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Hybridization and Speech Genres in *Recife Frio*, by Kleber Mendonça Filho / *Hibridização e gêneros do discurso em Recife frio, de Kleber Mendonça Filho*

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a reading of discursive aspects in *Recife Frio* (2009), a short film by Kleber Mendonça Filho. It aims at reflecting on how genre hybridization, which results from the presence of incorporated genres, creates meanings and provokes certain attitudes in the interaction between film and spectators. To do so, I discuss some key concepts of Bakhtinian theory, describe specific moments of the short film, and finally conduct a pointed analysis of specific scenes or sequences. This form of dialogue with the corpus follows the assumptions of the sociological poetics that traverse the discussions done by Bakhtin and the other researchers of the Circle(s). These reflections point to a play between fiction and reality, which in the film is triggered by the presence of elements that may be associated to the documentary genre.

KEYWORDS: *Recife Frio*; Hybridization; Incorporated genres

RESUMO

Neste trabalho, proponho uma leitura de aspectos discursivos do curta-metragem de ficção Recife frio (2009), de Kleber Mendonça Filho, com o objetivo de refletir sobre como a hibridização de gêneros na obra, decorrente da presença de gêneros intercalados no filme, cria sentidos e provoca determinada postura na interlocução com os espectadores. Para tanto, discuto alguns conceitos-chave da teoria bakhtiniana, descrevo momentos específicos do curta-metragem e proponho análises pontuais de determinadas cenas ou sequências. A forma de diálogo com o corpus segue os pressupostos da poética sociológica que perpassa as discussões empreendidas por Bakhtin e pelos demais pesquisadores do(s) Círculo(s). As reflexões apresentadas apontam para um jogo de cena entre ficção e realidade, que, no curta, são acionados pela presença de elementos que podem ser associados ao gênero documentário.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Recife frio; Hibridização; Gêneros intercalados

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Opening Sequence

Kleber Mendonça Filho's work has been the object of public attention and criticism in Brazil and abroad. In 2019, his feature film *Bacurau*, co-directed with Juliano Dornelles, won the jury prize at Cannes and best film at the Munich Film Festival. Before that, the career of this director from Pernambuco had already been consolidated with the feature films *Aquarius* (2016) and *O som ao redor* [*Neighboring Sounds*] (2013) as well as award-winning short films including *Vinil verde* [*Green Vinyl*] (2014), *Eletrodoméstica* [*Electrodomestica*] (2005), and *Recife frio* [*Cold Tropics*] (2009).¹

Drawing on Bakhtinian studies, this paper aims at reflecting on a possible genre hybridization in the short film² *Recife Frio* in order to highlight how this discursive resource contributes to the meaning construction of this work, an important link in Kleber Mendonça Filho's discursive chain in which fiction dialogues with the social, historical and ideological struggles of an "existence reflected in sign [that] is not merely reflected but refracted" (VOLOŠINOV, 1986, p.23).³

References to this short film available on the Internet provide a variety of genre classifications (science fiction, comedy, documentary, etc.), which may result from this hybridization.

The paper will be organized as follows: a) discussion of fundamental theoretical concepts for the purpose of reading this work as a concrete utterance making up the discursive chain of Mendonça Filho's productions; b) brief synopsis of the short film, highlighting its filmic genre classification in the spheres in which it circulates, interspersed with a detailed description of key moments for the analysis; and c) analysis

¹ Available at <http://www.adorocinema.com/personalidades/personalidade-146744/>. Access on July 2, 2019. All titles of Mendonça Filho's films will be cited in the original along this text. The titles in brackets correspond to the international titles listed on the IMDb website https://www.imdb.com/name/nm2207625/?ref=nm_sr_1?ref=nm_sr_1. Access on September 29, 2019.

² The definition of short film is not stable. I adopt this designation rather than the classification of the work as a medium-length film, which would be more appropriate according to ANCINE regulations, available at <https://www.ancine.gov.br/media/passoapasso/RegistroObraCPB.pdf>. Access on July 10, 2019. My choice follows the discursive chain of the work, which has been awarded as a short film in several festivals.

³ VOLOŠINOV, V. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and R. Titunik. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

of key scenes and moments in which the transition from a speech genre to another is apparent, given that I present the proposal that the hybridization of genres in *Recife Frio* is a key factor for the construction of its meaning. These stages of the journey are not completely independent, but rather interpenetrate each other dialogically.

I point out that the timing of the scenes cited along the text follows the version available on the *Porta Curtas* website (<http://portacurtas.org.br/>), accessed on July 10, 2019. The standard used (00 min 0 s) follows Inmetro's specifications (<http://www.inmetro.gov.br/consumidor/unidLegaisMed.asp#tempo>), accessed on July 16, 2019.

1 Speech Genres, Incorporated Genres, Hybridization

Between a detailed description of theoretical bases for the dialogical analysis of any concrete utterance and the concrete utterance that is to be analyzed there cannot be an abyss, as if the theory were external to the intertwining between the researcher's gaze and his/her other. Therefore, in this section, I lay out, within the limits of an article, some theoretical concepts in dialogue with the contextualization of the data to be analyzed.

As with literary works, the classification of films into genres coincides with the very history of the field. In this sense, the English film critic Edward Buscombe (2003)⁴ draws a parallel between the use of the term *genre* in literature and in cinema, concluding that the latter must think its classifications according to its own criteria. He states, in fact, that when dealing with a visual medium “we ought surely to look for our defining criteria in what we actually see on the screen” (p.15), but after reflecting on what characterizes a movie as a western he concludes his essay with the following question about genres: “Can we possibly evolve a theory to fit them all?” (p.25).

