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Cinema and Its Intermedial Passages to Reality: The Case of the Árido Movie

Samuel Paiva

Abstract: *This article examines the development process of the documentary film* Passages: Travelling in and out of Film through Brazilian Geography *(Lúcia Nagib and Samuel Paiva, 2019) that emerged from a research project on intermediality and cinema.* Passages *uses an intermedial perspective to approach films which have been produced in Recife and São Paulo since the beginning of the Retomada do Cinema Brasileiro (Brazilian Film Revival) in the mid-1990s, and analyses their connections with other media. Particular focus is given to works created in Recife within the Árido Movie movement, such as* Baile perfumado *(*Perfumed Ball, *Paulo Caldas and Lírio Ferreira, 1996), which unveils a whole set of intermedial connections between cinema and music.*

First Intermedial References

This article presents a case study of the documentary filmmaking process of *Passages: Travelling in and out of Film through Brazilian Geography* (Lúcia Nagib and Samuel Paiva, 2019) through its consideration of intermediality in cinema. This film is the culmination of a research project that began in 2016 and resulted in an essayistic documentary that investigates cinema carried out throughout the past two decades in two Brazilian cities, namely, Recife and São Paulo. Our research starts in the mid-1990s, when the so-called Retomada do Cinema Brasileiro reactivated the country's cinematographic production which had nearly vanished for half a decade following the government's closure of Embrafilme (a state-owned Brazilian film company) in 1990. In that context, the relationship between cinema and other media plays a crucial role, especially with regards to music. Therefore, this article presents the process for the planning and production of the documentary *Passages*, while considering parallel research that supports it. Three fundamental axes will be considered: how the 1990s Árido Movie movement which originated in Brazil's Northeastern capital city Recife, Pernambuco, and developed in combination with its relationship to local music in the 1990s, constitutes itself as a starting point for the documentary project; how intermediality engages with the history and geography of Brazilian cinema; and how this scholarly film production materialised.

Walter Benjamin's masterpiece, *Das Passagen-Werk* (*The Arcades Project*), not only lends its title but also guides the argument and the editing of our documentary film *Passages.* Benjamin's posthumous work was first published in Germany in 1982 in a volume organised by Rolf Tiedemann, who clarifies that history, for Benjamin, was constituted from a principle of montage related to his interest in "discovering in the analysis of the small singular moment the crystal of the total event" (qtd. in Tiedemann 931). That is, the historical event is constructed with quotes, aphorisms and fragments that are opposed to teleology. The book itself is presented as a kind of notebook, full of thematic ideas. Shortly after the release of *Das Passagen-Werk* in Brazil, in 2007, a reviewer drew attention to some aspects of the work, such as viewing the city as a poetic form, in this case Paris in the nineteenth century, a time when a

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flâneur poet like Charles Baudelaire would stand out and when galleries were both entrances and exits for the circulation of people, combined with their dreams and expectations (Kirchner). Some of these principles of Benjamin's work appear in *Passages*, in the way in which it approaches history by observing the poetic tension between media and Brazilian cities that appear as polar opposites—particularly, Recife and São Paulo—at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Similar to Benjamin's work, *Passages* highlights the historiographic methods by way of intermediality, or media references, transpositions and combinations (Rajewsky 58), by considering the history of Brazilian cinema through its connections to the reality from which it emerges. For this reason, the documentary is an essay film that explores several cinematographic works from the Retomada do Cinema Brasileiro. So, both the film *Passages* and this article seek to investigate intermediality's intervention in the process of transforming the reality of film production itself. Ágnes Pethő synthesises the theoretical problems related to the concept of intermediality by proposing three paradigms: first, the "crossing of media borders"; second, the idea of being "in-between" or *on* the border, as she clarifies, in a situation of "in-betweenness"; third, a "connection between the real and the intermedial" (166). It follows from these three paradigms (especially the third), that our aim is to analyse the Árido Movie movement, which can be perceived as an intermedial experience between cinema and music, and how it responded to a context of crisis and stagnation for the national film industry in the 1990s.

The initial motivation for this project came to light during an intermediality workshop at the University of Reading in 2016, in which Lúcia Nagib delivered a paper that eventually became the documentary film's central query. Here, she drew attention to the knowledge that Parisian passages, according to Benjamin, were places of a dialectical dimension that contained utopian elements regarding the hope for a better society. Nagib's textual analysis addressed the film *Crime delicado* (*Delicate Crime*, Beto Brant, 2005), its connections with the phenomenological real and its convergence with literature, theatre and painting. Furthermore, she highlighted interactions between Beto Brant (director from São Paulo) and Cláudio Assis (director from Pernambuco who acts in Beto Brant's film), both of whom belong to a historical moment in the 1990s, when music videos emerged within Brazil's cultural industry, with the arrival of MTV.

