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Global cinema, world cinema

Denilson Lopes

Resumo

Starting with an analysis of the usefulness of the concept of global cinema in the context of contemporary cinema, and utilizing a cosmopolitan perspective, this paper reflects over what it means to conceive of the world, how it can be shown, who can speak about it and how it is configured as an aesthetic challenge. Thus, the experience of globalization becomes everyday; memory, affect are translated, interpreted, not only as a theme but as a structural element, within a multidirectional network, as in the discussions raised by Negri and Hardt, under the aegis of Empire, deconstructing categories such as First/Third world and, by extension, the theory of Third Cinema. In developing these issues, the paper analyzes Wim Wenders' *Until the End of the World* (1991) and *The World* (Jia Zhang-ke, 2004), relating them to other films and emphasizing the construction of space and characters.

Keywords
Global cinema. Cosmopolitanism. World cinema.

Denilson Lopes | noslined@bighost.com.br

With a bachelor's degree in Journalism and Communication (1989), a master's in literature (1992) and a Ph.D. in sociology(1997), all from the University of Brasília, Denilson Lopes is currently a tenured professor at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, with a research grant from the Conselho Nacional de Pesquisa. He has experience in the area of communication, with an emphasis on aesthetics of communication, and also works on contemporary cinema, gender studies (gay and transgender studies), cultural criticism and contemporary art, cultural studies, and comparative literature. He is the author of A Delicadeza: Estética, Experiência e Paisagens (Brasília, EdUnB, 2007), O Homem que Amava Rapazes e Outros Ensaios (Rio de Janeiro, Aeroplano, 2002) and Nós os Mortos: Melancolia e Neo-Barroco (Rio de Janeiro, 7Letras, 1999). He is co-editor of Imagem e Diversidade Sexual (São Paulo, Nojosa, 2004), Cinema, Globalização e Interculturalidade (Chapecó, Argos, 2010) and editor of O Cinema dos Anos 90 (Chapecó, Argos, 2005).

In the nineteenth century, at the same time that the concept of a national literature was developing, there also arose a parallel idea: that of a world literature, (*Weltliteratur*) a term coined by Goethe. More recently, especially since the 1970s, the recorded music industry came to utilize the term *world music.* Not as well known, more recent and with less of an impact in critical debates, at least up to now, is the expression *world cinema*. In the present paper, I will not only seek to delineate the concept of what would be, in today's world, "global art" or "world art," but also to suggest a path, continuous with the search for transcultural landscapes in contemporary cinema, in dialogue with equivalent expressions in literature and music. I will not attempt an exhaustive inventory of the terms "world literature" and "world music", nor of the details of the debates surrounding them; I will merely address elements that are useful in reflecting over contemporary cinema.

One thing worth retaining from Goethe's idea of a world literature is his search for alternatives

to what was then an emerging discourse privileging the specificities of national cultures. However, unlike the idea put forth by Goethe, after the diverse criticisms of "universal" totalizing categories made by post-structuralists and also by intellectuals in the area of Cultural Studies, it is uncomfortable, to say the least, to fall back upon a vague humanist discourse that is sustained only by the idea that readers from different cultures may develop a sense of kinship to a culture other than their own, as the result of, or strengthened by, having read works by authors from other cultures.

Since people travel, it is only natural that ideas and works also travel, that they are translated, interpreted and read in the most far-flung places. And in this sense, although Goethe had an essentially Eurocentric frame of reference, he was not a purist in any sense in defending the idea that in translation, the original work takes on new meanings. He even considered that comments on *Faust*, made by foreign critics who had read it in translation, to be more interesting than critiques made from within the German-speaking world. What we can take away from Goethe's notion of a world literature is that global art – which certainly includes global cinema – does not refer to a specific school or movement, nor even to a certain body of literature, "a sum of all national literatures," (GUILLÉN, 1993, p. 38, my translation), nor "an object, it is a *problem*, and a problem that asks for a new critical method" (MORETTI, 2004, p. 149), another way of seeing.