⁴ BUSCOMBE, E. The Idea of Genre in the American Cinema. In: BRANT, B. K. (ed.) *Film Genre Reader III*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003. pp.12-26.

For Stam (2000),⁵ in turn, the notion of authorial structuralism in the history of cinema is tied to a certain notion of genres, which ends up directing authorial choices in the field:

Genre analysis is plagued by a number of problems. First, there is the question of *extension*. Some generic labels, such as comedy, are too broad to be useful, whereas others, say “biopics about Sigmund Freud” or “disaster films concerning earthquakes,” are too narrow. Second, there is the danger of *normativism*, of having a preconceived *a priori* idea of what a film genre *should* do, rather than seeing genre merely as a trampoline for creativity and innovation. Third, genre is sometimes imagined to be *monolithic*, as if films belonged only to one genre. The “law of genre” presumably forbids miscegenation between genres, yet even classical Hollywood films hybridized diverse generic strands, [...] (p.128; emphasis in the original).

If, on the one hand, it is evident that this renowned professor and critic does not refer to a Bakhtinian conception of genres, on the other hand the path he points to for the generic critique of cinema is not incompatible with Bakhtinian postulates:

The most useful way of using genre, perhaps, is to see it as a set of discursive resources, a trampoline for creativity, by which a given director can “gentrify” a low genre, vulgarize a “noble” genre, inject new energy into an exhausted genre, pour new progressive content into a conservative genre, or parody a genre that deserves ridicule. Thus we move from static taxonomy to active, transformative operations (STAM, 2000, pp.129-130).

Therefore, to reflect on a filmic work from the point of view of a “discourse theory and/or analysis” (BRAIT, 2006, p.9)⁶ is to put in dialogue distinct epistemic fields and to assume a specific spatial horizon which is in line with that of a sociological poetics (VOLOŠINOV, 1986),⁷ one which considers, as constitutive of the utterance, not only its materiality, but also social, historical and ideological issues related to its creation and circulation.

From the point of view of dialogical discourse analysis theory, which emerges from the work of Bakhtin and the other thinkers of the Circle(s), a short fiction film

⁵ STAM, R. *Film Theory: An Introduction*. Malden, MA; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000.

⁶ In the original: “teoria e/ou análise do discurso.”

⁷ For the bibliographic reference, see footnote 3.

presents relative stability in relation to the characteristics of the speech genre to which it belongs without, however, being closed to “active and transformative operations” (STAM, 2000, p.130)⁸ in its spheres of production, circulation, and reception. As Bakhtin affirms:

The wealth and diversity of speech genres are boundless because the various possibilities of human activity are inexhaustible, and because each sphere of activity contains an entire repertoire of speech genres that differentiate and grow as the particular sphere develops and becomes more complex (BAKHTIN, 1986, p.60).⁹

Bakhtin’s statement could be an answer – formulated more than a decade earlier – to Buscombe’s point:¹⁰ genres are infinite and unstable, but the dialogical analysis/theory of discourse, predicting these characteristics, points to a stance for the study of genres in any field of human activity.

In this sense, I propose to dialogue with the short film by Kleber Mendonça Filho by taking it as a concrete utterance, which means “taking the dialogical elements as source of an active and scientific understanding” (SOUZA, 2002, p.73).¹¹ In such dialogue, it is noteworthy that each genre implies some forms of finishing and that

[t]he consciousness and cognition of reality is not achieved through language and its forms understood in the precise linguistic sense. It is the forms of the utterance, not the forms of language, that play the most important role in consciousness and the comprehension of reality (BAKHTIN/MEDVEDEV, 1991, p.133).¹²

Similar to Bakhtin’s formulations on speech genres, Medvedev’s reflections on the genre-reality relationship can also be transposed to utterances made up of a materiality that implies not only the verbal, as is the case of filmic utterances. In an

⁸ For the bibliographic reference, see footnote 5.

⁹ BAKHTIN, M. The Problem of Speech Genres. In: EMERSON, C.; HOLQUIST, M. (ed.). *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1986. pp.60-102.

¹⁰ Buscombe’s text cited here (2003) was first published in 1970.

¹¹ In the original: “tomar os elementos dialógicos como fonte de uma compreensão ativa e científica.”

¹² BAKHTIN, M. / MEDVEDEV P. *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*. Translated by Albert J. Wehrle. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.

essay on speech genres as a key concept in the theoretical framework of Bakhtin's work, Machado (2005) warns us that from the perspective of dialogism

[...] it is possible to consider discursive formations from the broad field of mediated communication, whether processed by mass media or modern digital media, of which Bakhtin evidently said nothing but to which his formulations converge (p.152).¹³

In the spheres in which it circulates, the classification of *Recife Frio* points to a diversity of filmic genres, as I will explain later. There are characteristics in the work that create this effect, which seems to contradict Bakhtin's own definition of speech genres since, according to the Russian thinker,

Speech genres organize our speech in almost the same way as grammatical (syntactical) forms do. We learn to cast our speech in generic forms and, when hearing others' speech, we guess its genre from the very first words; we predict a certain length (that is, the approximate length of the speech whole) and a certain compositional structure; we foresee the end; that is, from the very first beginning we have a sense of the speech whole, which is only later differentiated during the speech process. If speech genres did not exist and we had not mastered them, if we had to originate them during the speech process and construct each utterance at will for the first time, speech communication would be almost impossible (BAKHTIN, 1986, pp.78-79).¹⁴

Why then is there no consensus on the classification of *Recife Frio*? The misunderstanding, as we will see later, of presenting this work as a documentary is due to the fact that the film contains elements in its compositional form that refer to this genre via hybridization.