The collaboration between Brant and Assis exemplified a wider connection between São Paulo in Recife in the 1990s film scene. In the previous decade, some professionals from São Paulo, such as the editor Vânia Debs, had already worked on creative projects in Recife. While living in São Paulo, Debs began editing for Recife-based filmmakers including Paulo Caldas (*Nem tudo são flores* [*Not Everything Are Flowers*, 1985]; *Chá* [*Tea*, 1988]), Lírio Ferreira (*O crime da imagem* [*The Image Crime*, 1992]; *That's a lero lero* [1994]), Cláudio Assis (*Soneto do desmantelo blue* [*Sonnet of Dismantling Blue*, 1993]) and Marcelo Gomes (*Maracatu, maracatus* [1995]; *Clandestina felicidade* [*Clandestine Happiness*, directed with Beto Normal, 1998]). These collaborations on film shorts eventually culminated in the production of the first full-length features of this generation. Debs is the editor of *Baile perfumado* (*Perfumed Ball*, Paulo Caldas and Lírio Ferreira, 1996), *Árido Movie* (Lírio Ferreira, 2005), *Deserto feliz* (*Happy Desert*, Paulo Caldas, 2007), among other more recent films by these filmmakers.

In this sense, the research corpus of *Passages* is extensive and focuses on films from both São Paulo and Recife from 1990 to 2016. It includes short films from Recife and feature films from Recife and São Paulo.[1]

Another important aspect in Nagib's textual analysis and our documentary's initial concern, is the crucial role that music plays in that intermedial context. This becomes apparent in her discussion about the films *Antônia* (Tata Amaral, 2006), a work about hip-hop singers from São Paulo's outskirts, and *O rap do pequeno príncipe contra as almas sebosas* (*The Little Prince's Rap against the Wicked Souls*, Paulo Caldas and Marcelo Luna, 2000), a film produced and set in Recife which nonetheless establishes connections with São Paulo. Nagib addresses a scene in this second film in which musicians from São Paulo (the band Racionais MC's) and Recife (the band Faces do Subúrbio) discuss their personal realities and this is followed by a soundtrack with song lyrics that mention the favelas of several Brazilian cities. The song "Salve" ("Hail", 1997), by Racionais MC's, overlaps with an aerial shot over the immense slum location in Recife, in close proximity of the musicians' homes/everyday surroundings. As Nagib notes: "The extraordinary event in this particular long take is […] its intermediality, through which, like in the other examples, music and poetry offer a passage to reality through the virtual medium of film" (38).

Manguebeat and Its Connections

Questions that arise include: Why does music stand out in this process? And, why do films from Recife have a larger presence compared to other major cities? The answers can be linked to Manguebeat, an eminently musical phenomenon characterised by the appearance of several bands in the city of Recife in the 1990s, which in turn influenced the context of the local film production. Thus emerges the so-called Árido Movie, which is considered the cinematic aspect of Manguebeat. This connection between music and cinema and vice versa reveals why films from Pernambuco are discussed more frequently in *Passages* than films that were produced in São Paulo during this era.

This point requires consideration. In São Paulo, there were several very important experiences regarding intermediality and its impact on reality. For instance, it is worth remembering the work of Fernando Meirelles and other members of the video production company Olhar Eletrônico, who, in the 1980s, produced videos in connection with theatre, television and advertising. Also, it is important to recognise the influence of MTV, which arrived in Brazil (precisely in São Paulo) in 1990 and impacted on the filmmaking process for many filmmakers especially those who directed music videos. This includes Beto Brant who directed many music videos for the band Titãs and received MTV awards for his work. Considering this, the presence of Titãs band member Paulo Miklos in the film *O invasor* (*The Trespasser*, Beto Brant, 2001) is not coincidental. Indeed, Miklos's role as a main character demonstrates a continuity of the relationship between music and the audiovisual that had already begun to surface in the arts industry. However, unlike what happened in Recife, where there was an articulated movement of artists, especially musicians, defending a common cause, in São Paulo there was nothing similar in terms of a collective response to that moment. So, from the fifteen professionals interviewed for *Passages*, only four originate from São Paulo (Beto Brant, Fernando Meirelles, Tata Amaral and Vânia Debs). Recife then, has a more prominent role in the film with its articulation of this wide cultural movement and its relevance regarding the intermedial connection between cinema and music through Manguebeat.

Traditionally, Recife's film production has been more marginal than São Paulo's because of their distinct urban socioeconomic situations. According to the 2019 Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), São Paulo had its population estimated at 12,252,023 people and Recife at 1,645,727. São Paulo is the country's financial urban centre and capital of its homonymous state, which is the richest state in Brazil. In turn, Recife is the capital of Pernambuco, a state located in a poorer region, the Northeast. However, while São Paulo's prominence traces back to the early twentieth century, Recife has been a crucial location for many moments in Brazilian history, especially for its economic role in the production of the sugar cycle during the colonial period. Soon after the "discovery" of Brazil in 1500, Portugal divided its main colony into captaincies. The captaincy of Pernambuco then became a major sugar producer, reaching worldwide prominence. For this reason, the state also attracted the attention of other European conquerors, such as the Dutch, who occupied Recife and Olinda (neighbouring city) from 1630 to 1654 (after having invaded the city of Salvador, capital of Bahia in 1623–4). Pernambuco was also important for its struggles for Brazil's independence (1822), as well as for Afro-descendants' resistance to slavery.