Also relevant to the present analysis are discussions of world music, for they are marked by a peculiarity also present in the concept of world cinema. If the label *world music*, which arose within the North American recorded music industry, signified the recognition that there was a market for music in languages other than English, whose styles were not linked to North American pop culture, the term also risked creating a kind of ghetto into which a multiplicity of different musical styles were lumped together, according to a generic, vaguely-defined sense of exotic alterity.

In this vein, the expression *world cinema*, utilized in cinema studies in the anglophone world, would seem to create, with no better conceptual consistency, a grab-bag category that includes any cinematic works that are not European or North American and/or that are in languages other than English, in the same way that the term *world literature* has been applied in literary studies (DAMSROCH, 2003, p. 282). *World cinema* would thus be "analagous to *world music* and *world literature* in that they are categories created in the Western world to refer to cultural products and practices that are mainly non-Western." (DENNISON; LIM, 2006, p. 1).

In beginning to address the subject of global cinema,[1] we come to a point not contemplated thus far: the production and distribution circuits of cultural products and works of art. As in discussions of *world music*, especially the collaborations between Anglophone pop stars with musicians from all over the world (such as the well-known and hotly debated cases of Paul Simon, Peter Gabriel, David Byrne and Sting, to mention only a few), it would be mistaken to consider any film produced with an international cast and crew to be global cinema, since as far back as the 1920s, Hollywood employed professionals from various countries, whose professional styles were modified to fit the demands of the American film industry.

To think of a global art form as "mode of circulation and of reading, a mode that is as applicable to individual works as to bodies of material, available for reading established classics and new discoveries alike" (DAMSROCH, 2003, p. 5) – certainly is a step forward, but we need to go a bit further in order to utilize the concept of global art, within the historical singularity that emerges in the context of late capitalism, considering not only "literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language" (idem, p. 4), created by authors whose books may be translated into other languages within a few years after their original publication, thus reaching audiences that may be much larger than their readership in their home cultures (idem, p. 18).

Even though it is important to recognize that the conditions of distribution – and, I would contend, of production as well – can result in films having crew members drawn from various countries and in their reaching millions of spectators from around the world. At the same time, this creates a new tension for artists who hope to reach international audiences and who, to that end, are willing to take the risk of self-exoticization (DENNISON; LIM, 2006, p. 3).

In reflecting over what constitutes a truly global cinema, I distanced myself from films characterized by mere exoticism or by strictly cultural phenomena, which operate via processes similar to tourism, reducing art to an easy way of getting access to other realities and places, to a product that is consumed before, during or in lieu of travels, offering the possibility of simulating travel without leaving the comfort of home, like the universal fairs so popular at the end of the nineteenth century before the introduction of theme parks exhibiting cultural icons and images. Instead, I sought works that were aesthetically singular, in which the experience of globalization was configured as part of everyday experience, memory, affect being translated and interpreted, not only as themes but as questions indivisible from the work's creation within a multidirectional

1 Because of the problems surrounding the term world cinema, in this paper I will use global cinema as an alternative.

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network, as suggested by Negri and Hardt, in the context of Empire, in which they deconstruct categories such as First World/Third World and by extension the theory of three cinemas and dichotomies such as *mainstream*/independent. Global cinema would thus have more of a rhizome structure, if we consider it from a Deleuzian perspective. This characteristic is fundamental in the notion of empire as a network, in contrast to the axial structures that are part of the configuration of national cinemas, with their own specific pasts, presents and futures. Regarding rhizome structure, global cinema would be closer to an "atlas," a "map" (ANDREW, 2006), or perhaps even being a constellation with multiple possibilities of configuration, constituting itself via "a method, a way of cutting across film history according to waves of relevant films and movements, thus creating flexible geographies" (NAGIB, 2006, p. 35).