From a dialogical point of view, the relationship between the genres represented within the short film can be read in the light of incorporated genres and/or hybridization, both forms of inserting heteroglossia/heterodiscourse¹⁵ into an utterance.

¹³ In the original: “[...] é possível considerar formações discursivas do amplo campo da comunicação mediada, seja aquela processada pelos meios de comunicação de massas ou das modernas mídias digitais, sobre o qual, evidentemente, Bakhtin nada disse mas para o qual suas formulações convergem.”

¹⁴ For the bibliographic reference, see footnote 9.

¹⁵ In Paulo Bezerra's most recent translation of the essay *Discourse in the Novel* (in: BAKHTIN, M. *Teoria do romance I. A estilística*. Transl. Paulo Bezerra. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2015), the term *heterodiscourse* is used, which in my view, in contemporary times, is loaded with meanings due to the *Bakhtiniana*, São Paulo, 15 (2): 102-124, April/June 2020.

If in incorporated genres we can recognize the boundaries between, for example, a novel in which a letter written by a character is represented and the beginning and ending of that letter (which now makes up the novel), genre hybridization, as proposed in this paper, is a discursive resource that promotes the simultaneous presence of architectonic features of two genres in a single utterance, even if, on the whole of that utterance, the genre to which it belongs can be determined. Therefore, I propose analyses that, on the one hand, highlight that *Recife Frio* is not a documentary, a newscast or any other genre that is incorporated within it, and, on the other, show how, in the architectonic relationship with the author-contemplator, the film takes on compositional, stylistic and thematic characteristics of other genres.

For Bakhtin, a hybrid construction happens in an utterance

[...] that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two languages, two semantic and axiological belief systems. We repeat, there is no formal – compositional and syntactic – boundary between these utterances, styles, belief systems [...] (BAKHTIN, 1981a, pp.304-305).¹⁶

In the body of the Russian thinker's work, the concept of hybridization refers to the phenomenon of double-voiced discourse: the same utterance carries in itself different voices, with appreciative intonations not always in agreement. Hybridization has to do with the "mixing of accents and erasing of boundaries between authorial speech and the speech of others [...]" (p.320).¹⁷ In proposing the term, therefore, Bakhtin does not refer specifically to hybridization of genres, but we can infer that the phenomenon also implies the presence, in a single utterance, of characteristics of more than one genre without the boundaries between them being clearly delimited, as with incorporated genres.

opposition of the prefixes homo- vs. hetero- vs. trans- vs. pan-, etc. Therefore, I choose to bring both *heterodiscourse* and *heteroglossia*, even using that recent translation of the work.

¹⁶ BAKHTIN, M. Discourse in the Novel. In: BAKHTIN, M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Edited by Michael Holquist; translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981a. pp.259-422.

¹⁷ For the bibliographic reference, see footnote 16.

We recall that for Bakhtin double-voiced discourse arises “under conditions making possible an authentic life for the word” (BAKHTIN, 1984, p.185).¹⁸ The Russian thinker examines double-voiced discourse in detail in his analyses of Dostoevsky’s work, having as cornerstone the concept of dialogical relations, which may arise between utterances as a whole or between parts of utterances, or “between language styles, social dialects, and so forth [...]” (p.184).¹⁹ What matters to Bakhtin, rather than identifying the voices in a discourse, is to understand from which angles they dialogue.

As for incorporated genres, in his reflections on the novel, Bakhtin analyzes the phenomenon as one of the forms of multilingualism or heterodiscourse, “one of the most basic and fundamental forms for incorporating and organizing heteroglossia in the novel” (BAKHTIN, 1981a, p.320).²⁰ The Russian author considers that the possibilities of inserting genres in a novel are infinite, bringing as examples lyrical songs, poems, dramatic scenes. He also points to “a special group of genres that play an especially significant role in structuring novels” (p.321),²¹ citing here the confession, the diary, and the personal letter, among others. The concept dialogues with hybridization, but it does not presuppose, like that notion, that the boundaries between discourses (and thus between genres) fade.

I propose, therefore, that dialogical relations also occur between speech genres and their traditions, and that the presence of hybridization and incorporated genres in *Recife Frio*, as I will argue in the analysis, is fundamental for the creation of meaning in the work.

Recife Frio is not a novel; it is a short film of fiction. However, Bakhtin’s remarks about that literary genre are transposable (and resignified) to a filmic genre, since the author himself, as we have seen, states that dialogical relations exist not only in everyday or literary discourse, but in any construction made of “semiotic material” (BAKHTIN, 1984, p.185).²²

¹⁸ BAKHTIN, M. *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*. Edited and translated by Caryl Emerson, with Introduction by Wayne C. Booth. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

¹⁹ For the bibliographic reference, see footnote 18.

²⁰ For the bibliographic reference, see footnote 16.

²¹ For the bibliographic reference, see footnote 16.

²² For the bibliographic reference, see footnote 18.

In the following sections, I present the description and analysis of the key scenes in order to consider the effects of meaning created through hybridization and the presence of incorporated genres in *Recife Frio*. To this end, I will also mobilize the theoretical notion of chronotope, understood as “intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature” (BAKHTIN, 1981b, p.84).²³

Like Bakhtin, who appropriates the term as used in the sciences and in the theory of relativity, I bring to the reflection on a filmic utterance the category mobilized by the Russian thinker mainly for literary analysis.²⁴ Chronotope is not to be confused with genre, but as Bakhtin (1981b) explains it is nodally related to this concept, since “it is precisely the chronotope that defines genre and generic distinctions [...]” (p.85).²⁵

2 Fiction, Documentary, TV News and *Ciranda*²⁶ in the Recife of Any Future

Recife Frio (2009) is a 25-minute short film (including credits)²⁷ that, in a way, presents themes that will be deepened in Kleber Mendonça Filho’s later works, such as real estate speculation and the deterioration of human relations in urban space.