Due to a law sanctioned by Princess Isabel, slavery was abolished in Brazil on 13 May 1888. Before that, slaves who had fled farms and sugar mills across Brazil relocated to quilombos, or communities of former slaves living as free citizens. One of the most well-known, Quilombo dos Palmares, was in the captaincy of Pernambuco and Brazilian filmmaker Carlos Diegues made two films on the subject: *Ganga Zumba* (1963) and *Quilombo* (1984). Quilombo dos Palmares lasted for more than a century and came to occupy a large territory, equivalent to the territory of Portugal. Beginning in the late sixteenth century and at its peak in the middle of the seventeenth century, this quilombo gathered approximately thirty thousand people. One of its leaders, Zumbi dos Palmares, became a symbol of black resistance in Brazil, so much so that 20 November (the day of his death in 1695) marks a Brazilian Day of Black Consciousness.

During the process of writing a screenplay for *Passages*, we realised that a large portion of this historical period was taken up in the 1990s by the band Chico Science & Nação Zumbi, which in its own name pays tribute to Zumbi. Musically, the band's rhythms—mostly *maracatu* but also *coco*, *ciranda*, *baião* (Vargas 116)—derive from a black and indigenous ancestry but are now associated with pop beat. The band's first album, *Da lama ao caos* (*From Mud to Chaos*, 1994), includes the song "Monólogo ao pé do ouvido" ("Whispered Monologue"), with the following lyrics: "Modernising the past is a musical evolution" (Figure 1).[2] The verses then contain elegiac references to historical heroes such as Zumbi and Lampião, among others. In turn, the song entitled "A praieira" ("The Beach Rebel") contains lyrics such as "I remember the revolution", which refers to the Praieira Revolution (Beach Rebellion, 1848–1850), a Pernambucan insurrection against the second and last emperor of Brazil: Pedro II. In addition to these various historical references, the geographical dimension must also be highlighted. The song "Rios, pontes e overdrives" ("Rivers, Bridges and Overdrives") draws attention to the mangroves that are so characteristic of the local environment, an aspect discussed by physician and geographer Josué de Castro (1908–1973) in several books in which he reflected on solutions to the problem of hunger in the Brazilian Northeast, among others, *The Geography of Hunger* (1952).



Figure 1: *Da lama ao caos* (*From Mud to Chaos*, 1994), Chico Science & Nação Zumbi's first album. Graphic design by Dolores & Morales. Photos by Fred Jordão. Inside the cover, the manifesto *Caranguejos com cérebro* (*Crabs with Brains*) was printed to spread ideas of the Manguebeat artists. Chaos, 1994.

The reference to Josué de Castro in Manguebeat is also directly reflected in the 1991 manifesto *Caranguejos com cérebro* (*Crabs with Brains*) which was written by Fred Zero Quatro (from the band Mundo Livre S/A) and supported by several musicians and artists who all drew attention to the local geography. A researcher on this subject, Vargas calls our attention to concepts present in the *Mangue* (Mangrove) context since the *Caranguejos com cérebro* manifesto. For him, each section of the manifesto is concerned with distinct aspects of the Manguebeat conceptions. The first one, "Mangue – o conceito" ("Mangue, the Concept"), relates to the local ecosystem, which is characterised by diverse interactions between rivers and the sea and metaphorically conjures up the idea of cultural diversity, fertility, hybridisation. The second one, "Manguetown – a cidade" ("Manguetown, the City"), traces a critical socioeconomic profile of Recife, alluding to "inordinate progress, recent economic stagnation and the restrictive living conditions of the poor population" (Vargas 67). The third one,

"Manguie – a cena" ("Mangue, the Scene"), discusses pop culture as a means to improving local energies in relation to mass communication, simultaneously considering nature and culture. This section brings a symbolic image of a parabolic antenna stuck in the mud, which is a figure of connection between technology and local geography, characterised by the presence of mangroves.

In addition, it is worth noting that the image of the parabolic antenna in the mud also points to the possibility of paying attention to what comes from outside, implying interest in other regions of the country as well as in the foreign element. Considering such a possibility, a timely example is the first album by the band Mundo Livre S/A whose title, *Samba Esquema Noise* (*Samba Noise Scheme*, 1994), pays tribute to Jorge Ben, a musician from Rio de Janeiro whose first album (*Samba Esquema Novo* [*Samba New Scheme*], 1963) is quoted, and also includes the English word "noise" (Figure 2).



Figure 2: *Samba Esquema Noise* (*Samba Noise Scheme*, 1994). Mundo Livre S/A first album includes Tropicalist references. Graphic design by Renato Yada. Photos by Rui Mendes. Banguela Records, 1994.

