

## The reenactments in the documentary film

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En promenant me to pour Libération et Phnom Penh dans la campagne cambodgienne, j'entrevis to ressemblait quoi un et même un genocide genocide rest self-images et sans presque sans traces. La preuve le cinéma that n'était plus l'histoire Lie to intimement des hommes, ce fut-sur son versant d'inhumanité, je la fait dans le voyais ironiquement qu'à la différence des nazis bourreaux Thurs leurs victimes avaient film, les Khmer Rouge laisse derrière eux n'avaient that des photos et des charniers. (Serge Daney, 1994: 33).

**Abstract:** To explore the memory in the cinema is always a complex, contradictory and misleading issue. It constantly faces the risk of reviewing the past as it was, mobilizing documents as evidences of truth. The tradition of documentary cinema uses to deal of the historical memory through archive images, interviews with witness and reenactments. This last procedure, however, can be a way to stresses and confronts present and historical images. Through this technique cinema can engage a kind of involvement that, differently from the regular use of documents, entails temporal dimension, duration, immersion experience. This essay analyses the film *Wilsinho Galileia* (João Batista de Andrade, 1978) and Tonacci's method of reenactment in *Serra da Desordem* (Andrea Tonacci, 2004), looking for its relationship to the image, to History and to the memory of its characters.

**Keywords:** documentary cinema, history, memory, reenactment

## INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I propose to discuss the procedure of reenactment in documentary cinema as a practice and a way of tensioning the images of the present and the history. A method that, in cinema, brings a sense of engagement and immersion that the documents, books and historical images by themselves do not allow. In the field of documentary, the repetition of situations, gestures, places and bodies appears as a procedure able to enhance the idea that the meaning of an event does not depend simply on recognizing the fact, but recognizing its strategies of representation and how they are directed to the spectator, in other words, how the subject is prompted by the film. In the long

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tradition of documentary cinema, it is possible to notice that the procedures used, or more precisely, the procedures available for the historical memory documentarists are the archival images, the interviews with witnesses and the reconstitutions. Exploring the memory in cinema is a complex, contradictory and misleading issue, it is a constant encounter with the risk of reviewing the past as it was, the risk of taking the archive as a proof of the past and the tendency to mix up the memory with the remembrance (Niney, 2002: 250).

The aim of this paper is to analyze the method of reconstitution in its relationship with the image, the history and the memory of those involved in the process of filmmaking. To do so, I use two Brazilian films whose reconstitutions deal with the place of the crime, scenes which revisit violent and insoluble moments of the event and the relationship established between the images of past and present. *Wilsinho Galiléia* (1978, João Batista de Andrade), a film made for television, but prohibited by federal censorship regulator and that was never exhibited in Brazil, narrates and retraces the life of the bandit Wilsinho, famous in the 1970s for his crimes, robberies, murders and arrests, killed by the police just before reaching the adulthood. *Serras da desordem* (2004, Andrea Tonacci) reconstitutes the wandering trajectory of an Indian from Guajá ethnicity called Carapiru, a survivor of a massacre that wiped out his entire village in 1978, within the state of Maranhão, Brazil. In the first film, it is especially relevant the reconstitution of the crime, of an event that disturbs the usual order of those who are close to the event (the historical subsidy); in the second one, Tonacci oscillates between the reconstitution of common actions, of the village's everyday gestures (the anthropological subsidy) and the crime scene, the massacre as a traumatic and extraordinary event in its historical dimension. Unlike *Wilsinho Galiléia*, in *Serras da Desordem* the character is alive and he is the actor of his own story. In both cases, the figure of the victim re-emerges identified, especially with the presence of death in the cinema, of the crime as an event that traumatizes and fascinates, transforming the order of things and brutally disturbing the existences of those who are connected to the event.