In reflecting over global cinema, we should bear in mind the political and anti-homogenizing dimensions of discussions of Third Cinema, not necessarily because of their revolutionary content couched in the rhetorical style of the 1960s, but to help to avoid the expression global cinema from becoming just one more of the entertainment industry's categories of consumption, a neoliberal tool that diminishes specificities by disqualifying any kind of national construct, most notably for countries with less robust economies. The rhetoric of Third Cinema, however, is insufficient for constructing global cinema as a mechanism for opening up to the practices and objects of other cultures. As we will see further on, this concern is expressed in a more sophisticated way in the theoretical and critical debates over some films emphasizing the setting and characters. From the start, we can think of two possible alternatives for global cinema. Naturally, no film could be set in the entire world, but it is possible for one to take place in a number of different places, and for it to be made by a crew that has passed through a number of different countries and continents, with the finished work recreating this experience of movement even if filmed in the studio. Moreover, even if the film is shot in a single location, it can emphasize how this place is marked by references from other cultures, whether because of migrations or images that arrive via mass media. Within these possibilities, I would like to discuss not merely miscegenations, hybridisms and interculturalities, but also how the world is shown, not merely as a synonym for distance, the Other, alterity, but as an inclusive, non-dichotomous construction. In the end, whatever global or world cinema may be, we would like to discuss how the world can be represented to the viewer, who can speak about it and how it is configured as an aesthetic challenge.

A possible starting point is the three categories that Martin Roberts identifies in the global imaginary of Euro-North-American cinema. First, he identifies *global exploitation films*

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– *Mondo Cane* (1963), for example – which are marked by a Carnivalesque exoticizing, colonialist perspective, to the extent that they present a world that becomes chaotic in the absence of Europe's civilizing presence (ROBERTS, 1998, p. 66-67, tradução nossa como é uma colagem de informações do texto e não citação literal acho que não é necessário colocar esta informação de tradução nossa). Next, the author speaks of the *coffee-table globalism* (idem, p. 66) of films such as *Koyaanisqatsi* (1982) and *Powaqqatsi* (1988), both by Godfrey Reggio, or Ron Fricke's *Baraka* (1992). It is on this kind of imaginary that Martin Roberts dwells in his article. These two films have no dialogue or voice-overs, and their soundtracks are omnipresent and primarily instrumental. They juxtapose images from different countries and their peoples, focusing on spectacular, monumental natural and urban landscapes, with an emphasis on religious rituals, crowded streets, working people, without singling out any central characters except for the occasional quick close-up, depicting a kind of global quotidian.

Finally, Roberts points to the existence of a third imaginary, which he refers to as the "conspicuous cosmopolitanism of the international avant-garde" (idem, p. 66), including films such as *Until the End of the World* (Wim Wenders, 1991), *Night on Earth* (Jim Jarmusch, 1991), and *Sans Soleil* (Chris Marker, 1982). Roberts also mentions Werner Herzog, Ottinger, Aki and Mika Kaurismäki, who engage in a "form of detached, sardonic observation of an increasingly transnational world order and cultural change associated with" directors and characters alike self-consciously constituting themselves as "nomads" and "postmodern descendants of Baudelaire's flâneurs, rootless cosmopolitans threading their way around the globe in search of the even new and different,' for whom "tourism, tourist sites, tourists themselves are typically subjects of disdain or satire, even though filmmakers and protagonists are no less tourists than anyone else. What is perhaps most memorable about films of this type is their cult of cosmopolitanism, with its accompanying disdain for the parochialism of the national" (ROBERTS, 1998, 67). It is this last type of imaginary, which Roberts does not in his paper, that I would like to explore here, also mentioning films released after the publication of his paper, such as *Flirt* (Hal Hartley, 1995), and *The Intruder* (Claire Denis, 2004), as well as others produced by cineastes from outside of Western Europe and the United States, including *Here We Are, Waiting for You* (Marcelo Masagão, 1998), *The World* (Jia Zhang-Ke, 2004), and *Babel* (Alejandro González Iñarritu, 2006), – which may perhaps broaden or modify the framework presented by Roberts.