In doing so, the album's title is explicit about the fact that Brazilian music is composed with a variety of influences, and foreign music is obviously one of them. This idea had been brought to the fore by certain musicians of the Tropicália movement in the 1960s, including Jorge Ben, and can be traced back to the 1920s theorisation of Cultural Anthropophagy, which is a very important reference point for the Manguebeat generation. As Stefan Solomon points out,

> the term anthropophagy relates to the very real cannibalism of the indigenous Tupi people, whose traditions were first recorded in the sixteenth century in the famous captive narrative of the German explorer Hans Staden. Such actual, existing cannibalism was later taken up by Oswald de Andrade in the 1920s, where it was revived in his "Manifesto Antropófago" (1928) […] [F]or Oswald, anthropophagy suggested itself as a framework for the development of modernist culture in Brazil, which would truly realise itself in the act of ingesting foreign cultural influences, and then metabolising the foreign as something particular to the Brazilian context. ("Introduction" 11)

By inserting the English word "noise" within the album's title, the Mundo Livre S/A band explicitly acknowledges its foreign influences, which were appropriated and transformed following *Manifesto Antropófago*'s claims. This dialogue between local culture and media from abroad was a crucial feature of both Manguebeat and Árido Movie. While we were preparing the script for *Passages*, we listened to these records, watched films and we began to recognise the overlapping impact of one in another. Then our attention turned more naturally to the productions located in Pernambuco, because no feature films had been produced by the state for twenty years, not until the release of *Baile perfumado* in 1996. This compelled us to hypothesise that the significant ties between cinema and music were the main reason for the resumption of local cinematographic production.

Árido Movie

In the 1990s, both small and large Brazilian film productions, including several institutions responsible for promoting production (Embrafilme – Empresa Brasileira de Filmes S/A) practically ceased to exist because of government measures introduced by the new president elect Fernando Collor de Mello. However, after Mello's impeachment in 1992, the Retomada do Cinema Brasileiro emerged which resulted in the creation of the Prêmio Resgate do Cinema Brasileiro (Brazilian Cinema Rescue Award) by the Ministry of Culture. For this award, there were three selection committees in charge of rewarding short, medium and feature length films. This award helped facilitate the Retomada with its promulgation in 1993 of Law 8,685 or the Audiovisual Law, which enabled tax deductible investments in audiovisual productions, coproductions and exhibition infrastructures. With these initiatives, film production in the 1990s grew from near extinction to an average of twenty films per year by the second half of the decade. More importantly, the freedom of the new production infrastructure allowed films and filmmakers to emerge from states other than the traditional Rio–São Paulo hub.

Pernambuco was among these other states and began to produce films. Before the Retomada, in which the feature film *Baile perfumado* became a turning point, there were a few significant moments in the history of local cinema. In the 1920s, when there were various regional production cycles all around the country, the Recife Cycle was one of the most

important. According to Luciana Araújo, "among the regional cycles of the 1920s, the Recife Cycle is the one which is the longest, lasting from 1922 to 1931, and the most number of films produced—13 fictional films and various documentaries" ("Ciclo" 124). Later, in the 1970s, it was the Super-8 Cycle era. According to Araújo,

> from 1973 and in the following ten years, there was a second production cycle in the state, after the Recife Cycle. However, at this time there were shorts made possible by the practicality of a new gauge. It was the Super-8 Cycle […] Around 200 films were made in this period, following various approaches: documentaries with regional themes, experimental films, fiction, satire, road trips. ("Pernambuco" 425)

It is important to note that, in the 1980s, various shorts were made both in 16mm and 35mm, and this was when video media was gaining prominence. Within video media, TV Viva was the most significant. Created in 1984 in Olinda (near Recife) as a non-governmental organisation, TV Viva aimed to produce programmes for the outskirts of both Olinda and Recife, involving the communities in producing audiovisual content and stimulating young professionals to create music videos.

The 1980s were also a watershed moment for academia, providing the possibility for student gatherings that consisted of discussions on cinema and music and led to the discovery of new aesthetic ways to understand these mediums. In this sense, the Centre of Arts and Communication at the Federal University of Pernambuco was a space where interactions took place among different segments of cinema and music. For example, these interactions include the Vanretrô group (Lírio Ferreira, Adelina Pontual and, indirectly, Paulo Caldas and Cláudio Assis) and the team who worked on the radio programme *Décadas* (*Decades*, 1985) which was produced, among others, by Fred Zero Quatro from the band Mundo Livre S/A.

This relationship between cinema and music is historicised by Amanda Nogueira, a member from the *Passages* team who is a well-reputed researcher on Pernambucan cinema, especially on this generation that emerged in the 1990s, whose production she recognises as "the new Pernambucan cinema cycle". She explains that, after *Baile perfumado* was awarded the first prize on its release at the Brasília International Film Festival in 1996, media started paying more attention towards what was happening in Pernambucan cinema. In her testimony in *Passages*, Vânia Debs also reminisces about this period. In fact, Debs affirms that the festival had a significant impact regarding Brazilian cinema as a whole, because a new generation of feature filmmakers had arrived in full force, for example, São Paulo filmmaker Tata Amaral, with her film *Um céu de estrelas* (*A Starry Sky*, Tata Amaral, 1996).