## RECONSTITUTION-IMAGE

The reenactment as a cinematographic gesture is not a new methodology, on the contrary, it dates back to at least the 1920's. In Robert Flaherty's *Nanook*, for example, what you see is the repetition of a know-live and know-how, the anthropological gesture which reenacts what is ordinary and usual in the everyday life of an Eskimo family in their struggle for survival. But there

is also a judicial reenactment of *The Assassination of the Duke de Guise*, an art film of the 1910s, in which what is at stake is the historic gesture to reenact an extraordinary event that breaks and disarrays the continuity of chronological time. If both proposals reiterate, still at the beginning of the last century, that the relationship between history, reenactment and cinema can take very different ways, there is in common a necessity to repeat the history as a way of reconstructing the past, noting the chain of events and their significant conceptual linkages, from the very memory of the archives, testimonials, memories.

In the immediate post-war, Italian Neo-Realism would explore the rhetoric of exemplarity to promote an awareness of the actor and of all those involved in the film, because the reenactment here have a corrective effect, a moral lesson and which only can come from the projection of life of anonymous subjects on the screen (Margulies, 2002). If the neo-realist cinema looked for verisimilitude and exemplarity in the reenacted actions and gestures, Jean Rouch's cinema would take the (re)enactment a field to be investigated and problematized together with the characters and the spectator. In Rouch, the repetition as the writing of the film (*Jaguar*; for example) would critically redefine the images in their relationship with referentiality, in which the reenactment is as much or more multifaceted and complex in its meanings than the fact that has originated it. In the 1960s, the Brazilian documentarist Eduardo Coutinho was forced to stop filming *Cabra Marcado para Morrer*, due to the military coup. This interrupted movie was a reconstitution, based on real events which reenact the assassination of a peasant leader, with a cast of peasant actors which was close to the event of the crime. The second *Cabra Marcado*, resumed and completed years later, became another movie, different from the original proposal<sup>2</sup>.

The reenactment in contemporary documentary cinema can also take different ways. On the one hand, filmmakers who explore, through repetition, the discrepancy between what is said and what is seen, between speech and gesture, questioning the boundaries between history, memory and cinema, or between the past and the images of the past. On the other hand, those who repeat a project in which history is represented as an illustration of the past reality, treated as an action movie (adventure and /or thriller), in which contradictions and complexities of the past are attenuated on behalf of naturalized images of the past (when it approaches the true fiction, the historic film).

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<sup>2</sup> The film *Cabra marcado para morrer* that we know is the second one, from 1984, retaken in the end of 1970's and from the remaining material from 1964 filmings. The process of political opening allows Coutinho to resume the negatives of the first film, hidden for years, in order to rescue not only the history, but also the memory of those involved, making the cinema a field of formal invention.

*Close Up* (1990), by Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami, explains through the procedure of reenactment that many other meanings are activated and that it is not enough to merely reconstruct what happened (asking Sabzian to reenact his imposture with his family, who believed in him), but to activate and add meanings that were not attributed to what happened (França e Lissovsky, 1999). In the same line, the documentary *The Third Memory* (2000), by Pierre Huyghe, retraces the episodes of the film *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975), by Sydney Lumet, in the presence of the real bank robber, who freed from prison and much older and unhappy with the reconstitution done by Lumet, reenacts, remembers and analyzes, in the movie location, some moments of the famous assault on the Brooklyn bank in New York city, in 1972. Filmmakers as the Swiss Richard Dindo and the Cambodian Rithy Panh have also the assumption that there is a discrepancy between memory and history; both directors move away from a project of repetition as it stands, from the verisimilitude model, in the case of Dindo, to film the places where significant events occur, evoked by subjects who were there and who still are there, to tell what they saw, and in the case of Panh, to film the protagonists of the remembered events.

In the field of contemporary art, the repetition gesture has won a major exhibition, *History Will Repeat Itself: Strategies of Reenactment*, held in Berlin in 2007/2008, with artists from different nationalities who have explored the field of history as a field of media meanings in dispute. In the exhibition catalog, one of the texts emphasizes the epistemological value of reenactment, saying that the gesture maintains a relationship with the knowledge, when it creates a sort of palimpsest that accumulates all meanings created since then, including the idea of copy. It's a whole artistic and intellectual explanation, in behalf of this gesture, in the way in which repeating the history would be exalting the possibility of "looking at it more than once" (Bangma, 2005), bringing the most varied positionings and considering their effects.

