

The narration of the nationhood in Brazilian *Cinema da Retomada*: The imagined community and territoriality in *Foreign Land (Terra Estrangeira, 1995)* and *How angels are born (Como nascem os anjos, 1996)*

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Abstract

This paper aims to discuss the processes of the nationhood narration present in two films of a very significant period in Brazilian cinema history called Cinema da Retomada. What kind of nation is narrated in the Brazilian Cinema during the 1990s? This Brazilian cinema period is characterized by a shift in the way the nation is portrayed. The relationship between the political and economic scenery and some of the films produced in the 1990s might be the key to the public, critics, and scholars' interest for the films produced and released in the period. Our proposal seeks to outline the way that the nation is narrated based on Homi Bhabha (1990). Understanding that the various ways of portraying the nation might be a possible key for building the imagined community (Benedict Anderson, 2006), the images and sounds produced in the 1990s are a singular way for us to analyze the nationhood. The becoming-world in the Brazilian cinema is once more present here, but in a completely different way from the Cinema Novo, for example. Through the analysis of the films 'Foreign Land' (Terra Estrangeira, 1995), directed by Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas, and 'How angels are born' (Como nascem os anjos, 1996), directed by Murillo Salles, we would like to highlight the filmic procedures that suggest a very particular reading of the nationhood in this period of the Brazilian cinema. In the debate around the local and the global, our goal is to find characteristics of the national presence in the face of the globalization.

Keywords: Brazilian cinema, Cinema da Retomada, narration, nationhood, globalization.

In this paper, we analyze two films from the *Cinema da Retomada*¹ in Brazil, under the perspective of the cinema as apparatus and how personhood is connected to the construction of nationhood narration. We understand the cinema as part of a set of apparatus network that is related to the contemporaneity and altogether sustains a certain kind of narration. When we refer to apparatus, we think along with what Agamben (2009) establishes as three points of reflection on the apparatus. We assume that (apparatus):

- a. It is a heterogeneous set that includes virtually anything, linguistic and nonlinguistic, under the same heading: discourses, institutions, buildings, laws,

Police measures, philosophical propositions, and so on. The apparatus itself is the network that is established between these elements.

- b. The apparatus always has a concrete strategic function and is always located in a power relation.
- c. As such, it appears at the intersection of power relations and relations of knowledge. (Agamben 2009: 2-3).

Cinema, along with a series of other apparatus, is articulated in the discursive dimension to enhance the narratives about the national, especially if we take into account the advanced processes of globalization. During the 1990s, we see the growing advance of economic globalization and neoliberal precepts in Brazil, thus the cinema reflects in many ways these processes, making it an important apparatus for us to visualize the nationhood narration.

Appadurai, in his book *Modernity at large* (1996), states two important pillars to think of

¹ *Cinema da Retomada* in the Brazilian cinema means the film production rebirth during the 1990s when, for a number of reasons, but mostly because of the closure of the Embrafilme (a Brazilian state company responsible for producing and distributing the Brazilian cinema) by the President Fernando Collor de Mello in 1990. After publishing the new audiovisual Law in 1993, film production was reestablished. The first movies were released in 1995.

globalization, namely mass electronic media and migratory movements (diaspora). These pillars are anchored in a process that the author calls the "work of the imagination" that organizes the whole articulation of elements in the narration. Through a constant new electronic media use, we would be increasing our "knowledge" about other places not only as a real experience but also as an experience that would be based on imagination. According to the author, the media apparatus "always carries this sense of distance between the spectator and the event, yet these media harbor the transformation of day-to-day discourse" (Appadurai 1996, 3). It is as if the distances (in terms of territories) has been shortened. Therefore, the sense of closeness and appropriation of events not so close to the territoriality and culture of the involved subjects have been taken as natural. It is interesting to think that also within the territory itself the apparatus seems to be (re)organizing forms of narration within the "work of imagination".