However, before examining films that seek to portray the world, it may be important to pause to consider the return of cosmopolitanism, a term that Roberts uses to refer to such films. Discussions of cosmopolitanism are recurring, in the history of ideas, in the social and political sciences, economics and law, as well as in studies

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of cultural and intellectual elites, or even of those who were usually excluded from the benefits of globalization – that is to say, unskilled workers and the poor. It is beyond the scope of this paper to fully summarize this debate; I will only mention some questions that may be helpful in better understanding the films that will be discussed in this paper.

Over the past twenty years, parallel to the emergence of discourse on globalization and multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism has reappeared via a variety of conferences, publications and perspectives. Although cosmopolitanism has a long history, one that is older than that of nationalist discourses, its contemporary form has little to do with what appeared in eighteenth-century French philosophy, which designated, above all, "an intellectual ethic, a universal humanism that transcends regional particularism (CHEAH, 1998a, p. 22). Cosmopolitanism today is less a rigorous concept than an open project (BHABHA *et al*., 2002, p. 1), an "attitude" (MALCOMSON, 1998, p. 233) whose challenges are not theoretical but practical (idem, 238). At the very least, perhaps, cosmopolitanism is less interesting as an abstract discussion than as a "strategic bargain with universalism" in which there is "a purposeful concern for all humanity without ignoring 'difference' " (idem, 234). Thus, "the term is not as philosophically ambitious as the word *universalism*, though it does the same work. [...] Nor is it as politically ambitious as the word *internationalism"* but it can help to avoid confusion with "an attempt to revive the naïve Third Worldism of the 1960s." So "the term cosmopolitanism better describes the sensibility of our moment" (ROBBINS, 1998b, p. 260).

Clearly, there are various problems, among them, determining who is in the position of being "empowered to decide who is provincial" (MALCOMSON, 1998, p. 238). To establish rigid dichotomies between cosmopolitanism and provincialism, or between localism and nationalism, may not be profitable, given the complex relationships between the global and the local that have led, among other things, to the creation of the term 'glocal'. While we may not think of a cosmopolite as someone who belongs nowhere, and even though it may be difficult to imagine "a paranoid fantasy of ubiquity and omniscience," that is, of belonging everywhere, of being everyplace (ROBBINS, 1998b, p. 260), it is also not worthwhile to recreate the cosmopolite in the so-often criticized way (especially by the left), as someone characterized by "a privileged and irresponsible detachment" (ROBBINS, 1998a, p. 4). This occurs because, more and more, the importance of global resistance and world citizenship are considered important issues, and there is increasing recognition of the need to move beyond the privilege currently accorded [by theorists] to diaspora as a social construction and also to the politics of hybridism and interculturalities (CHEAH, 1998b).

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Incorporated into this is the need to understand cosmopolitanism as one of the "cultural forms of the contemporary world, without logically or chronologically presupposing the authority of the Occidental experience or of the models derived from that experience" (APPADURAI, 1991, 192, our translation), assuming various forms of cosmopolitanism such as the post-colonial (PARRY, 1991, p. 41), the vernacular (BHABHA, 1996, p. 191/207), the periphery (PRYSTHON, 2002), the poor classes (SANTIAGO, 2004, p. 45/63) or even the patriotric (APPIAH, 1998, p. 91). Despite the diversity of terms and views pertaining to cosmopolitanism, we could say that one thing they have in common is that they "presuppose a positive attitude in relation to difference, a desire to construct broad alliances and peaceful, egalitarian global communities, with citizens who are capable of communicating across social and cultural frontiers, creating a universal solidarity" (RIBEIRO, 2003, p. 17, our translation). This aspect is even more apparent if we understand postcolonialism as a cosmopolitics of intellectuals from former British colonies whose independence came after World War II, with the desire to provincialize Europe; the task of a post-colonialism that includes Latin America, then, would be to provincialize the United States (idem, p. 30).