If in the field of contemporary art the reenactment implicates, at least ideally, the mobility of the spectator, the multiplicity of screens, the ability to tell a story or don't, interactive interfaces, ie images that dissolve on conceptual and environmental articulations, in the field of documentary cinema, at least in its hegemonic representative narrative form, the reenactments still bound to the idea of telling a story (or stories), exhibited on a single screen, to a relatively immobile spectator. But both in contemporary art and documentary cinema, this repetition procedure can work as a critical strategy for the reinterpretation of history, considering that the characters in a documentary film or the participants of an action/situation are there as having a memory, whether it

is the body's – the one who lived through the grief and pain, repeating it (or them) to the camera(s) – or the one that has been forged by media and history discourses, an imaginary memory.

## THE REWRITING OF HISTORY

In the book *Images malgré tout* (2003), Georges Didi-Huberman discusses the place of the images of the past, specifically the archive, in a globalized economy and culture that place the management of information and knowledge at the heart of contemporaneity. The first part of the book had already been published before, in 2001, in the catalog of the exhibition *Memory of the Camps - Photos of the Nazi concentration and extermination camps*. This text has analyzed four photographs clandestinely taken by one of the members of the *Sonderkommando*<sup>3</sup> during their work in the extermination camp of Auschwitz.

The second part of the book is a kind of a *response* to the numerous attacks the artist has suffered because of the text presented in the exhibition catalog, a response that resulted in several conferences during 2003 to meet the criticism suffered; it is about, therefore, to develop and deepen the argument of the first part, since the text has resulted in great controversy, especially in France. And what would be the question of this Didi-Huberman's book (or at least one of the questions)?

The need to imagine what is in the category of the unrepresentable, to imagine what were the Nazi extermination camps from four photographs that remain irreducible in front of the spectator; neither the knowledge (as the historians think) nor the concept (as the philosophers think) and even the moving images (as the filmmakers think) are going to wholly capture what was the experience of Shoah (Holocaust). Despite everything, Didi-Huberman still insists that it is necessary to contemplate these images and assume the risk of our own inability to imagine what the History might have been, since these four photographs carry the trace of urgency and fear, translated in the deframing, in the lack of clearness, in the time the photos were taken without anyone seeing the camera, in the obscurity, and finally, in their gaps.

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<sup>3</sup> “*Comando especial*” was constituted by prisoners, mostly Jews, within the Nazi Extermination camps. These prisoners were forced to perform tasks as helping the victims to undress, conducting them to the gas chambers, taking the corpses to the crematorium, removing their dentures, maintaining the cleanliness of the crematorium. They were isolated from other prisoners to keep the confidentiality of the extermination operations. It was an indispensable unity to the Nazi death machine and that was systematically exterminated.

It proposes as a method to *learn to see* the images of the past, the procedure of montage and deconstruction as a gesture that implicates new associations, compositions, collages of different artistic and temporal fields, in order to produce a memory that can also be consisted by silences, by inaccuracies and by forgetfulness while significant powers.

A simple image: inadequate, but necessary, inexact, but true (...). The image here is the eye of history: its tenacious function of making visible. But also that it is in the eye of history: in a very local zone, in a moment of visual suspense, as the “eye” of a hurricane (Didi-Huberman, 2003:56).

Undoubtedly, the author refers here to the archival images in their unpredictable (what a research project does not handle) and disturbing (what is irreducible to a knowledge or to a system) aspects, because being *in the eye of history* is not only to produce knowledge about the past but to promote an experience that questions the present and its future, to deal with the residue that marks these images (instead of attenuating it), the residual of risk, danger and urgency as a vestige which indicates the complexity of the image.