The "work of imagination" mediated by electronic media creates spaces so that subjects can imagine the world, leading Appadurai to state that:

Because of the sheer multiplicity of the forms in which they appear (cinema, television, computers, and telephones) and because of the rapid way in which they move through daily life routines, electronic media provide resources for self-imagining as an everyday social project (Appadurai, 1996: 4).

Appadurai (1996) meets Benedict Anderson (2006) when he defines the nation, specifically with the work of imagination. For Anderson, a nation is "[...] an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign." (Anderson, 2006: 6). It is imagined because its members are never present at the same time and space remaining to imagine how it would be all of the members. In order not to have this imagined characteristic, all members of the community should meet, get to know each other and relate in a concrete way (Anderson, 2006).

Anderson (2006) proposes the physical encounter, the presence of the bodies, as a preponderant factor for this encounter. At this point, we assume that the idea of encounter can be extended and thought from the electronic media potential to promote dialogic processes between subjects. We can consider the cinema

as part of the electronic media mentioned by Appadurai (1996) and as a powerful means for the encounter, although without the idea of corporeality that Anderson (2006) implies. Thus, what challenges us is the film apparatus as potency for the encounter in the construction of the nationhood narration.

After this brief introduction on how we think cinema as a part of an apparatus and how it relates to the mass media helping to construct an imagined nation, we should briefly discuss some aspects of the narration of nationhood based on Homi Bhabha's work.

To encounter the nation as it is written displays a temporality of culture and social consciousness more in tune with the partial, over determined process by which textual meaning is produced through the articulation of difference in language; more in keeping with the problem of closure which plays enigmatically in the discourse of the sign. Such an approach contests the traditional authority of those national objects of knowledge – Tradition, People, the Reason of State, High Culture, for instance – whose pedagogical value often relies on their representation as holistic concepts located within an evolutionary narrative of historical continuity (Bhabha, 1990: 2-3).

Focusing on the above by Bhabha (1990), we can find the textual meaning related to the film construction (film as text) and the "writing" of the film production environment for cinema. We emphasize that the "writing" of *Cinema da Retomada* goes through processes of public policy-making (Ikeda, 2015) and it is directly related to the temporality of culture and to the social consciousness that Bhabha refers to. In this sense, we can open not only to ambivalence in the film as a text but also to the processes of "writing" production issues and their relation to the state. However, the focus should be more on the film construction, although we can find tangential thoughts to the production environment not exhaustively approached in this paper.

The national identity is a common ground by both writing structures mentioned above and it suggests an alignment between the cinematographic field and the resemantized state in different periods. We can directly associate with Bhabha (1990): "ideology (like language) is conceptualized in terms of the

articulation of elements” (Bhabha, 1990: 3). The elements articulated in *Cinema da Retomada* are a) the passage from allegory to irony in the films; b) the diaspora; c) the variety film spaces such as urban, rural, *sertão*², *favela*³, territories abroad and so on; d) The transparent narrative as put by Ismail Xavier (2005), as a source of communicability; e) The public space as more aggressive and more violent; f) The “mainstream” as a form of distribution and exhibition of the films, aligned both with the global economic strategy and global cultural processes. These elements are present in the *Cinema da Retomada* and we identify as an ideology symptom of the 1990s in Brazil.

According to Bhabha (1990), we can have an ambivalent strategy when narrating the nation: the performance and the pedagogy. When we think about the creative process within the cinema, the performance gathers some elements that make this art up, integrated into the scene, narration, framing choices, camera trajectory, diegetic and extra-diegetic composition, inside and outside the pro-film field. All of these elements reveal the power of performance as a possibility for the nationhood analysis in the films. The performance does not cease to speak for the pedagogical nature that the moving images can provide. In pedagogy, we find the connection of factors thought through the legal system and state public policies that take the cinema with strong appeal of speech act and discursive framework for the pedagogy of the national. The state factor present in Ikeda (2015) stresses the great potentiality of action in the imaginary for the construction of a narrative that tries to account for the nation cohesion proposed by the national narration pedagogy.