Another thing that should be noted is that the term cosmopolitan has come to refer not only to cultural and economic elites – because of their historical privileges, in terms of access to travel – but to those who are privy to a wide range of information, involving the possibilities brought by the mass communications media. There is also the cosmopolitan aspect of today's massive intercontinental migratory movement of workers, whose precursors, as James Clifford (1997, p. 33-34) reminds us, were not only gentlemen travelers but also the servants who accompanied them.

Thus, cosmopolitanism is a kind of reaction, as much to the excesses of local, regional and national provincialism as it is to the experience of migration, of being uprooted, of forever being an outsider, of never belonging anywhere. In fact, cosmopolitanism is another kind of belonging, the result of the formation of multiple ties, through which the world effectively becomes one's home.

In order to understand this possibility more clearly and in greater detail, we will now move on to examining how the world is conceived of from within cinema. Some films tell stories that take place simultaneously in different parts of the globe – such as in the recent *Babel*, in which a rifle that passes from the possession of one person to another forms the basis for a narrative that moves from the United States to Mexico, Morocco and Japan, or in *Night on Earth*, which weaves together different incidents all taking place in taxis on the same night in five different cities. In a certain way, these films are the heirs of a genre of cinematic works dating back at least to the 1920s that seek to present urban

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daily life via juxtaposed, parallel stories. In the present paper, however, I will focus on two films that utilize different narrative techniques: a global *road movie* and a film that represents international travel in a single location. Our first stop will be Wim Wenders' *Until the End of the World* (1991).

Since the beginning of his career, Wim Wenders has had an obsession for characters in movement – in search of a home, a person, or simply drifting. *Until the End of the World* is his most ambitious film in terms of the scale of the production and also its cost. Filmed in twelve different countries, it features a cast of characters who wander through Europe, Asia, and the United States, finally arriving in the interior of Australia. It is not a matter of a journey though a city, a country or a continent, but over the entire world. More than a set, the world is a space that no longer marked by a malaise brought on by German Nazism, nor by an ambiguous relationship with North American culture. This new sentiment, this changed position is defined by Wenders himself as "cosmopolitan" (WENDERS, 2001, p. 292).

In the first part of the film, stolen money and credit cards acquired during a robbery enable several characters to begin a voyage in which huge cities seem to be neighbors, different neighborhoods of a single borderless global megalopolis. The journey seems to be as instantaneous as mass-media connections. The robbery brings in elements of detective movies, and there is even a detective, played by Rüdiger Vogler, but the idea is less to create suspense than to develop connections between the various places through which the plot moves. The cities, mostly European, are shown under the sign of excess: excessive movement, information and images.

Little by little, we perceive that this is what the film is about: it examines the relationship between the gaze and the image, a recurring question in Wenders' work. Sam Farber (William Hurt) is a scientist who travels the world in order to record images of his family, which is spread out across the world, so that his blind mother, Edith (Jeanne Moreau), can see them, using a machine created by his father, Henry Farber (Max von Sydow). But the device, a kind of film camera, tires the eyes and eventually ruins the vision of the person doing the recording. The film resumes an ethical position taken by Wenders: that the excess of images, the excessive desire to see, leads to physical or metaphorical blindness. It is significant that Sam Farber takes up residence in a small village in Japan, where medicinal herbs are applied to his eyes. As though the cure for the excess of images, of the world, could be found in pauses, in withdrawal, in isolated places, or even in writing.

The reappearance of the local comes in an ambiguous way in the film. If the small Japanese town is a place of cure for Sam Farber, the journey's end comes in the arid interior of

Australia, where Henry Farber's laboratory is conducting research to develop the machine that will make it possible for the blind to see. The father, a famous scientist, fled from the United States with his family so that the device would not fall into the hands of the military and large corporations. For him, the location is merely a place that permits him a degree of isolation while also making it possible for him to carry on with his work. He does not reflect over the toll that this takes on his family, nor the impact on the local aboriginal community. As a scientist, he embodies a form of knowledge that is unable to see others, one that is blind to other ways of knowing.