The interesting aspect in this argument is the way the history is brought to the scene, as a field in which not only the future is incomplete, but also the past and the present are. The reference to Walter Benjamin is essential, because for the German thinker, the time of the history is infinite and incomplete in all aspects, and it is up to the historian and to all human action to provide its finish, to describe the events of the past, since allowing the outbreak of new events in the present is to be committed to an activity similar to the excavation, is to be positioned as an archeologist, pointing to the appeal that the past direct to the present. For both thinkers, history is conceived as a time of ruptures in which the *relationship* is more important than isolated words, since every moment carries the emergence of something new, it is always a present that restores something of the past, transforming itself and therefore the future.

Both in *Images malgré tout* and in *Quand les images prennent position* (2009), Didi-Huberman interlocutors are Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht, Aby Warburg, Michel de Certeau, among others. These thinkers have in common the conception of history as the time of ruptures, intensities and deviations; there is the recognition of the emergence of the historical event as necessary to distinguish the tiny deviations that occur in the power relations of history; there is a refusal of understanding the time and the history as an artificial continuum. For Certeau (1982: 65-119), the action of the historian is, in practical terms, the manipulation of evidences obeying certain rules. He remembers that the gesture of the historian is to cause displacements, to remove materials

from times before his and to connect them in a new and singular way, placing them somewhere else, altering and organizing their similarity and contiguity relationships, in short, redistributing and regrouping the pieces of the world. Certeau (ibid) insists that the writing of history, when it brings back the dead people introducing them into the narrative and into life, in one way or another it redistributes the place of the dead and of the living ones, it recreates belongings.

Undoubtedly, the work of the documentarist is a little different from the work of the historian, since it operates with other materials and other procedures. If we put aside the didactic films with commented iconography, the documentary cinema is limited by *alive* historical sources, in other words, its materials are the surviving witnesses and archival images. However, it is interesting that, by allowing the access to the *theatrical dimension of the historical process*<sup>4</sup>, the moving images not only evoke, but they expose certain aspects of an era (archives, evidences, gestures), they make us directly see and hear witnesses and memories, operating over the discrepancy between what is said and what is seen, between what a witness says and how he says or even contradicts himself. That's why François Niney questions how the cinema could devote itself to the memory, so the reenacted history not only become a database, a dead memory, but a reflection on the past and the present, a tension between these times, the questioning between them (Niney, 2002: 250).

This question refers to the subject of the Holocaust, an event that has inspired many films, from the American television series *Holocaust* (1978), passing by *La vita è bella* (Roberto Benigni, 1997), *Schindler's List* (Steven Spielberg, 1993) *Train de Vie* (Radu Mihaileanu, 1998), *La tregua* (Francesco Rosi, 1997 - adaptation of the book by Primo Levi), in a variety of reconstitutions and formal proposals, which constantly reconfigure their first cinematographic references, the documentaries *Nuit et Brouillard* (Alain Resnais, 1955) and *Shoah* (Claude Lanzmann, 1985). The latter films deal with the logic of destruction, to think not only the massacre of European Jews by the Nazis, but also the idea of a crime that affects man's *humanity*, a crime that makes impossible any historical reconstitution, because in the limit, there is no cause or justification for the suffering of others. Both Resnais' and Lanzmann's films (and in the field of fiction, Mihaileanu's film) reconstitute the heinous idea of a meaningless and useless pain, "for nothing" (Levinas, 2006: 83).

The history is repeated here, not on the scene of historical action, sudden, painful and pointless, but on another scene where the events are reversible and mediated, where the livings

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<sup>4</sup> Annette Wieviorka, cited in *Images Malgré Tout*, p. 127.

speak as survivors and, paradoxically, witness in the place of the dead; if the cinema is often able to make the dead speak, how would Certeau like, these films about the Holocaust show in the limit that those who were safe cannot remember the decisive events, cannot testify about the concentration fields because they were not "total victims" (Agamben, 2004). The intensity of the experience, the death as a decisive moment, is also what the testimonial is not able to represent and it is precisely this impossibility that it must refuse.