Baile perfumado was also Paulo Caldas and Lírio Ferreira's first feature film. Its narrative concerns the history of local cinema and quotes the Recife Cycle from the 1920s but it also addresses life in Recife from a broader perspective with an innovative discussion on Cangaço or banditism, a recurring topic in Brazil's national filmography that includes historically significant works such as *O cangaceiro* (*The Bandit*, Lima Barreto, 1953) and *Deus e o diabo na terra do sol* (*Black God, White Devil*, Glauber Rocha, 1964), among many others.

It was then, at the time of *Baile perfumado*'s launch, that journalist Amin Stepple coined the term Árido Movie and it became popularised nationwide. As Nogueira notes, "[i]n a report entitled 'Pernambucans invent the Árido Movie' from the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* on 2nd April, 1997, journalist Luiz Zanin Oricchio interviewed Amin Stepple, in an attempt to conceptualise the 'Árido Movie'" (85). Nogueira then proceeds to quote an excerpt from the

article: "[a]ccording to Stepple, creator of the Árido Movie term, the idea was to embark on the wave of the Manguebeat, which already had national repercussions with Chico Science's work, mainly" (85). For Lúcia Nagib and myself, this was a fundamental point, that is, the articulation of cinema with other arts, especially music, in response to a situation of real crisis, including the near erasure of cinema in Brazil. For this reason, we state at the beginning of our film that the Retomada do Cinema Brasileiro from the 1990s onwards favoured a new approach to reality, drawing on the expressive and sensory power of all other media.

Moreover, we agree with Amanda Nogueira's view, recognising *Baile perfumado* as a turning point in this new Pernambucan cycle. In fact, Paulo Caldas and Lírio Ferreira's film was made possible thanks to the Prêmio Resgate do Cinema Brasileiro. Recreating real events, its narrative tells of a Lebanese photographer and cinematographer, Benjamin Abrahão (1890–1938), who in the 1930s and living in Brazil's Northeast, photographed and filmed the most famous group of *cangaceiros*: Lampião and his gang. As explained by Gabriel de Campos Carneiro,

> it was agreed to call Cangaço the form of banditry that belongs to the *sertão* area of the Brazilian Northeast and it is characterised by the profusion of criminal gangs exercising similar activities. Since the mid-nineteenth century, peaking during the 1920s and declining [...] in 1940, several gangs, organised around hegemonic leaders and having a specific hierarchy, carried out armed raids, assaulting cities and spreading violence throughout the region. (9)

However, Carneiro and other scholars who studied Cangaço, including the historian Frederico Pernambucano de Mello, an advisor to the team of *Baile perfumado* screenwriters, recognised a kind of ambiguity in relation to the *cangaceiro* image. This is because, on the one hand, they were bandits, but on the other, they were considered Robin Hood–like heroes, for the courage they faced against powerful locals or citizen oppressors.

Popular imagination was instigated by the adventures of the *cangaceiros*, in particular, Lampião, the nickname of Virgulino Ferreira da Silva (1898–1938). Therefore, Benjamin Abrahão's project of making a film with Lampião would most likely have been a great success if it had been completed. However, precisely because it represented a threat to the instituted order of powers at various times, including Brazil's president Getúlio Vargas, the film was interrupted and Benjamin Abrahão was murdered, as were Lampião, Maria Bonita (his wife) and other bandit gang members. Representing these historical facts, the film also emphasises a certain idea of resistance, which is noticeable in the way Benjamin Abrahão attempts, despite all obstacles, to carry out his project. This resistance acts as a metaphor for the efforts forged by the Árido Movie generation to produce their cinematic works.

Considering that several films deal with cinematographic narratives or the audiovisual production, it is not by chance that the issue of metalanguage reoccurs in productions from Recife. For example, *O rap do pequeno príncipe contra as almas sebosas* establishes an entire relationship surrounding the topic of television reporting, especially police reports. *Cinema, aspirinas e urubus* (*Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*, Marcelo Gomes, 2005) tells the story of two men—a German and a Brazilian—who travel through the backlands of Brazil enticing locals by projecting films which are in fact advertisements for an aspirin product. *Árido Movie*, a film by Lírio Ferreira whose name is homonym to the historical movement, presents as the main characters a weatherman and a videomaker. *Febre do rato* (*Rat Fever*, Cláudio Assis, 2011) and *Tatuagem* (*Tatoo*, Hilton Lacerda, 2013) incorporate Super 8 into their discursive

plots. *Amor, plástico e barulho* (*Love, Plastic and Noise*, Renata Pinheiro, 2013) dramatises the audiovisual realisation of music videos.



Figure 3: Benjamin Abrahão (Duda Mamberti) and Lampião (Luiz Carlos Vasconcelos) making film in *Baile perfumado* (*Perfumed Ball*, Paulo Caldas and Lírio Ferreira, 1996). Photograph by Fred Jordão. Saci Filmes, 1996.

