the characters, and crossed by other times. As for the subjects, they are filmed from the way they elaborate their relationship with the territory – translated into these scenes, for example, by the reproduction of old songs about Ceilândia around the fire, which refers us to the work of memory, invention, and a collective situation shared between them.

As César Guimarães (2015, p. 47) suggests, following Jean-Luc Nancy, it is not a matter of idealizing or dreaming of a “lost community,” where the connotations of interiority, exclusivity and identity would lie, but of “sheltering new modalities of existence in common: decentralized, far from all unification and all the appeals that call for the fusion.” According to him:

⁸ JK's famous phrase, delivered on his first visit to Brasília, on October 2, 1956. This phrase is even recorded on the City Museum's marble, at the *Praça dos Três Poderes* [Three Powers Square] of the Federal Capital.

The loss of the communion intimacy, the refusal of absolute immanence in favor of exposure to an outside space, of a relationship with the exterior, with others; non-closure in a territory; the denial of the consubstantiality of “blood” or native land”: these are the constitutive features of the inoperative or deactivated community, which is not erected as a work. Paradoxical community, whose being-with or being-in-common refuses both the motive of a common interiority conceived as a fusion and a gathering from the outside, in favor of an exhibition (to the open element, to others) of the singularities that constitute it. (GUIMARÃES, 2015, p. 47)

The community that appears in Queirós’ films in this sense constitutes its multiplicity and plurality, without opting for any nostalgia or idealization of the past and without seeking identifications, fusions or determinations that could fall upon the subjects filmed. A holey, cracked community, impossible to be composed from reconciliations and understandings. The retaking of a forgotten history, of the silenced testimonies and desires does not joint or recompose what before was established in a fragmented way.

Final considerations

Although we chose to select here only a few scenes from films presented in sequence (from the 1970s to the 2010s), it is not, however, a matter of asserting a linear progression of the ways in which the cinema illuminates the peoples filmed. We believe we are dealing with intermittence: appearance and disappearance amidst spectacle’s and history’s spotlight. On this path, we do not believe that it is the case either to annul the powerful work of the filmmakers who filmed the peoples in the last decades, with enough effort and commitment, or to overestimate, immediately, the possibility of people producing their own films, since they were offered a video camera, as if, only this way, cinema could generate more powerful records. Moreover, we know that cinema, especially the documentary cinema, is also irrigated by the differences, by the relations of otherness that can be generated by it when the filmmaker films the “other,” even if this is only asphalt filmmakers’ privilege.

Nevertheless, we point out that currently new vectors have modulated these apparitions, particularly from the popularization of access to image production technologies – from video cameras to, more recently, cell phone cameras. If the lighting that sometimes falls upon their faces, allowing them a brief appearance,

as in *O homem que virou suco*, illuminates them in their mute or, in *Santa Marta, duas semanas no morro*, from a questioning, an invitation to listen, in *O Paraíso não é aqui*, we perceive the need for people to exceed their own representation, when they become also filmmakers. Men's and women's, blacks', workers' desire and demands to become subjects of their own image are accompanied by an affirmative gesture, appropriation of scenes, spaces and words so that it is possible for them to appear in community, as it happens in Adirley Queirós' cinema. In this gesture, as the youths of the NCA wanted, it is therefore necessary to invent ways, fabricate new imaginaries and fictions that do not adhere easily to the customary and perverse dispositions of social life.

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submitted on: Jun. 29, 2018 | approved on: Oct. 30, 2018.