The recent *Bacurau* (2019), by the same director, a work that brings strong characteristics of the Western genre, has as its setting the fictional town of the title which, by the technological cunning of a group of enemies (or bandits, to recall a sign of Westerns), gets wiped off the maps. The space represented in this 2019 feature film, although undoubtedly characterized as belonging to the Northeast region of Brazil, is a

²³ BAKHTIN, M. Forms of Time and of Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics. In: BAKHTIN, M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin. Edited by Michael Holquist; translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981b. pp. 84-258.

²⁴ Bakhtin himself points to the “real-life chronotope” (BAKHTIN, 1981b, p.99) and to the pertinence of the category in the spheres of production and reception when he mentions “the chronotopes of the author and the listener or reader” (p.252). For a reflection on the scope of this category, I suggest the reading of BRAIT, B. *et al.* O pesquisador do discurso aqui e agora. *Bakhtiniana. Discourse Studies Journal*, [S.l.], v. 14, no. 2, pp.2-5 (Port.) / pp.2-6 (Eng.), March 2019. ISSN 2176-4573. Available at <https://revistas.pucsp.br/bakhtiniana/article/view/42002/28003>. Access on July 26, 2019.

²⁵ For the bibliographic reference, see footnote 23.

²⁶ Much like a *ring-a-ring-o-rosies*, the term refers to a popular dance (or children’s game) in which the participants move in circles, hand in hand, to the rhythm of a song normally performed by themselves. The *cirandeira(o)* is the participant leading the performance.

²⁷ The DVD cover of the work informs a 24-minute running time and thus seems not to count the credits.

counterpoint to the explicit singling out of the city of Recife throughout the director's filmography. In the feature films *O Som ao Redor* (2013) and *Aquarius* (2016), for example, we have narratives that, in chronotopic terms, portray the city of Recife in space and time that is contemporaneous to the sphere of the work creation. In *Recife Frio* the space of Pernambuco's capital is quite peculiarly related to the temporal aspect, as the short film presents hypothetical future situations in this same space (the city) in order to denounce the hardly hypothetical inequalities of contemporary Recife. The future time is announced after the initial credits, at the very beginning of the film (00 min 37 s), when we read, in white italic font in the lower right corner of the screen and against a dark backdrop, the words "In a few years."²⁸

On the website *Porta Curtas*,²⁹ we have the following information about the classification of the work: "genre: fiction; subgenres: comedy, science fiction."³⁰ By contrast, in *Wikipedia*,³¹ today's source of popular wisdom, we find the following entry for this work:

Recife Frio is a Brazilian film written and directed by Kleber Mendonça Filho. It is a *documentary* about a strange climate change in the tropical city of Recife, capital of Pernambuco, in the Northeast of Brazil, which inexplicably becomes cold. It premiered in November 2009 at the Brasília Film Festival. With over 50 prizes in Brazil and abroad, *Recife Frio* has become the most awarded Brazilian short film since Jorge Furtado's *Ilha das Flores* (1989) (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recife_Frio; my emphasis). Access on July 12, 2019.³²

The DVD cover of the work does not feature a classification regarding the genre in its credits, but brings the following synopsis:

²⁸ The same resource is used in *Bacurau*.

²⁹ http://portacurtas.org.br/filme/?name=recife_frio. Access on July 12, 2019.

³⁰ In the original: "gênero: ficção; subgêneros: comédia, ficção científica."

³¹ This would not be an adequate source for the inclusion of authority voices in the academic domain. However, it is an important reference for punctuating the discourses about the work that circulate in common sense.

³² In the original: "Recife Frio é um filme brasileiro escrito e dirigido por Kleber Mendonça Filho. Trata-se de um documentário sobre uma estranha mudança climática na cidade tropical de Recife, na região Nordeste do Brasil, capital de Pernambuco, que, inexplicavelmente, passa a ser fria. Estreou em novembro de 2009 no Festival de Brasília do Cinema Brasileiro. Com mais de 50 prêmios no Brasil e exterior, Recife Frio se tornou o curta metragem brasileiro mais premiado desde Ilha das Flores (1989), de Jorge Furtado."

A strange climate change makes Recife, in northeastern Brazil, become a cold city. A foreign TV *documentary* examines the effects of the change on a culture that has always lived in hot climate (*Recife Frio*. DVD, 2009; my emphasis).³³

The term *documentary*, therefore, appears in the official synopsis of the work, but as an element represented in the plot. Part of the short fiction is a documentary made by a television network, probably from Argentina (judging by the variety of Spanish language spoken by the reporter). In this documentary, whose beginning seems to coincide with the beginning of the short film, we have an alternation between the speech of a presenter and the speech of residents of Recife who were affected by the climate change and who are interviewed by him.

I emphasize, however, that the word *documentary* is not present in the verbal materiality of the work. Were it not on the cover of the DVD, perhaps the best term for defining the foreign television's action in the plot would be *reportage*. For the analysis, however, I will follow the definition of the DVD, since the term gained *Wikipedia* and, from there, numerous online reviews about the work. In many cases, the film is classified as fake documentary, or mockumentary, or its genre is questioned.³⁴

Thus, it can be seen that in the reception sphere the discursive chain of *Recife Frio* is marked by the presence of the term *documentary*. A reflection on some characteristics of this genre, therefore, permeates this article.