Imagining this community is the connecting point we find in Bhabha (1990) and Anderson (2006). The way of meeting performance and pedagogy with imagination is our interest, as well as the forms in which this type of cinema mediates the related elements articulated in *Cinema da Retomada* and the personhood. Films like *Foreign Land (Terra Estrangeira, Brazil, 1995)* and *How angels are born (Como nascem os anjos, Brazil, 1996)* propose mediation forms of the nationhood narrative and the personhood that are significant to visualize the political, economic and social crossing of Brazil as an

imagined community. Through some elements identified in the narrative, our goal is to outline some themes and characteristics in the diegesis that will strongly relate to a certain type of nationhood narration present in the Brazilian cinema of the 1990s.

Foreign Land (*Terra Estrangeira, Brazil, 1995*, directed by Walter Salles and Daniella Thomas): an example of how territory and diaspora are presented in the *Cinema da Retomada*

‘Foreign Land’ (1995), directed by Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas, deals directly with the political and economic processes of Brazil as an imagined community in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It considers the economic plan (Collor Plan) implemented by the former President Fernando Collor de Mello (March 15th, 1990 to December 29th, 1992) as a trigger for a narrative process that will take into account the questioning of territorial aspects.

In territoriality terms, the path proposed by Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas can be seen as the inverse to the one traveled by the director Carla Camurati in ‘*Carlota Joaquina, the princess of Brazil*’ (*Carlota Joaquina, a princesa do Brasil*, 1995), a film constantly seen as the inauguration of *Cinema da Retomada*. The film departs from Brazil to Portugal with the deterritorialization as a mainspring, questioning the economic, political and social aspects of the imagined community in the search of a metaphorical opposite “point of origin” or “vanishing point” (lines of Paco, character played by the actor Fernando Alves Pinto).

The search is fulfilled in the articulation of the desire of two characters. The first character is a mother brought to life by Laura Cardoso. She is a Spanish immigrant whose project is to return to the land of origin. She saves money her whole life to return to San Sebastián, Spain. She is the mother of Paco (second character), a young college student who dreams of pursuing a theatrical career. In this first relational system of characters, the emotional dependence between the two is evident, present in the use of small and enclosed interior spaces - apartment where they live in *minhocão*⁴, in São Paulo - and in the

² Sertão is an arid region in Brazil, known for the poverty, lack of state presence and difficulties in terms of living.

³ The way shanty towns are named in Brazil.

⁴ A set of overpasses built over an avenue in the city of São Paulo to improve the traffic. The apartments are at the same level as the overpasses.

direct dialogues between mother and son about their going to Spain.

The directors use date identifiers on the screen to set the first temporality present in the film. It would be a way of introducing the story using the idea of "meanwhile", which refers to questions of time and space (typical of parallel editing). In some shots later, after the first identification of the space and relationship of the characters, the film jumps into another spatiality that is Lisbon, in Portugal. In addition to Lisbon being identified by the writing on screen, there are other aspects that are striking in the presentation of this new space: the sea and the city in the background, a ship that enters the bay and the film score using a *fado*⁵. It would be possible to pronounce mentally the famous phrase used by the navigators alluding to the Portuguese conquistadors "land in sight"! After this sequence, the directors use a panoramic shot view from the upper city in Lisbon. We are introduced to a new spatiality and a new system of characters: Alex and Miguel, two Brazilian immigrants in Portugal. She is a waitress and he is a musician. Miguel is presented as a trumpeter in a bar that he calls cabaret of the colonies. The different cultural aspects in the bar puts in evidence the inadequacy of the character. Miguel plays Jazz, a different music from the type of music expected by the regulars, the Brazilian *lambada* and African popular music. The feeling of not belonging there follows him even in an environment where they (Alex and Miguel) "could" belong and share affections for the same imagined community. He is interested in Jazz; the other regulars are interested in songs from their home countries.

