

CINEMA, MIGRATION AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY: INTRODUCTORY NOTE

CINEMA, MIGRAÇÕES E DIVERSIDADE CULTURAL: NOTA INTRODUTÓRIA

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Intensification of migratory flows and increased “global” interconnectivity have demonstrated that more contact between peoples of different cultures does not automatically foster greater mutual knowledge or intercultural dialogue. On the contrary, the recent explosion of hate speech in social networks and dissemination of *fake news* (including *fake* videos) via digital social networks (initially heralded as promising greater interaction between people, transcending traditional physical borders), have made it clear that greater connectivity in the world does not necessarily translate into greater respect for diversity. In fact, the “new” situation is surprisingly “old”: in today’s world, social and technological transformations have been accompanied by maintenance, and even exacerbation, of pre-existing hierarchies, binary divisions and gaps that continue to shape our lives (Cabecinhas & Cunha, 2017; Macedo, Cabecinhas & Abadia, 2013), which makes this field of research and intervention extremely challenging.

Today’s global digital economy is accompanied by increasing concentration of resources (economic and symbolic) in a smaller number of hands and more extreme social differences. In Europe, for example, while public policies have tried to foster cultural diversity through the media (Macedo, 2017), growing media concentration (Sousa & Costa e Silva, 2009) has effectively marginalised issues of diversity, in terms of media visibility (Bailey, Georgiou & Harindranath, 2007). In other words, a growing number of professionals with a migration background has not yet led to a significant structural change in the organisational culture of large media companies. In fact, a real change in media culture, that goes beyond the ritualised exhibition of “visible diversity”, is extremely difficult, because it implies true social transformation at all levels, given that the media does not operate in a social vacuum.

In recent years, cinema has included a greater number of representations of migrant experiences and intercultural relations (Berghahn & Sternberg, 2010; Ezara & Rowden, 2006). There are significant incentives to produce audiovisual works that promote cultural diversity. However, stereotypical images of migrant populations persist (Smiers, 2006) in films produced. Nevertheless, as a space for (re)construction of social representations, the cinema can offer an important arena in which to interrelate the past and present of intercultural relations, foster mutual knowledge and denounce expressions of racism in the contemporary world, considering the diverse contexts whereby meaning is socially, politically, historically and economically constructed. This issue of the *Lusophone*

Journal of Cultural Studies aim to establish itself as a place of critical reflection, encompassing counter-hegemonic perspectives, on migratory processes, intergroup conflicts and social identities. The films discussed in this issue aim at encouraging viewers to challenge the legacies of colonial dynamics in today's world.

Under the theme of “Cinema, migrations and cultural diversity”, this issue presents several articles which reflect highly distinct theoretical currents and audiovisual works, but all approach transcultural dynamics and their consequent revitalization of narrative cinema – fictional and / or documentary – by exploring the underlying tensions and meanings which until recently were assumed to be fixed and stable. New meanings emerge from works which, in terms of their theme and form, constitute symbolic intercultural objects, and which inherently challenge and deconstruct hegemonic discourses and identities that are normally considered to be closed, while discussing and suggesting new meanings for aesthetic paradigms and alterities.

This issue includes eight thematic articles, two articles in the “Varia” section and two film reviews. The texts analyse different sociocultural and geographical contexts, and present reflections on intercultural communication from different perspectives. In certain texts the authors highlight the important role of filmic (and literary) narratives in citizenship education, at different levels of education, and discuss the need for an inter- and trans-disciplinary approach.

“Visions of Latin America in Glauber Rocha’s *Cabezas cortadas*”, is the opening article, based on Estêvão Garcia’s analysis of the 1970 film by the renowned Brazilian director, Glauber Rocha, based on the perspective of the cultural struggle to investigate Latin America’s colonial past, while exploring the work’s surrealistic dimension. Garcia observes how Rocha’s own migratory experience is reflected in the film, in order to rearticulate concepts and symbols in an audiovisual narrative that discusses not only the authoritarian governments of the epoch but also film form itself. The author begins by analysing intercultural dialogue between Latin America and Spain to discuss and interpret scenes from the film, that discuss the colonial past by exploring visuality, sonority and certain Hispanic and Hispanic-American symbols in allegorical and symbolic representations of the “conquest” of America.