In the table below (TABLE 1) I present the sequence of events and the corresponding timing in which the initial scenes take place in order to point out how the documentary genre is introduced in the short film:

TABLE 1: Insertion of the Foreign Documentary in the Plot of *Recife Frio*

Description of the scene by content	Start time
Lettering in white font against dark backdrop reads: “ <i>In a few years</i> ”	00min 37s
Falling object in flames	00min 44s

³³ In the original: “Estranha mudança climática faz Recife, no Nordeste do Brasil, passar a ser uma cidade fria. O *documentário* de uma TV estrangeira examina os efeitos da mudança em uma cultura que sempre viveu em clima quente.”

³⁴ Take, for example, the following sites: <http://www.agendabh.com.br/documentario-recife-frio-de-keleber-mendonca-filho/>; <https://www.institutonetclaroembratel.org.br/educacao/para-ensinar/planos-de-aula/cinema-e-educacao-recife-frio/> and <https://www.cinepipocacult.com.br/2013/05/recife-frio.html>. Access on July 15, 2019.

Sequence of photographs: Men protected by special white suits and masks, working in an area on a beach isolated by yellow and black tape. As the photographs follow one another, interspersed with brief moments of film in which the insulating tapes move with the wind, a previously unidentified voice is heard speaking in Spanish. The short film brings the following subtitles to this: “The meteorite has crashed on Maria Farinha beach, 20 km north of Recife, and killed three people who were singing in a luau / However, there is no scientific evidence linking that space bolide to the cold weather / For scientists, it was just a meteorite [...]” ³⁵	00min 50s
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Source: http://portacurtas.org.br/filme/?name=recife_frio. Access on July 14, 2019.

The sequence of still images with voiceover ends at 01min 22s when, after a display of news footage of the arrival of penguins to the region, there appears the image of the reporter to whom the previously heard voice corresponds, showing the name of the program (*The World in Motion*)³⁶ and explaining that this week the team would be in the city of Recife to investigate the strange events in the place.

The moment the journalist/presenter appears, a watermarked logo with the letters MM is shown in the lower right corner of the screen. This program logo stays on screen for almost the entire short film, up to 18min 47s.³⁷ It is a mark in the visual materiality of the film that coincides with the time the film shows the documentary of the foreign television network. Strangely, however, the frozen image sequence that runs from 00min 50s to 01min 22s does not display this logo, but already carries the voice of the reporter/presenter. Like the temporal indication (*In a few years*), this is already a discursive clue that the (documentary) reporting is constructed as an element of fiction.

The beginning of the documentary, as I said, seems to coincide with that of the short film, but the moments without the *The World in Motion* logo, already with the voice of the Argentine reporter, discursively provoke a strangeness that is inherent in this work. *Recife Frio* sometimes causes the viewer to wonder exactly what filmic genre they are watching, which contradicts Bakhtin’s aforementioned statement about our

³⁵ In the original: “O meteorito caiu na praia de Maria Farinha, 20 km ao norte de Recife e matou três pessoas que estavam cantando num luau / Todavia, não há nenhuma prova científica que relacione aquele bólido espacial com o frio / Para os cientistas, foi apenas um meteorito [...]”

³⁶ In the original: “*El mundo en movimiento*.”

³⁷ On the *Porta Curtas* webpage we also see a logo representing the face of an animal and the word *Tamanduá* (anteater). It is the institute that supports the site, and not the original trademark of Kleber Mendonça Filho’s work.

supposed ability to “guess” the genre of others’ speech (BAKHTIN, 1986, p.79).³⁸ This is an effect of the absence of clear boundaries between genres, a hallmark of their hybridization.

Returning to the plot line, the foreign television network shows how the lives of residents have been affected by the cold weather, bringing testimonials from improv singer/songwriters (*repentistas*), a nearly bankrupt innkeeper, a professional Santa Claus – the only one who seems to like the cold. There are moments of great comicality interspersed with sections showing how inequality would have become more visible with the new climate, such as the sequence filmed in the home of the upper-middle-class family – the fictional Nogueira family – revolving around the devaluation of their beach property, formerly appreciated for its location and now undervalued by the fact that the waterfront is the coldest spot in town. Emblematic of the film’s theme is the figure of the maid who is forced to give up her room, formerly an unpleasant place for the strong heat due to low ventilation, to the teenage son of the couple of bosses as he perceives that stuffy room to be the best room in the house, given the circumstances. The temperature changes, but the vulnerability of the already vulnerable remains the same.

At 16m 30s the documentary presenter exhibits a book by Armando de Holanda entitled *Roteiro para construir no Nordeste [Guidelines to Building in the Northeast]*. He states that “Holanda’s vision of creating generous and human constructions seems to be an impossible poetry today” (16min 29s up to 16min 33s).³⁹ Thus there is always, like the *The World in Motion* logo in the lower right corner of the screen, an external sequence of streets, sidewalks, facades of an apparently deserted city while the narrator/reporter reflects on how before the climate change Recife was already a place marked by violence and the urbanization of “right lines and angles” (17min 05s), which would be manifestations of urban inhumanity.

These inside/outside relations and inhospitable/inhabitable space are fundamental for the analyses that will be proposed. Before describing the final moments of the documentary, which do not coincide with the final moments of the short film, I

³⁸ For the bibliographic reference, see footnote 9.