Here, the end of the world is more than the spectre of disaster; it is the progressive elimination of places that are distant from everything, with the advance of mass communications media and the technologies associated with them. The end of the world also appears in another way, midway through the film, when a satellite whose malfunctioning has been suggested since the beginning finally falls to earth, causing a global blackout and equipment failure. Cars come to a halt, computers and telephones go dead. Is it the end of the world when people only have knowledge of what is in their physical and geographical proximity? Or is it the end of the technological world, as it came into existence in the second half of the nineteenth century?

The communications networks are re-established, but Henry Farber's research takes another direction. He no longer seeks to make the blind see, but begins working on a way to make dreams visible by transforming them into digital images that reveal to onlookers what was once private and hidden within the individual. With this, his aboriginal assistants abandon the laboratory, in opposition to this transformation of the inner world, while the remaining characters become more and more obsessed with seeing their own dreams, withdrawing into their own worlds, blind to the world outside.

Later, in one of the most redemptive endings in Wenders' work, Sam Farber's girlfriend, Claire (Solveig Dommartin), appears enveloped in what seems to be an aura of light. Now an environmental activist, she travels around the earth caring for the planet, in clear contrast to her situation in the beginning of the film, when she was lost, unable to recognize where she was when she woke up, as though in a succession of nightmares and missed rendezvous. It is her birthday, and she receives congratulatory messages from a number of the film's characters, via screens that are present in the spaceship in which she navigates around the Earth. It is not a happy ending for the couple, but a celebration of the possibilities offered by technology, in terms of maintaining affective ties. It's a gamble.

> I love to look at positive utopias; even if they are sometimes terribly naïve and sometimes just a bit woozy; I still find it more fruitful than dystopias. I have no interest in gloomy views of the future. The end of the world is such common currency nowadays, you can't do anything

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> with it. All that "no future" talk bores me to tears (WENDERS, 2001, p. 295).

It is worth pointing out that this gamble involves cosmopolitanism, clearly defined as an existential and ethical attitude that is distinct from irresponsible distancing that is the privilege and prerrogative of cultural elites.

Perhaps the most lingering question raised by the film is whether it is possible to speak of a global quotidian, apart from Wenders' utopian perspective, an everyday life unmarked by grandiloquent tones and *tour de force* (and by the production), which leads the characters of *Until the End of the World* to criss-cross the globe, at the same time that a satellite, whose gaze is turned toward the earth as it moves at high speed through space, begins to fall down into the concrete and material world. In Wenders' previous film, *Wings of Desire* (1987), the angels believed in the material world as a poetic possibility, abdicating their place in eternity in favor of it; in *Until the End of the World*, on the other hand, the characters seem to be suspended by and within communicative webs, finding their space for encounters, their way of belonging, perhaps their community. In *Until the End of the World*, Wenders seems to gamble on the potential of a cosmopolitanism that is redefined by technology but not subject to its excesses.

In reflecting over this descent to earth, and turning to a vision of cosmopolitanism less luminous than the one presented by Wenders, one that speaks from another place, perhaps we should accept Ernst Bloch's challenge and shift our attention to Jia Zhang-Ke's *The World* (2004): "Things on the margin are beginning to play an increasingly important role. We should pay attenttion to the little things, look into them more closely. The curious and the strange often tells us the most. Certain things can only be expressed in such stories, and not in a lofty, epic style" (*apud* GROB, 1997, p. 191).

The world, in Jia Zhang-Ke's film, is the name of a theme park in Beijing that boasts famous monuments in miniature: the Eiffel Tower, the Egyptian Pyramids, Lower Manhattan, "still with the twin towers of the World Trade Center," as one guide proudly puts it, as well as Big Ben, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Taj Mahal, the Vatican and the Parthenon. Again, the images representing the world come mostly from the Occidental tradition, catapulted by the tourism industry to places of desire. The park is accessible by a kind of train that "passes through the most disparate countries" in fifteen minutes. The characters themselves speak in terms of "going to India," or "going to Japan," as they move from one monument to another. All this is reflected in the park's advertising slogans: "See the world without having to leave Beijing" or "Give us a day and we'll show you the world."