This beginning suggests what Gaudreault and Jost (2009) stated in terms of spatial relationships. With the help of the initial writings on screen, the viewer is placed in the time and space of the movie as "pluripunctual", if we take the two sequences as a whole.

With pluripunctuality arises a certain form of spatial diversity that places the viewer in the problem of the relation between two spaces (and, possibly, two times) shown by two shots in sequence (Gaudreault and Jost 2009: 117).⁶

This pluripunctuality of the initial sequences in the movie points to deterritorialization and reterritorialization as central axes of the film. The process of territorial identification, which derives from the pluripunctual relationship, suggests the reflection of a "here" and "there" that will be a constant in the film.

The presentation of the characters' relational system in the foreign space is very direct. Miguel declares himself a smuggler and Alex feels more like a foreigner than ever, recognizing her accent as an aggression to the ears of the Portuguese and declares her constant fear of being alone; in the background, the landscape of the city of Lisbon, white and calm. Alex says that the idea of returning to Brazil sends shivers up and down her spine. The scene is interrupted abruptly and we return to the first spatiality of the film, the *minhocão* in São Paulo and the apartment of Paco and his mother. She puts aside money in a drawer, he reads. The question of immigration projects for Paco's mother homeland is back again. In this initial narrative game, the presentation of the characters and their conflicts and the comings and goings to Brazil by the film narration gives us the grounds that the territory is a very important issue to be observed, either in its deterritorializing aspects or in the conformation of Brazil as an imagined community.

García Canclini (2008) states about television and the sense of public space that it confers, like this:

As the information about inflation, what the governor does and even about the previous day's accidents in our own city come to us through the media, it becomes the dominant constituent of the "public sense" of the city, which simulates integrating a disaggregated urban imaginary (García Canclini, 2008: 289).⁷

The television is the mediation for the public sense of the city, and it is relevant when we think of 'Foreign Land', especially in the scene that Paco's mother watches the news on the Collor Plan⁸ and, consequently, her dreams about returning to her homeland are shattered. The fact is directly linked to the death of the

⁷ Translated by the author of this paper

⁸ A plan set in January 16th. 1990 that kept the Brazilian population savings frozen in the banks, only a small amount of money could be withdrawn.

⁵ A traditional Portuguese type of music.

⁶ Translated by the author of this paper

character that will cause a turning point in the narrative. The film does not create another public space that puts into evidence this political decision that affected the Brazilians, and this episode is a central pillar in the narrative of the film. The only public space for such an important shift in the nation is the television media. At this point, we can relate to what Appadurai (1996) calls the influence of electronic media in the context of globalization and its diasporic relations. It helps to create the imagined context of other territories (although in the case of 'Foreign Land' the electronic media works as a mediator of the public space in sharing the economic policies that affect an entire nation).

If we analyze the general structure of the film up to the moment when Alex and Paco meet, we have a kind of two parallel lines with different territorialities and the same temporality, both theming the nation from their respective territorialities. It would be the use of editing that privileges two territorial spatialities to converge in the deterritorializing diaspora process.

Paco's mother brings to the scene the affective issues of a lost territoriality felt by the immigrant. She metaphorically says that the city of San Sebastián is inside of her, she cannot forget the smell of the city. To end the agony, reterritorialization (for her) is the only way out. At this point, we see the two characters, mother and future lover (Alex), with their desire turned to other territories than Brazil.

The narrative addresses the theme of the economic despair and political crisis in Brazil in a globalized way, relating to the diaspora, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization; these are the "footprints" of the process of globalization of cultures (Renato Ortiz, 2005; Octavio Ianni, 2001) in 'Foreign Land'. One can also take into account how the film circulated and was legitimized by the festivals in different parts of the world. The opening of the film brings a list of awards that it has garnered throughout its trajectory in festivals, one aspect from the viewpoint of circulation and exhibition that refers to the globalization "footprint". There is an intersection with the statement of Lúcia Nagib (2006b) when she mentions the type of globalized scripts that would be in line with the transnational aspects, legitimized by prizes and festivals around the globe. 'Foreign Land' is a clear example of that.