Analysis of the relations of space and memory as symbolic articulators is continued, from a different perspective, in Teresa Manjate’s article, “*Entre memórias silenciadas* of Ungulani ba ka Khosa and Licínio de Azevedo’s *Virgem Margarida: spaces and memories*”. Manjate proposes a study of the approximation between the literary novel and the film, which concern processes of governmental “re-education” of a marginalised section of Mozambican society in the post-independence era. Using topoanalysis the article relates these processes of forcibly silenced experiences to think about space as a category to analyse these works, by bringing multiple perspectives and invoking social and ideological interpretations. The article cites the documentary *A última prostituta*, also directed by Licínio de Azevedo, and conjures up subalternised memories based on the different symbolic techniques used by literary and audiovisual narratives to deconstruct the official discourse.

The memories awakened by audiovisual narratives are also explored in Benalva Vitorio's "Lusophony in the cinema". Using discourse analysis and the auto-ethnographic method, the author commences with her own memories as an immigrant in Portugal and Mozambique to analyse the film *Terra estrangeira*, by Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas. Discussing the concepts of migration, Lusophony, identity and alterity, the author uses personal experience to reflect on the migratory journey – surrounded by major contemporary issues – exploring the audiovisual work as a symbolic object that offers a place for interpretation, serving as a place of discourse. The cultural, sentimental and identity-based dynamics of frontier subjects are reflected in the film's main characters, thereby awakening memories of former immigrants.

Ana Cristina Pereira, Isabel Macedo and Rosa Cabecinhas discuss the persistent effects of "old" racial hierarchies forged during the colonial period in contemporary society, on the basis of recent Portuguese films. In "Film screening African Lisbon: talking about *Li ké terra* and *Horse Money* in classrooms", the authors analyse discussions held in several focus groups with higher school students. Analysis of the students' conversations after seeing *Li ké terra* (Filipa Reis, João Miller Guerra & Nuno Baptista, 2010) or *Horse money* (Pedro Costa, 2014) enables us to understand processes of social construction of images about people of African descent in Portugal and the way that racial representations are reified in everyday life. The conversations illustrate how the memories of the colonial period are (re)created in postcolonial contexts and how these memories can foster critical reflection of past conflicts and intercultural relations in today's world.

In "*Chocolat* and *Venus negra: body, identity and memory*", Catarina Andrade explores these two films, by Claire Denis and Abdellatif Kechiche, respectively, to reflect about representations of the female body and its symbolic potential as an object of desire, place of resistance and cultural and ethnic frontier. Commencing with the film's lead female actors and the way that their personal stories are used to represent collective stories, the author analyses the ways in which bodies displaced from their original landscapes help build cultural memory and reinforce colonial imperialism, understood as a vestige of history and memory. Discussing the image and its strength of permanence, Andrade analyses both films as spaces of fracture, in which the Other ceases to be a historically constructed stereotype and assumes a questioning function of its own history.

Fernanda Marra also questions concepts of historical identity in "*O animal cordial: a sliver of reason*", which discusses the notion of the Brazilian as a "cordial man" based on Gabriela Amaral's film *O animal cordial* (Friendly Beast). Sérgio Buarque de Holanda's well-known formulation in his 1936 book, *Raízes do Brasil* [Roots of Brazil] presented a historical-social approach to explain the factors underlying the characteristics of hospitality and generosity, that are recurrently identified by foreigners as key aspects of Brazilian identity. The author uses the audiovisual work as a contemporary signifier that makes it possible to rewrite this concept on the basis of a plot that tells the story of a night in a restaurant which spawns a violent identity that poses a vital test to the Brazilian ethic based on allegedly cordiality.