But what kind of world are we shown? Unlike Wenders, who gives us a road movie that sweeps across countries and continents, Jia Zhang-

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Ke constructs his film without even focusing on the visitors to the theme park; rather, he concentrates on the park's workers, especially its security guards and a group of young women who work in a kind of musical revue that celebrates the different cultures of the world. They are unskilled workers who come from small towns, for whom the biggest voyage of their lives seems to have been the trip from their hometowns to Beijing. In fact, state restrictions make it difficult for them to leave the country, as in the case of one character who finally obtains a visa, years after her husband left the country illegally. It seems to be easier for foreigners to come to Beijing: some of the park's employees are Russian women who were brought into the country under ambiguous circumstances that suggest trafficking in women.

The target of the film is not a simplistic social critique of the world but merely a side of it that is not shown by the ascetic, monumental and pasteurized character of the monuments trasformed into scenario and image. Without being a festive apotheosis of the world of the simulacrum set in a Las Vegas replete with neon in the midst of Fourth of July celebrations, as in Coppola's *One From The Heart* (1982), the park also brings the possibility of a better life for its workers. It is a space of social encounters, a very particular transcultural landscape in which media images of the world take on three dimensions, becoming places for walking, working, and living. In contrast to the adventurous tone of Wim Wenders' film, *The World* emphasizes the everyday, ordinary life in which money is counted and saved, and petty squabbles arise within families and between lovers. There is nothing epic or grandiose in the film, neither in its events nor in its characters. The tone is somewhat melancholy, but there is still a gamble at the end, when the couple who protagonize the film, a dancer named Tao (Tao Zhao) and a security guard called Taisheng (Taisheng Chen), apparently are killed in their sleep by a gas leak. A bitter metaphysical gamble in the face of an impoverished everyday environment? Certainly, this is no longer the Bressonian tone of the director's earlier films, in which he was fascinated by youth who, relegated to the margins of China's economic development, faced difficulties in entering the workforce, as in *Xiao Wu* (*Pickpocket*), made in 1998, and *Unknown Pleasures* (2002). *The World* may be Jia Zhange-Ke's most ambitious film. For the first time, he had support from a state producer, which facilitated distribution within China, and he also obtained resources from Franca and from a Japanese company, Takeshi Kitano. But the film also marks stylistic and technical changes in Jia Zhange-Ke's approach. Cuts diminish the length of the takes, and the scene alternates between a few stark interior living spaces and outside shots of Beijing and the park. Yu Lik-wai's beautiful cinematography contrasts with the grandiosity of the locations, the construction sites and wide expanses of highway which are deserted at night,

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endangering the characters' lives, a relationship that Jia Zhang-Ke continues to explore in *Still Life* (2006). The presence of a soundtrack – the first in Jia Zhange-Ke's work – composed by Giong Lim, utilizes electronic effects, accentuating the film's aesthetic distance from a certain spareness and frugality in the director's previous work, which was marked by long, rough takes and which utilized only diegetic sound, techniques exploited fully in *Platform* (2000), a historical anti-epic that follows a group of young people in a theater group as they travel from one small Chinese town to another. In *The World,* we also find elements of animation, especially when the characters are talking on cell phones, which accentuates the rapidity of communications media associated with transportation, and shows the fleeting contact by characters who float, fly, and get lost among the world of sets in which they live, as Tao (Tao Zhao), who spends her days cooped up in an airplane that simulates flight, succinctly puts it, when she says that she is afraid of turning into a "ghost." The use of this term is not by chance. The film's characters search to find their own space in society, but end up becoming lost in the anonymous masses of unskilled workers. Feeling pressured by their families to send money and at the same time seeking to construct new lives at the margins of the underworld, they supplement their meager salaries by resorting to robbery and prostitution. Even affective relationships, marked by uncertainty and ephemerality, fall under this ghostly shadow, as in the friendship that develops between Tao and Anna (Allá Shcherbakova), although the latter is Russian and the two women do not speak each others' language. The fragility of human relations is also seen in the encounter between Tao and her ex-boyfriend (Jin Dong Liang). When he visits her on his way to Ulan Bator in Mongolia, only a vague memory of the experiences they once shared seems to remain. There is also the stylist Qun (Yi-qun Wang) with whom Taisheng becomes involved, but their relationship is interrupted when Qun receives a visa to visit her husband, whom she has not seen since he left to become an illegal immigrant in Paris a decade ago. At a certain point in the film Tao, who lives in the midst of people who come and go, says that she has never met anyone who has been on an airplane, and when she picks up a passport to have a look at it she is unable to understand how to read it. She has a sense of instability that developed without even travelling, in a physical sense. Images and people come and go, but she remains in the same place.