The use of electronic media as a public space in the narrative is also evidenced by the use of sound space while Paco prepares his mother's funeral. A radio continues to broadcast the news on the economic plan elaborated by the government of the ex-president Fernando Collor. It would be a double existence of pain. The pain of his mother's loss and the social pain caused by the constant crises of the late 1980s and early 1990s: the combination of the public and the private by the thread of hopelessness and disruption.

The junction of lost youths from the same territoriality who find themselves in situations of lack of future perspectives is emblematic. Paco and Alex are symbols of a middle-class youth challenged by a weakened state and who seek in the diaspora the hope for a promising future.

The process that will lead Paco to find Alex in Portugal is through the pain of loss and a casual chat in a bar with a possible "sponsor" of his trip. The "sponsor's" speech matches exactly the pursuits of origins and a hope for a future. He challenges Paco and offers him a chance to get to the country of his mother by smuggling. In the sequences within the pluripunctuality, Alex and her boyfriend Miguel are also being challenged; he is trying to sell stolen precious stones and Alex is selling her passport to two Spaniards. The passport sale operates an important metaphor in the construction of the discourse. Alex wants to sell it for three thousand dollars and the Spaniards say that the Brazilian passport does not worth much in the black market, three hundred dollars is what they pay; one way of putting the idea that the country is so deep in trouble that even in the passport black market the imagined nation would have no value.

An interesting operation to highlight in 'Foreign Land' is that the borders weaken and distinct nationalities find themselves in a symbolic territoriality in the construction of the imagined community of Brazil. In this harmonious coexistence within the crime, we see different nationalities (French, Portuguese, Spanish, Angolans, and Brazilians) coming together, proposing a relationship between ethnicity and globalization as part of the desire for a change and as part of the life expectancy process within a chaotic situation. It is through the world experience that the subjects come together to mobilize aspects of the expectation of survival.

Another reality highlighted by the film is that the more the characters seek to return to the affective territoriality, the more they feel foreigners. A reading could be that a constant reshape is needed in a new globalized reality. The subjects would be all the time in deterritorializing processes and what is left would be the affective memory; a process of constant affective reinvention that exists beyond the boundaries of national narratives.

The encounters and mismatches of Paco's trip to Portugal are developed in a tone of "an adventure of search". Search for the person who was going to receive the order he takes, search for a solution to deliver the order and the search for territoriality that comes to him by cultural heritage. In this search, the mismatches are the most notable, leading the character to state that Portugal is not a place of encounters and, rather, a place to get lost, a place of mismatches, a prophetic oracle within diegesis that foretells facts of the argument. On the other hand, it is a problematization of the diasporas leading to an explicit construction within the diegesis.

A disconcerting factor in the process of seeking "their" territoriality is the space where the different otherness is found: a territory that still does not identify itself as Europe. Going to Europe, being in the center, is not yet in this place that is presented and constructed by 'Foreign Land'. The territory where the film unfolds is still fickle, multiple and searchable. This aspect can be directly related to the diasporic questions of a constant search of a territoriality for a better life expectancy, within the transitory and fragile character of the individuals present in this process.

'Foreign Land' refers to the escape of those who are lost and displaced. They are Brazilians who are in the process of hopelessness in search of a better life; a strong parallel with the political, economic and social problems that the imagined community went through in the 1980s and early 1990s.

How angels are born (*Como nascem os anjos*, Brazil, 1996, directed by Murilo Salles): social discrepancies and the territories within the globalized Brazilian community

The erratic saga of the characters Branquinha, Japa and Maguila in 'How angels are born' (*Como nascem os anjos*, 1996), directed by Murilo Salles, begins in a very emblematic way.