³⁹ In the original: “A visão de Holanda, de criar construções humanas e generosas, parece hoje uma poesia impossível.”

present a table (Table 2) with a description of the scenes that make up the new genre transition:

TABLE 2: From the Foreign Documentary to the TV News Report

Description of the scene by content	Start time
People at a shopping mall entrance checking in their coats	17min 40s
Kids playing inside inflatable bubbles at the mall / people ice-skating inside the mall / people walking haphazardly at the mall (interspersed scenes)	18min 12s
Electronics store with televisions turned on as background for people walking through mall aisles	18min 44s
Cut to news images being shown on television screens and disappearance of MM logo	18min 47s

Source: http://portacurtas.org.br/filme/?name=recife_frio. Access on July 14, 2019.

The foreign television program has its apotheotic ending at a shopping mall. In the voice of the presenter, while we watch images of the deserted streets, the question “Where are the people?” is heard at 17min 25s. Then there is a cut; the second movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony comes in as soundtrack, and the following is shown: in the foreground a license plate and then several cars in a parking lot. Still with the same soundtrack, the sequence begins inside the mall: in slow motion, people take off their winter clothes and stroll in that enclosed and heated space which offers various possibilities of entertainment, such as ice skating and a water park with giant inflatable bubbles inside which children move on water without getting wet. The camera, still from the documentary with the MM logo, focuses on an electronics store with televisions on. At 18m 47s, one of these television screens becomes the screen of the short film itself, as the logo disappears. We are now inside a Brazilian newscast. At the top right of the screen, the inscriptions “Channel 7/News” appear. The transition from foreign television to local television news carries marks that make its borders clear. As spectators, we come out of the hybrid construction in which the documentary overlapped with the narrative short film itself. Clearly we are still in the short film, but no longer under the effects of a documentary genre.

The theme of the news story is the cold weather: an exhibition of photographs of the cloudy sky, whose authors are prisoners, entitled *Olha pra cima, irmão* [Look up, Brother]. Then we move to the weather forecast, during which it is possible to read *Bakhtiniana*, São Paulo, 15 (2): 102-124, April/June 2020.

irony-laden calls on moving signs about events in the city of Recife, such as a socialite's statement on how the cold makes poor people more elegant.

The insertion of these ironic calls and the very title of the exhibition strengthen the fictional character of this passage in which a newscast is represented: if the compositional form, with elements such as anchor, news reading and images, and weather forecast, complies with the prescriptions of a newscast, the content permeated with irony points to the fictional narrative that is inherent in a short fiction film.

In the weather forecast a presenter appears with the map of Brazil in the background, showing highs and lows in various places and reaffirming the cold weather in that metropolitan region. This begins to prepare a new transition of genres. We move from the representation of television news to an external scene: a *ciranda* led by Lia de Itamaracá, a recognized singer and popular artist in the region. Table 3 shows the succession of scenes that builds this transition:

TABLE 3: From the TV News Report to the *Ciranda* Final Scene

Description of the scene by content	Start time
Weather forecast presented by a man facing the map of Brazil, highlighting the climate conditions of Recife	19min 22s
Mention to the climate in Itamaracá	19min 59s
Initial insertion of Lia de Itamaracá's voiceover in the TV news weather forecast	20min 02s
Disappearance of the TV news and beginning of the beach outdoor scene	20min 12s
Beginning of credits, interspersed with the <i>ciranda</i> scene	23min 07s

Source: http://portacurtas.org.br/filme/?name=recife_frio. Access on July 14, 2019.

When the weather announcer says that the next day's minimum temperature will be 5 degrees Celsius in Itamaracá, on the North Coast, we begin another moment of transition: the newscast continues for a few seconds, but the sound of that utterance turns into a background sound and we begin to listen to a *ciranda* song in the voice of Lia de Itamaracá. Then we move on to an outdoor scene in which the singer, wearing heavy clothes and a golden cap, starts a *ciranda* on the beach. The weather, of course, is overcast, and everyone is wearing winter clothing. We have now left the news and moved on to an outdoor scene. We are no longer in *The World in Motion* documentary; we are no longer on the Channel 7 newscast. We are, in fact, where we have always

been: in a fictional short film, cleverly constructed with features of other genres and challenging viewers to travel along between the ethical and aesthetic spheres in their contemplative authorship.

3 Life in Fiction and Fiction Lived: Meanings in the Genres Represented in *Recife Frio*

The beginning of *Recife Frio* makes explicit its fictional nature: in the opening credits there is a first presentation of the cast, with 13 entries bringing the correspondence between the names of the actors/actresses and their characters. The characters are always identified by their social roles preceded by an indefinite article; for instance, “a homeless person,” “a santa claus” (in lowercase letters), “a narrator.” There is one exception: when presenting Pinto and Patativa, the improv singer/songwriters who are interviewed in the documentary, the names of the artists are used in the credits just as they appear in the short film, on the list of actors’ names, with the noun “*repentistas*” preceded by the number two. They differ from the rest of the cast in the way they are credited. They would, therefore, be real improv singer/songwriters who use those names artistically.

In turn, for the final credits, which blend in with the scene of the *ciranda* from 23 min and 09 s, we have technical data such as direction, script, production and editing and, again, the cast credited in the same way as at the beginning of the short film, however expanded to 23 entries – the scientists, the news anchor, the weatherman, among others, are added. Still, the sequence of final credits singularly includes in the cast the name of Lia de Itamaracá, which appears by itself on the screen.