In *Baile perfumado*, Lampião (Luiz Carlos Vasconcelos) is depicted as a cinephile. He visits the cinema with his wife, Maria Bonita (Zuleica Ferreira), to watch *A filha do advogado* (*The Lawyer's Daughter*, 1926) by Jota Soares, one of the most successful films of the Recife Cycle. At one point, Lampião engages in conversation with Benjamin Abrahão (Duda Mamberti) about his photographs and helps him to film the *cangaceiros*, practically codirecting the scenes (Figure 3). This facet of the Cangaço's greatest leader was not very well-known and was brought to the project by the historian Frederico Pernambucano de Mello who provided his extensive knowledge of the historical figure. For this reason, Lampião appears in the film as a modern man, interested not only in cinema but also photography and music. The ball in question, in which the *cangaceiros* dance and interact amongst themselves while the Lebanese cameraman records, occurs in simultaneity with the sound of the band Mestre Ambrósio, whose musicians are present in the scene playing music related to their repertory of *maracatu*, *coco*, *ciranda*, *baião*, etc. In another scene, Fred Zero Quatro (Mundo Livre S/A band leader) is a supporting actor playing a journalist who interviews Benjamin Abrahão. Not surprisingly, the bands Mestre Ambrósio and Mundo Livre S/A are also in the soundtrack, along with Chico Science & Nação Zumbi.

Chico Science, in fact, is an iconic figure in the early context of the Manguebeat and Árido Movie. In *Passages*, his presence can be observed in diverse ways, whether in various directors' testimonies or in excerpts of films and videos that reproduce his image and sound, for example, in the short *O mundo é uma cabeça* (*The World Is a Head*, Cláudio Barroso and

Bidu Queiroz, 2005), which compiles several archival materials from that moment. Until his death from a car accident in 1997, Chico Science (who was born in 1966) had a strong impact on the mangrove aesthetics. In the mid-1990s, there was indeed an evident synchronicity between his band's first two albums—*Da lama ao caos* (1994) and *Afrociberdelia* (1996)—with Pernambucan films and most of all *Baile perfumado* (1996), which uses songs from both on its soundtrack, such as "Salustiano Song" and "Sangue de bairro" ("Neighborhood Blood"), respectively.

Considering our historiographic method of approaching intermediality, studying songs also enables us to understand the films and contexts related to them. In this case, "Salustiano Song" is a tribute to Manoel Salustiano Soares (1945–2008), known as Mestre Salustiano (see Gaspar), a popular artist whose work includes ancestral rhythms, such as *maracatu* and *cavalo-marinho*, among others. Mestre Salustiano became a kind of symbol for the Manguebeat and Árido Movie generation. In a documentary scene in the short *Maracatu, maracatus*, Mestre Salustiano makes an appearance and questions the role of marketing media in relation to popular art. He is talking about *maracatu*, but his criticism concerns a wider universe not only of music but also cinema. For this reason, *Passages* pays homage to him with the inclusion of the song "O enigma turco" ("The Turkish Puzzle", 2002) composed by Maciel Salú (Mestre Salustiano's son) and DJ Dolores. This song comes with a sonority that refers to both the *maracatu* ancestral culture and the Arab music linked to Benjamin Abrahão's life.



Figure 4: Chico Science in *Sangue de bairro* (*Neighbourhood Blood*, 1997), music video by Lírio Ferreira and Paulo Caldas. Saci Filmes, 1997. Screenshot.

In turn, "Sangue de bairro" refers to several *cangaceiros*, whose names are cited in its lyrics, which also mentions the fact that many of them were beheaded by the police. This song became a music video by Paulo Caldas and Lírio Ferreira (1997) and used images from their co-directed film (Figure 4). As Paulo Caldas recalls in *Passages*, *Baile perfumado*'s soundtrack production preceded its shooting and the songs worked as a reference in the composition of the images for the film and music video.

Another important fact that arises from Amanda Nogueira's research is that she recognises an Árido Movie style. In this regard, she discusses three fundamental aspects, namely, self-referentiality, privileged access to music, and identity constructions or issues (67–118). Self-referentiality refers to making films including local experiences. In other words, self-referentiality is a process that refers to the cinematographic universe through references from the group of filmmakers themselves, with strategies that involve films addressing cinema (*Baile perfumado*, *Cinema, aspirinas e urubus* and *Árido Movie*, among others) and references to the history of Pernambucan cinema itself, with quotes, use of archival materials, music and so on.

The privileged access to music is the result of the longstanding interaction between Árido Movie filmmakers and the Manguebeat music scene, and according to Nogueira it becomes more obvious in specific sequences within the films such as *Baile perfumado*, *Amarelo manga* (*Mango Yellow*, Cláudio Assis, 2002), *Árido Movie*, and *Deserto feliz*, "in which there are sequences that can be called 'musical moments'. These sequences can be incorporated into the plot (as part of the general narrative) or they can be given greater autonomy in relation to the dramatic action itself (marked by a certain 'displacement of the plot')" (88). In our view, the notion of "musical moments" could be applied to a variety of films throughout the history of Brazilian cinema, for example the musical comedies and *chanchadas* from the 1940s and 50s, when cinema had a strong intermedial connection with radio. The specificity from the 1990s onwards is that television, video and the internet stand out, as media is implied in the material and aesthetical dynamics of music contained within cinema and vice versa.