Violence and identity are also analysed in Claudiney Lodos' article, "A perspective of the Israeli-Palestine peace process and land problem in the documentary *Promises* (2001)". *Promises* by Justine Shapiro, B.Z. Goldberg and Carlos Bolado includes testimonies by Arab and Jewish children about religious political conflict and the borders erected in this society, and proposes dialogue between people. Ney analyses the work in order to reflect about issues of land ownership and belonging, expanding the filmic approach to discuss identity-based dynamics in a process of articulation of a collective Self *vis-à-vis* a collective Other and its serious political, social and humanitarian consequences.

The final thematic article, is Renato Prado's "'Off-centre' production and audiovisual training in Brazil: the case of the Goiás Federal Institute", which discusses Brazilian audiovisual production beyond the main production centres, based on training courses in a small city in the Brazilian interior. The city of Goiás, with just over 20,000 inhabitants, offers a BA Hons degree in Film and Audiovisual and a Technical Course in Audio and Video Production, that has already secured a considerable number of productions and awards. The author reports how public policies of decentralisation of Brazilian production in the 21st century have played an important role in allowing new forms of resistance to the historical process of production concentrated in the hands of a few agents, which has favoured hegemonic and alienated discourses of other cultures. Prado also discusses the relationship between the audiovisual and education sectors, in a time of technological change and easier access to means of production.

The Varia section discusses two literary works by Mozambican authors. "*O regresso do morto: return to the misfortune of Suleiman Cassamo*", by Martins Mapera, addresses Mozambique's complex and diverse sociocultural reality based on the book *O regresso do morto* [The return of the dead]. It brings a sociocultural approach to the torment of uncertainties in the characters portrayed in the novel. In "Re-education centers in Mozambique (1975-1985): memories, silences and journalistic discourses", Orquídea Ribeiro and Daniela da Fonseca analyse, as the title suggests, the memories that were silenced by re-education centres in Mozambique in the early years after the declaration of independence. The authors provide a comparative study of fictional works with news articles published by Mozambican and international newspapers about this period, to discuss how fiction is used to recover memories that were silenced by the re-education centres – that were places of violence which tried to erase people's personalities.

The issue concludes with two film reviews, which approach representations of daily life and its cultural dynamics with highly distinct forms and themes. Carla Cerqueira writes about *Matria*, a realistic short film directed by Alvaro Gago about the everyday life and sense of emptiness of a woman who works in a canned food factory. Giane Lessa presents Eliane Café's feature film, *Narradores de Javé* [Storytellers], in which the director uses comedy to represent the procedural, subjective and conflictual aspect in the construction of collective memory, highlighting the symbolic struggles between social groups. Although very different, both works explicitly or implicitly address how women are erased from history (Cabecinhas, 2018), either the so-called "great history" that marks the lives of "imagined" communities, or the history of everyday lives.

The different films and literary works analysed in this issue reveal complex links between the past, present and future. The chapters help us realise that it is impossible to understand the intercultural dynamics of the present without taking into account the past and without listening to what the past means for the respective groups and people involved. To actively listen to the different “voices” and to engage with different perspectives on reality is a huge challenge for all professionals involved in the world of the media, arts and education (Cabecinhas & Cunha, 2017; Lopes, 2018; Macedo, 2016; Nacify, 2012).

As we mentioned earlier, old binary divisions rooted in the historical past continue to mark our daily lives. In this context, cinema, like the other arts, is a privileged arena for challenging existing hierarchies and for promoting diversity (Nacify, 1993). Multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches are essential to address social complexity as well as to forge a dialogue between the academic world and society. This issue of the *Lusophone Journal of Cultural Studies* illustrates the fruits of several processes of dialogue that have already begun and we hope it may foster active listening and the daily commitment that is essential to promote genuine social change.

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