The *cirandeira*’s performance is completely different from that of the other names of the cast. There is no need to match her name to a role, which happens in fiction films, or to a social role/place, which is commonly seen in documentaries. Lia de Itamaracá does not explain herself or represent a character; she shifts between the chronotope of the work of fiction and the “real-life chronotope” (BAKHTIN, 1981b, p.99)⁴⁰ as herself, and the particular way of presenting her name in the credits is the

⁴⁰ For the bibliographic reference, see footnote 23.

highlight of the sequence in which she appears in the film – a sequence that belongs neither to the fictional newscast nor to the fictional documentary, as I have shown. The format of the credits signals the hybridization, in compositional form, between short fiction and documentary, and the meanings created by the voices of these genres construct the particular interaction that is established with the work.

The *ciranda* moment marks a dizzying departure from the incorporated television news genre to an outdoor scene. A scene of fiction, undoubtedly, as it keeps representing the climate change investigated by the fictional documentary. The physical reality of Lia de Itamaracá, however, is one of the links that build the theme of this work which, dressed in fiction, shows so many real plights.

This *play* of fiction and nonfiction, already so well explored by Eduardo Coutinho in his 2007 documentary (is it really a documentary?) *Jogo de Cena*, has its construction strongly marked by the hybridization of genres in *Recife Frio*.

The moment of the documentary, the first genre represented in the short film, begins after strong evidence (cast, time references) that we are dealing with fiction. However, it is a fiction that shows the here and now of Pernambuco's capital.

Bakhtin highlights the use of future time in the history of the novel as a resource that makes it possible for the novelist to analyze the social contradictions of their own time. "Every such uncovering [of social contradictions] inevitably pushes time into the future" (BAKHTIN, 1981b, p.147).⁴¹

In order to film the social contradictions so well represented, for example, by the scene in which a fictional Nogueira family (beginning at 13min 15s) is interviewed, Mendonça Filho initially invites his viewer to occupy a position of someone interacting with fiction. Before approaching the family, the work goes through comic moments, such as those afforded by the interviews with the gentleman who works as Santa Claus and the artisan, who states that he will have to represent male nudes with their "wieners shrunk"⁴² (12min 48s) by the cold. In the fictional interview with the family, the easy humor of the previous scene, with the artisan, gives way to a scathing irony well represented by the mistress's talk about the maid's situation, who was shifted to the

⁴¹ For the bibliographic reference, see footnote 23.

⁴² In the original: "bitocas murchas."

very cold suite formerly occupied by the couple's son, now in turn occupying her room, the warmest one in the house, as we have seen. Ms. Nogueira, in a speech interspersed with her husband's about the maid's situation, states that the employee is "feeling cold and, in a way, feeling like a fish out of water [...] because she is not used to it – no wonder, she's never lived in a suite"⁴³ (beginning of the statement at 15min 22s).

A statement of this kind, marked by the social clashes materialized in Brazilian architecture by the tiny maid's rooms in traditional apartments, might not have taken place and would have no ironic tone in a documentary; yet it fits perfectly in *Recife Frio* as it well encapsulates the theme of this fiction disguised as documentary.

Each interview featured in the work is constructed as if it were a staging-location, in which a take is "performed in the circumstance of the world where the subject who is filmed lives his/her life" (RAMOS, 2008, p.42).⁴⁴ This and other compositional aspects that refer to the documentary, such as the narrator's voice over much of its representation, mix with others that clearly signal fiction, such as the indication of future time. In this play, the work leaves the viewer in a space between life and art. Therefore, a logic of film genres is subverted, according to which

In general, the documentary narrative is already classified by the viewer [...]. It is not usually our pleasure to go to the cinema to find out whether a narrative is fiction or documentary. The documentary intention of the author/filmmaker, or the production of the film, is indexed through various social mechanisms directing reception. [...] Upon receiving a narrative as documentary, we are assuming that we witness a narrative that establishes assertions and postulates about the world, in a completely different context from that in which we interpret the statements of a fictional narrative (RAMOS, 2008, p.27).⁴⁵

⁴³ In the original: "passando frio e, de certa forma, se sentindo um peixe fora d'água [...] porque ela não é acostumada; também, nunca morou numa suíte."

⁴⁴ In the original: "realizada na circunstância de mundo onde o sujeito que é filmado vive a vida."

⁴⁵ In the original: "Em geral, a narrativa documentária chega já classificada ao espectador [...]. Não costuma fazer parte de nosso prazer esportivo ir ao cinema para tentar descobrir se uma narrativa é ficção ou documentário. A intenção documentária do autor/cineasta, ou da produção do filme, é indexada através de mecanismos sociais diversos, direcionando a recepção. [...] Ao recebermos uma narrativa como documentária, estamos supondo que assistimos a uma narrativa que estabelece asserções, postulados, sobre o mundo, dentro de um contexto completamente distinto daquele no qual interpretamos os enunciados de uma narrativa ficcional."

This subversion is reflected in the reception of the short film and its aforementioned non-homogeneous classification in specialized cinema publications. The fictional short film is confused with a documentary; fiction is confused with real events.

The other genre that deals with real events and is included in the short film is the newscast. *Recife Frio*, to the extent of my research, has never been cataloged as television news. The proximity between the fictional short film and the documentary, as both genres are characteristic of the cinematic sphere, is greater than the proximity between a fictional short film and a newscast, since the latter usually circulates in the sphere of TV journalism.⁴⁶

The already described cut from the documentary to the television news occurs in the shopping mall scene, when a TV set displayed in a store window is captured showing the news. This television screen transmutes into that of the short film and we enter the world of this new genre which, in the television sphere, should deal with real events. The fictional news conveyed by the represented newscast, including the *Look up, Brother* exhibition, echoes the humor of part of the documentary in *Recife Frio*.