There is a German television crew on the hill of Santa Marta, a *favela*⁹ located in Rio de Janeiro, and Branquinha insists that she is a good character to be interviewed; she is a married pre-adolescent girl and wants to be a very important person in the *favela*. Her dreams are far from what it would be formal jobs. She wants to be part of the drug dealers' gang.

The first image of the filmic text is the character Branquinha in the foreground with the *favela* in the background negotiating her participation in a movie for fifty dollars. Her disappointment in knowing that her image will be displayed in other territories and not in her territory is visible. The territoriality debate opens; it unfolds for the construction of the *favela* inhabitants in a deterritorialized way. Branquinha negotiates with the German crew using the common discourse about the *favelas* in the media: a cast of people not adapted to the social norms. She is a married pre-adolescent girl and tries to be exotic enough to convince the producer that she is an interesting person to be interviewed.

The presentation of the characters follows with Maguila, an adult with infantile traits and with an apparent mental retardation. His universe is the drug trafficking, but he is not one of the leaders. He says he can fix a gun that is not working well and nobody believes in him. He fixes it and he shoots one of the drug dealers. After the murder, he escapes from this environment because the drug dealers want to kill him. Fixed and open shots taking advantage from a framing that emphasizes the space is the strategy used by the director to present a house of a *favela*; few camera movements and close-ups are the resources used to present Maguila and his universe.

In a further scene, Branquinha is shown giving an interview to the German television – she has no dreams, only the desire to be respected by the inhabitants of the *favela*, especially by the drug traffickers. The first act continues with the introduction of Japa, a mulatto boy who dreams of being a basketball player and idolizes American players. This character has more traits related to the globalization: he wants to be part of the American basketball universe. A contrast between the characters' desires: one focused on their territory with all the social implications and

⁹ The way shanty towns are named in Brazil.

the other character part of the processes of globalization. Through a direct way in the presentation of the characters, we observe the strategies of transparency regarding the narrative proposed by Murilo Salles. He presents the *favela*, the drug traffic, the foreign television that wants to film the members of the community, altogether acting very clearly in their roles in the saga.

The following set of actions seems to happen as the only possible way. 1) The shooting of the drug dealer; 2) the escape at the rush hour of the *favela*; 3) the car hijacking; 4) the stop to urinate in a rich neighborhood; 5) an American lawyer opening the gate of his mansion; 6) the characters in the house asking to urinate; 7) Maguila being shoot by the American lawyer's driver. The chain of actions builds the narrative in the new territory (the mansion), each of them showing how fragile the three characters are. It would be a life script already written by the social condition. The only thing they can do now is to follow what is already "inscribed" in the course reserved for them. The *favelados*¹⁰ portrayed in 'How angels are born' are used to the violence and the drug dealers. The film suggests that the media discourse is where the possible dreams are. The hopes for a better future is on the television for both Branquinha and Japa.

The camera is inscribed in different strategies in the two main territories of the film: the *favela* and the mansion. In the mansion, the camera becomes a kind of device that reveals territorial and social differences, it moves through the new space in a contemplative way, the opposite when in the *favela* space - which is already admitted as natural with shortcuts and fixed camera position. The territory of the mansion is a space to be known, it is the other territory - the otherness; it is a kind of nation built and imagined. In this sense, the time to be traveled in this space by the camera is larger, with fewer cuts, giving the aspect of contemplation of the new territory.

In the "foreign territory" of the mansion, the recognition and the wonder are latent by the words of the main characters: "the *gringa*¹¹ is gorgeous"; "What a strange house"; "The language they speak is bizarre; tell her to speak

the language of the people ". The house cleaner is the translator for both worlds / territory. She is the one who explains to Branquinha and Japa the functioning of the things in the mansion. Japa is mesmerized by the explanation in the kitchen and amazed by the wonders of the American appliances. He says "wow, everything works so well"! This line is an ironic and direct message to the middle class¹².