Regarding identity problems, several aspects came up for discussion in our view on the Árido Movie. One of them concerns the issue of foreigners. We highlighted the case of the Lebanese cinematographer Benjamin Abrahão, but there are other foreign characters in both feature and short films. In a feature such as *Cinema, aspirinas e urubus*, the German Johann (Peter Ketnath) is one of the most important characters (Figure 5). In turn, sequences of *Deserto feliz* were shot in Germany, where another German character named Mark (Peter Ketnath) appears. Regarding film shorts, *That's a lero lero* tells the story of Orson Welles (Bruno Garcia) and his passage through Recife in 1942. *Clandestina felicidade* depicts the writer Clarice Lispector (Luísa Phebo) when she was a little girl arriving in Recife with her Ukrainian Jewish family.

In fact, this question of foreign characters is quite significant not only in Pernambucan cinema but in the Retomada do Cinema Brasileiro as a whole, especially if we consider productions from the Rio–São Paulo hub. Considering this, Fernão Ramos calls attention to several films such as *Carlota Joaquina, princesa do Brazil* (*Carlota Joaquina, Princess of Brazil*, Carla Camurati, 1995), *Como nascem os anjos* (*How Angels Are Born*, Murilo Salles, 1996), *O que é isso, companheiro?* (*Four Days in September*, Bruno Barreto, 1997), and Rogério Sganzerla's films on Orson Welles's passage through Brazil, to name a few. Ramos extends to all these films what he perceives in different scales as an "unviable nation". In his words: "[t]his negative view is dominant in the Retomada do Cinema Brasileiro, configuring what we will call 'unviable nation'. In this representation, the figure of Brazil is permeated by notions of failure and incompetence, laden with contempt" (424).

Quite the contrary, this notion of an unfeasible nation does not fit with the Manguebeat and Árido Movie we have investigated. The idea of foreigners in Pernambucan cinema is different. It is not restricted to characters only, as it is in productions from the Rio–São Paulo

hub, but concerns cultural references received from abroad and also local images projected to the whole world (as confirmed by the symbol-image of the manifesto *Caranguejos com cérebro*: an antenna dish stuck in the mud). National identity is reiterated, even when associated with a foreigner or foreign expressions such as "beat" and "movie" and, in this sense, a reference to the Cultural Anthropophagy mentioned earlier is justified once again. This is also because all references converge to an essential turning point, namely, the city itself. Metaphorically, Recife "eats" the foreigner who arrives in its location to reinforce its power. On the one hand, this is what happens in relation to characters such as Benjamin Abrahão, Johann, Mark, Clarice Lispector, Orson Welles and, on the other, with regards to cultural references such as pop music.

Such a perspective of passages between national and international, local and global, countryside and city, seem to correspond to the "border" metaphor so frequently used in intermedial studies. In this cinema, being on the border of various media or overriding them corresponds to doing the same with spaces and times. Sometimes this movement occurs with still images, for example, photographs which promote displacement in space–time in films such as *Baile perfumado*, *Praça Walt Disney* (*Walt Disney Square*, Renata Pinheiro and Sérgio Oliveira, 2011), *O pedido* (*The Request*, Adelina Pontual, 1999), *Retrato* (*Portrait*, Adelina Pontual, 2012), *O som ao redor* (*Neighbouring Sounds*, Kleber Mendonça Filho, 2012) and *Aquarius* (Kleber Mendonça Filho, 2016). Sometimes the displacement appears as a road movie in which radio, photography, television and video are in connection with cinema, for example, in films such as *Árido Movie*, *Cinema, aspirinas e urubus*, *Eu vou de volta* (*I Get Back*, Cláudio Assis and Camilo Cavalcante, 2007), *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo* (*I Travel Because I Have To, I Come Back Because I Love You*, Karim Aïnouz and Marcelo Gomes, 2009) and *Rio Doce – CDU* (Adelina Pontual, 2013). In one way or another, with still or moving images, these are intermedial possibilities of connection to other flexible cinematic geographies.



Figure 5: The Brazilian Ranulpho (João Miguel) and the German Johann (Peter Ketnath) in *Cinema, aspirinas e urubus* (*Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*, Marcelo Gomes, 2005). Rec Produtores Associados, 2005. Screenshot.

In consideration of the flexible possibilities embedded in the Árido Movie, we were not concerned with how the movement would end. As stated before, this term was coined in 1997 by the journalist Amin Stepple. It was Stepple who stated in an article published in 2003 that its final moment occurred with the release of *Amarelo manga*, because of the way it "advances boldly in experimentalism, definitively leaving behind the romantic arid movie aesthetics" (qtd. in Nogueira 87). Despite Stepple's view, we do not consider Árido Movie as a finished movement, because filmmakers who belonged to that movement are still active today and their films maintain a strong connection with the mangrove aesthetics.

Reality of Scholarly Film Production

From the beginning, this IntermIdia Project has drawn from a fundamental reference, namely André Bazin and his idea of "impure cinema". Bazin's proposal, which he presented in the early 1950s, can be summed up in a very simple way and it is extremely powerful from a political point of view, even today. According to Bazin, the interaction of cinema with other arts (or media) results in the strengthening of all of them, even more so because it enables a wider audience reach. This possibility inevitably tends to transform reality, even when difficult moments for filmmaking are at stake, as what happened with Italian Neorealism shortly after the Second World War.