The staging of the newscast, which runs from 18min 47s to 20min 11s, seems to function as a transitional time-space between the representation of the documentary of the foreign program *The World in Motion* and the outdoor scene of Lia de Itamaracá's *ciranda*. It works, therefore, as a corridor through which to leave the mall, a closed space where you can see a crowd of individuals apparently isolated from each other – which is reinforced by the images of children in inflatable bubbles, and an access to the beach of Itamaracá, still a cold space but now marked by the golden glow of the cap worn by the *cirandeira* and the circular dance that requires the union of people.

The *Recife Frio* camera thus travels through different genres and spaces after the narrator of the documentary, noting that the city is an inhospitable space with straight-line angles, as mentioned, and asks: “Where are the people?” (17min 25s). People are seen inside the mall, still under the mediated gaze of the narrator of the foreign documentary; people are seen in the *ciranda* scene, outside the mall, outside the

⁴⁶ There is an analogous genre that used to circulate in movie theaters: the newsreel. A famous representative of this genre in Brazil is *Canal 100*, extinct in 2000.

documentary, outside the news, still under a mediated gaze but no longer that of the foreigner.

When we no longer have the mediation by the supposed camera of the documentary, we get to take a closer look at each one, each individual: in fact, during the *ciranda*, in an alternation of takes (MARTIN, 2013), we can see the whole geometry of the dance in panoramic shots. But we also see in extreme close-up the facial features of each dancer interspersed with highlights of Lia de Itamaracá's face and shots of parts of the dancing bodies and often smiling faces of those participants. At 16min and 57s the narrator of the documentary mentions the "dehumanization of cities." At 17min and 13s he states that in the urban disorder "the human element has been flattened." In the *ciranda* this flattening crumbles and we have people portrayed in their individuality, in a movement during which each individuality interacts with one another – a movement that, in this dialogue, becomes part of an organic whole, which is precisely what the city lacks.

Although the interaction between the spectator and the *ciranda* is mediated by a camera, that of the director of the short film, there are no longer the layers of representation by other narrative orchestrators, such as the documentary narrator. That way, the author and the spectator get closer to the narrative of the *ciranda*. With the *ciranda* chronotope, there is a change in the architectonic relation⁴⁷ between aspects of the aesthetic object, between author-spectator, author-creator.

I point out that, unlike Paulo Bezerra who states that "the old architectonics gives way" (BEZERRA, 2018, p.253)⁴⁸ to the category of the chronotope in Bakhtinian thought, I respectfully claim that the chronotropic relationship between the aesthetic aspects of a work is constitutive of its architectonics. The inter-relationship play of author-spectator in *Recife Frio* changes as the narrative chronotopes change with the genres represented. The passage from the interior of the mall, which circulates the sense of individualism, to the beach, where the circular representation of the *ciranda* takes place away from the inhospitable lines and angles of Recife's urbanity, is pregnant with meanings.

⁴⁷ On this concept, see Silva (2010).

⁴⁸ In the original: "a antiga arquiteônica dá lugar."

The ray of sunshine that comes out after the initial minutes of the *ciranda* seems to indicate the end of the time of suffering. Was it an indication that this dance would have the strength to subvert the social and human abyss created in the city? The director/narrator's answer, not at all optimistic, may lie in the last frames of the short (beginning at 24min and 41sec), which contain a scene only seen by those who follow the final credits to their conclusion. I will avoid the description of the scene here, as it would be an unnecessary spoiler.

Final Scenes, or Considerations in Motion

Recife Frio, a short film of fiction, brings incorporated genres and features a hybridization that ultimately determines not only its compositional form but, above all, the relationship between its architectonic aspects. The play of fiction-reality offers to the work a scathing critique of the social and ideological clashes that constitute life in Pernambuco's capital.

Initially, the work brings the representation of society mediated by the gaze of the other/foreigner. From the newscast onwards, this element dissipates and the representation is made by an authoritative camera-look of a much closer other. The viewer dialogues, thereby, with different voices that build discourses about this society, and the insertion of these discursive voices, characteristic of heteroglossia/heterodiscourse, is made possible by the presence of incorporated genres and the hybridization of the short fiction genre.

The hybridization of genres affects the reception of the work. There is not the alibi of being in dialogue with a work of fiction, or the illusion created by documentaries (RAMOS, 2008) of being faced with assertions about the world. If we understand, with Medvedev, that "every genre has its methods and means of seeing and conceptualizing reality, which are accessible to it alone" (BAKHTIN/MEDVEDEV, 1991, p.133),⁴⁹ we can conclude that hybridization broadens and complexifies the modes of reception of the meanings that circulate in *Recife Frio*.

⁴⁹ For the bibliographic reference, see footnote 12.

The theme city of *Recife Frio* is a space of diversity and social contradictions. Analyzing *The Golden Ass*, as a stage of his great reflection on the chronotope in the novel, Bakhtin affirms that Apuleius's work represents a society already socially diverse, but static as it is free from contradictions. He adds that “[i]f such contradictions were to surface, then *the world would start to move*, it would be shoved into the future, time would receive a fullness and a historicity” (BAKHTIN, 1981b, p.129; emphasis added⁵⁰). And in *Recife Frio* we see, under the guise of the climate change and the foreign documentary, in the fictional program *The World in Motion*, precisely the aesthetic representation reflecting and refracting social contradictions.

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⁵⁰ For the bibliographic reference, see footnote 23.

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