Branquinha plays with the daughter of the American lawyer as if she was her Barbie doll. She asks her to undress, analyzing and contemplating her breasts. Branquinha puts on her dress and plays with her clothes so she looks very pretty in front of the television cameras. The relationship goes through an identification attempt; Branquinha tries to please the lawyer's daughter, tries to approach her through unrequited affectionate gestures.

An emblematic shot of Japa is when walking alone the territory of the mansion he finds out an international pair of sneakers. He puts a rap/funk song in a CD player and sees from the window Rocinha, another famous *favela* in Rio. He sees the *favela* as a place of affection, almost as a goal to be achieved. From afar, in another social space that is not his, the view of Rocinha brings him back to a known territory.

A fact that is important to state is the presence of the government in the movie. All the characters question the Police (a representation of the Brazilian government), both the members of the mansion territory and the *favela* territory. The Police are discredited and not skilled at solving the dilemma.

A short account of García Canclini (2008) leads to the idea that the public space is given and updated through the media devices, especially television. The device informs about social problems within the imagined community, more specifically about the state failures as a provider of well-being. It is possible to find examples of the public discourse within the media apparatus such as the strike of the doctors of the public hospitals, the chaos in the traffic in the city, the high-interest rate of the Brazilian economy and the urban violence. Television has more effect in the public sphere than the Police itself - representing the security power managed by the state. Television crews easily discover the frequency of the radio used

¹⁰ People who live in the shanty town.

¹¹ Gringa can be a derogatory word in Brazil and other regions of Latin America. It means foreigner.

¹² During the 1990s. Brazilians used to say that imported products were better than those made in their own country.

by the Police and within minutes, they are ready to broadcast.

In the strangeness caused by the erratic entrance of the *favelados* in the mansion, idealizations of the distinct social spaces are revealed. In 'How angels are born' strangeness is even more problematic, it involves foreigners in the struggle of poor versus rich within the imagined community.

The German television at the beginning of the film is the commonplace of what the media portrays the *favela*. Which is different from processes used by Eduardo Coutinho, in the documentary *Babilônia 2000* (Coutinho, 2000), for example. There is a clear elaboration by one of the people filmed saying that she needs to be dressed and prepared to record the interview. Coutinho and his team say no, that she is fine for the interview; so the interviewee says she understood the purpose, that they want a *favelado* community image. This gesture in the interview with Coutinho is a revealing one since it points to the pre-disposition of construction by the media device to follow the existing and current discourses for the poor communities of the *favelas* (Lins and Mesquita, 2008). In Murilo Salles' film, the German TV crew at the beginning of the film fits the already naturalized stream of representation of the excluded. The search for the image of the *favelado* is the affirmation of what has already been said and seen on the subject by the media. Branquinha fits into this system; her goal is to negotiate with foreigners to have her image strengthened on her territory. The movie embarks on the naturalization of the representation of the excluded, showing exactly how every player should act: the media; the Brazilian state; the *favelados* and the foreigners.

The relationship between the foreigners who inhabit the mansion reveals the disbelief in relation to the Brazilian public institutions, mainly the Police. The lawyer's daughter is an important piece to this construction because she continually reveals that the Police are not competent enough to solve the problem they are experiencing. Moreover, the request for the presence of a nongovernmental organization and the US embassy to ensure that the *favelados* will not be violated in terms of human rights is another fact that reveals the non-ability of Brazilian government to deal with social matters illustrated in the film.