In many ways this understanding of impure cinema had an impact on our work. The initial plan of academic production for the IntermIdia Project did not include film nor a video essay. *Passages* was not foreseen, nor were video essays that several colleagues made, such as "Still Brazil" (Solomon), "Hunger and Rotten Flesh: Cinema Novo, Pasolini, Eisenstein" (Elduque) and "Playing at the Margins" (Gibbs and Miranda). In fact, it was in the course of our studies on the various objects investigated (including Árido Movie among many others), that we realised the possible intermediate dimension in the academic production itself, capable of making bibliographic and audiovisual texts interact. In addition, making our research available both in textual and audiovisual form has given it a wider impact within society, because *Passages* has reached local and international festival audiences who had never read our articles or papers, both inside and outside of Brazil. For this reason, working intermedially between academic texts and film production has helped our research to travel beyond the borders of academia, therefore proving the Bazinian principle of intermediality as a method to reach wider publics.

Specifically, in relation to *Passages*, the film became viable thanks to a mode of production that even recalls the difficulties for the Retomada do Cinema Brasileiro itself. On the one hand, institutional support was necessary and, in this sense, there was the Federal University of São Carlos in Brazil, and the University of Reading in the United Kingdom, which were partners on this research on intermediality. Respectively, we also had support from FAPESP (São Paulo Research Foundation) and AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council). More financial support was granted from the University of Reading, through the Building Outstanding Impact Support Programme (BOISP). In relation to the film crews in São Paulo, Recife and Cambridge, as well as in the editing and postproduction process in London, we had the opportunity to work with both scholars and audiovisual professionals, who interacted with each other in all stages of the film making process.[3]

We learned a great deal and we also counted on the immense generosity from the filmmakers we interviewed. Thus, intermediality as a way of transforming reality, which was

an experience that had already occurred in the 1990s, has now been repeated with us. Reflecting on the passages between media at that moment of the Retomada do Cinema Brasileiro, and establishing connections between scholarly and cinematographic modes of production today, we managed to make a film that undertakes the search for new historiographic methods, without giving up the idea that, after all, art really can be for everyone, as they taught us.

Notes

1 Shorts from Recife quoted in *Passages* include: *Soneto do desmantelo blue* (*Sonnet of Dismantling Blue*, Cláudio Assis, 1993), *Maracatu, maracatus* (Marcelo Gomes, 1995), *Punk Rock Hardcore* (Adelina Pontual, Cláudio Assis and Marcelo Gomes, 1995), *O pedido* (*The Request*, Adelina Pontual, 1999), *O mundo é uma cabeça* (*The World Is a Head*, Cláudio Barroso and Bidu Queiroz, 2005), *Praça Walt Disney* (*Walt Disney Square*, Renata Pinheiro and Sérgio Oliveira, 2011), and *Retrato* (*Portrait*, Adelina Pontual, 2012). From Recife, there are feature films such as: *Baile perfumado* (*Perfumed Ball*, Paulo Caldas and Lírio Ferreira, 1996), *O rap do pequeno príncipe contra as almas sebosas* (*The Little Prince's Rap against the Wicked Souls*, Paulo Caldas and Marcelo Luna, 2000), *Amarelo manga* (*Mango Yellow*, Cláudio Assis, 2002), *Cinema, aspirinas e urubus* (*Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*, Marcelo Gomes, 2005), *Árido Movie* (Lírio Ferreira, 2005), *Eu vou de volta* (*I Get Back*, Cláudio Assis and Camilo Cavalcante, 2007), *Viajo porque preciso, volto porque te amo* (*I Travel Because I Have To, I Come Back Because I Love You*, Karim Aïnouz and Marcelo Gomes, 2009), *Febre do rato* (*Rat Fever*, Cláudio Assis, 2011), *O som ao redor* (*Neighbouring Sounds*, Kleber Mendonça Filho, 2012), *Amor, plástico e barulho* (*Love, Plastic and Noise*, Renata Pinheiro, 2013), *Tatuagem* (*Tatoo*, Hilton Lacerda, 2013), *Rio Doce – CDU* (Adelina Pontual, 2013), and *Aquarius* (Kleber Mendonça Filho, 2016). In turn, the following feature films are related to São Paulo: *Um céu de estrelas* (*A Starry Sky*, Tata Amaral, 1996), *O invasor* (*The Trespasser*, Beto Brant, 2001), *Cidade de Deus* (*City of God*, Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund, 2002), *Crime delicado* (*Delicate Crime*, Beto Brant, 2005), *Antônia* (Tata Amaral, 2006), *Blindness* (Fernando Meirelles, 2008) and *Trago comigo* (*Bring It Inside*, Tata Amaral, 2013).

2 All of the translations from Portuguese are mine.

3 The interview with Kleber Mendonça Filho was conducted at the University of Cambridge, where he was in November 2017 to present his films.

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