## WILSINHO GALILÉIA

In the field of Brazilian documentary, the reenactment of an extraordinary and traumatic event, exposing its internal tensions, appears in the films made and exhibited in the television program *Globo Repórter*, in the 1970s, in a surprisingly way. It is a gesture that often dialogues with the sociological model in cinema (Bernardet), when it seeks the mediation between the alleged mob and their alleged ambitions said by the narration in off, but that strains this model to operate in another way in its relationship with the social and political context of the moment. As historical reconstitutions, they request a judgment that is - at the same time - ethical, on the correction of historical interpretation, and aesthetic, on the relevance of the formal proposal; they request a subsequent judgment of a past that is gone and that we need to retake, recall and rethink, especially because movies like *Caso Norte* (1977, João Batista de Andrade), *O último dia de Lampião* (1973, Maurice Capovilla), *A mulher no Cangaço* (1976, Hermano Penna) and *Wilsinho Galiléia* interrogate the regime of images in the history from their own strategies of representation<sup>5</sup>.

These films of reconstitution are only possible because they can occupy a difficult position between reflexivity and a certain positivism, because, constrained by internal (from the TV broadcasting station) and external (from military dictatorship) censorship, they force the filmmakers to try new procedures of language in order to make the image say what cannot be said. If the commentary in off, often compulsory and done by the show's host, tends to reduce the complexity of the image, it is the repetition of places, gestures, words and bodies that, by exploiting the discrepancy between memory and history, can return to the past a field of research.

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<sup>5</sup> Outside Brazil, there is something that some authors called reality in TV syndrome: in USA, there is a TV that is going to do reconstitutions of small crimes, while in England in the 1960's there is a TV that seeks to do a reenactment of police and social investigations. It is in the 1970's, however, that it is consolidated a strategy of mixing *real* people with fiction elements, among the large audience of these dramatized documentaries (the docudramas) which extend, in turn, the experiments of the British school of documentary in the 1930's and 1940's.



In the movies from *Globo Repórter* which would exploit the reenactment of an extraordinary event, *Wilsinho Galiléia* is a documentary whose methodology consists in taking the history as a question, while wondering how to relate to it. João Batista de Andrade mixes reconstitutions enacted by actors with testimonies from delegates, relatives, Wilsinho's colleagues; there is also the insertion of sensationalist subtitles published in the press and the information obtained from police files that, associated through the montage, allow the spectator to perceive in the image of the criminal an unconsidered complexity at the time of the crimes. It is as if the documentary reiterates by the montage and by the repetitions that the images alone cannot say anything, that they lie and remain unclear "while we do not detain on them to read, analyze, decompose, reassemble and interpret them, distancing them from the 'linguistic clichés' while 'visual clichés' (Didi-Huberman, 2009: 36). From the clichés of marginality and coldness of Wilsinho, forged by the media and police reports, we pass to other dimensions of the criminal, less reductionist and that are possible only because of the fragmented reenactments - the assaults, the murders, the rides with stolen cars, the ambush to kill him.

Batista uses the reports, the records, the police promptuaries, as well as the photos of the bandit published in newspapers to gradually show the discontinuities between these institutional documents; as if between these archives inhabit emptiness and gaps that need to be reenacted and fulfilled by other histories, temporalities and affections. The field of memory - the photographs, the testimony of family members and colleagues, the police records, the materials extracted from the press - is the basis on which the film confronts and crosses images, reenacting (as Paulo Weudes, who represents Wilsinho) the numerous failures of a hegemonic discourse that turn the criminal an emblem of the violence and cruelty. The reenactments with the actor in bars, streets and places where the criminal walked before being murdered - Weudes walks through the poor districts of São João Clímaco and São Caetano, suburbs of São Paulo - produce, at the same time, an approach to history, because they are places where Wilsinho grew, lived, had friends, family, and which the actor stares, and an irreducible distance. It is as if the actor was very different from the criminal that we see in the pictures, not only in age but also in appearance. It is as if the actor invites the spectator to look at those extremely poor places, as if he invites the spectator to stop in front of those images.