Nevertheless, why are the inhabitants of the mansion foreigners instead of a Brazilian upper class? In addition, why did the director choose a

foreign television crew at the beginning of the film? Are these elements sufficient for elucidating the globalization in the construction of a nationhood narration? The answer to the last question is no. All of these elements are indicative and symptomatic of a film production that assumes the aesthetics and narrative manner of hegemonic cinematography without questioning; only showing and constructing a representation of the social in a film space. Ivana Bentes (2007) states that:

Territories of frontiers and social fractures, mythical territories, loaded with symbologies and signs, the *sertão* and *favela* have always been the "other" of modern and positivist Brazil: place of misery, mysticism, disinherited, non-places and "folklore", where tradition and invention are drawn from adversity (Bentes, 2007: 242).¹³

This postcard of the *favela* enters in an economically globalized world and its relations with the foreign territory presented in the film of Salles are indicative for the contrast of the "other" modern and globalized Brazil. As matter of fact, it would be not only a question of a becoming-Brazil but also of a becoming-world, according to the statements of Giuseppe Cocco (2009). In this sense, we could associate this issue with what Cocco calls "one of the tendential faces of the new configuration of power" (Cocco, 2009: 117), when he states that:

[...] it is in the "Brazilianization" that biopower also becomes death power, a regulation of the population that confines sectors of the poor and young population in the fields of the *favelas* and shanty towns, in the condition of *Homo Sacer*: lives unworthy to be lived but not self-sacrificing (Cocco 2009, 117).¹⁴

The solution given by Salles is clear: poor kills poor. The poor lives are unworthy to be lived; death is the only way out, not in terms of sacrifice but in terms of the only possible way to end the matter. Foreigners are not killed and the erratic saga closes in the death of the poor. Japa kills the house cleaner and later, in the denouement of the film, Japa and Branquinha kill themselves.

¹³ Translated by the author of this paper.

¹⁴ Translated by the author of this paper.

Conclusions

The analyzed films present the performance (Bhabha, 1990) based on a very strong thematization of the territory and its social, economic and political issues. It is a model of nationhood narration that is inscribed in the visualization of the social issues linked to a style of filmic narration that does not include aesthetic ruptures with the classic narration in cinema. From the given examples, we can dare to infer that the cycle of the *Cinema da Retomada* is performatively imbricated in two strategies. One is what would be the dialogue with previous moments in Brazilian cinema, whether related to the theme on the movies or the spaces addressed in the pro-filmic field and the other that would be the development of the most global thought of cultural production within the Brazilian imagined community. This particular cycle pays homage to previous moments of the Brazilian cinema, taking them as national cultural heritage. Within the same performance strategy, it also assumes the world cinema as an influence, using strategies of narration within the expectations of reception in international festivals as well as wanting to be part of the global arena. It is in this relational aspect that the processes of creation based on the global versus local axis are identified and provide a new moment for the pedagogy of the national.

On the other hand, there is a strategy of the interpenetration of cultures due to the social, economic and political panorama of the 1990s. Not only the referred interpenetration is responsible for opening up to a transnational aesthetic and narrative, but also the naturalization of the becoming-world causes the *Cinema da Retomada* to appropriate procedures,

whether thematic, narrative or aesthetic, in order to continue the search for the world in a context of economic globalization.

The analysis of the above-mentioned films points to the existence of issues that we can identify as part of the process of globalization. If taken altogether, the procedures tend to highlight themes related to the social issues, especially the violence and the economic inequality in the country; a theme that was present in previous moments of the Brazilian cinema and still is. The inclusion of the imagined community Brazil in the system of economic globalization can be highlighted by the questions elaborated by the films of Salles and Thomas. 'Foreign Land' explores the context of economic crises to question the hopes of a generation that experiences constant changes in the economy. The diaspora is the justification for a better future. 'How angels are born' explores the biopower in the becoming-Brazil. We can state that the strategy in the films is to point out elements that would doubt the real participation of Brazil in the globalization.

The territory is present in the discursive construction of the two films with different artistic positions. In 'Foreign Land', is through deterritorialization that the discourse arises and having the diaspora as background. In 'How angels are born', territories are settled within the imagined community to show the social conflicts. The *favela* and the mansion create the spatial context for the development of social questions. Thus, it would be a way of constructing a nationhood narration that takes the ambiguity of the inside and outside of this imagined community as a procedure for the relevance of encounters and mismatches.

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Biographical note

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