The end of the film, perhaps, brings another kind of meaning. When Tao and her lover Taisheng are found apparently dead, victims of a gas leak, the screen goes dark and we hear two voices speaking, the last of the film. He asks, "Are we dead?" and she replies "This is only the beginning." With no intent of facile allegory, this exchange seems to intensify what the film has presented, but it is unclear what will be next or what the consequences are.

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In Brazilian cinema, too, we are only beginning to speak of the world, as in Marcelo Masagão's 1998 film, *Here We Are, Waiting for You [Nós que aqui estamos por vós esperamos],* a delicate collage of twentieth century history, a journey via images that synthesize, in a few moments and a few words written onto the screen, great stories of ordinary people and ordinary stories of great people, guided by a melancholy soundtrack by Wim Mertens. The film ends in a cemetery, in some part of Brazil, over whose entrance is written the beautiful title of the film, the director's reply to part of a poem by Maiakovski – "They say that someplace, apparently in Brazil, there is a man who is happy," which are quoted, at the same time that we see Buster Keaton onscreen, serious and serene, being taken away by a train. But to where?

It is not a matter of representing the world, but of finding ways of living in it. We are truly only beginning. Neither periphery nor center. The world. *Here we are, waiting for you.*

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Cinema global, cinema mundial

Abstract

A partir de uma defesa da rentabilidade do conceito de cinema global no contexto do cinema contemporâneo e de uma perspectiva cosmopolita, nos perguntamos sobre o que é pensar o mundo, como ele pode ser encenado, quem pode falar sobre o mundo e como ele se configura como um desafio estético. Portanto, a experiência da globalização tornada cotidiano, memória, afeto é traduzida, interpretada, não só como tema, mas como algo estrutural, dentro de uma rede multidirecional, próxima das discussões trazidas por Negri e Hardt, sob a égide do Império, que desconstrói categorias como 1º/3º mundo, e por extensão, a teoria dos três cinemas. Para tentar desenvolver essa questão analisaremos "Até o Fim do Mundo de Wim Wenders" (1991) e "O Mundo" de Jia Zhang-ke (2004), em diálogo com outros filmes e privilegiando a construção do espaço e dos personagens.

Palavras-chave

Cinema global. Cosmopolitismo. Cinema mundial.

Cine global, cine mundial

Resumen

Partiendo de una defensa de la rentabilidad del concepto de cine global en el contexto del cine contemporáneo y de una perspectiva cosmopolita, nos preguntamos sobre qué es pensar el mundo, cómo él puede ser representado, quién puede hablar sobre el mundo y cómo él se configura como un desafío estético. Luego, la experiencia de la globalización hecha cotidiano, memoria, afecto es traducida, interpretada, no sólo como tema, sino como algo estructural, dentro de una red multidireccional, próxima de las discusiones de Negri y Hardt, bajo la égida del Imperio, que deconstruye categorías como 1er/3er mundo, y por extensión, la teoría de los tres cines. Para intentar desarrollar esta cuestión, analizaremos "Hasta el fin del mundo", de Wim Wenders (1991), y "El mundo", de Jia Zhang-ke (2004), en diálogo con otras películas y privilegiando la construcción del espacio y de los personajes.

Palabras clave

Cine global. Cosmopolitismo. Cine mundial.

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