Exploring, in the reconstitutions, this discrepancy between the actor Paul Weudes, with his ironic smiles, and Wilsinho, is to introduce a failure in the time within the police and the media archives, is to reinject in the field of memory its original power, promoting a kind of dialogue

between the filmmaker gesture of repetition and the traces of information left over the time, exploring the gap between signs and their objects. The reconstitution here indicates the power of the gaps between the "theater of memory" and the Brazilian police/prison apparatus, whose scientific knowledge legitimates these institutions, because what the film shows is the gap between the image produced by the criminal records, excellent in fitting and disciplining what could disturb the island of peace and tranquility called Brazil (as the president Medici has said), and the brutality of a repressive regime that arrested and killed people without hesitation.

By mixing procedures from the fiction cinema with procedures from the documentary, the journalistic report and the performances to reenact the history, these documentaries were already pointing to the idea that the image is constituted by various regimes of visibility, multiple and shared practices, which can and should be remodeled. This period of *Globo Repórter* opens up a whole possibility of innovation and continuity for a project of aesthetic experimentation aborted by the military government, in a period of great censorship to the artistic expression and a period of supremacy of the state in the production, financing and distribution of films.

## ***SERRAS DA DISORDEM***

Discussing the procedure of reenactment today, as a practice and a way to negotiate with the history, within the documentary film, helps us to think about questions such as: how to establish a difference amid the homogeneity of the images? How to invent new ways of looking? How to have a critical positioning on the audiovisual flow? A whole state of things which we saw emerge in the beginning of the 1980s and which would be detected by cinema criticism, especially by Serge Daney and later by Gilles Deleuze, who would point to the necessity for the artist to become a skilled craftsman and manipulator of the various media, a specialist. There is no doubt that even today, the logic of reenactment in the cinema may want to represent the historical event in its continuity and similarity, or otherwise, to restore to its autonomy and insistence in time.

In *Serras da Desordem* (2004), Andrea Tonacci reenacts the wandering trajectory of an Indian from Guajá ethnicity, a survivor of a massacre that wiped out his entire village in 1978, within the state of Maranhão. The Indian escapes and starts to perambulate Brazil inwards until he is received by a peasant family in Bahia, ten years later, in a distance of over two thousand kilometers from the destroyed village. Later, a frontiersman becomes aware of the situation and makes the first attempt at approximation with the Indian. Finally led to Brasília, he is identified as a remainder of

the Guajá tribe, and the confirmation is made by a young Indian interpreter, from the same ethnic group, also rescued more than ten years before by the FUNAI (Brazilian National Indian Foundation). In the encounter of the two Indians, a surprise: they recognize themselves as father and son, which both thought killed during the massacre in the village.

What matters to the film, however, is what has occurred far from television cameras, silently, before and after the encounter between father and son. It is as Tonacci seeks, unlike the great summaries and the new cases, the singularities and the experience of the ordinary man who, in this case, is an Indian and, as such, should reenact, with his own body, his history. So Carapiru should engage again with his body (to strip it for the second time) and his history, because they are the source of his suffering and his pain.

The film will then reenact situations, repeat the old encounters and dramatize, in the body of the Indian, the pain and incomprehension. Tonacci turns Carapiru's body in an ambiguous place, a place of the person who writes the history and at the same time recreates it, as the reenounters are, in this second time, happy, celebrated, cathartic moments. The massacre is repeated in the village, and also the escape of the Indian, the long wandering, the encounters with white people who received him, the family meals at the table, the smiles exchanged on the edge of the stove, the television program that is watched collectively and the loneliness of the survivor. Singularity and repetition, truth and lie, face and mask, all this reconciled by the power of the film, that makes this confusion between the stage and play its ethical and aesthetic principle.

Placing the reenactment at the center of the methodology is to make possible what the film shows. It is about restoring the dark zone of the death, understood as suppression of alterity - the other people, the criminals, the foreigners, the poor people, the Indians - and as a difference in their own time, its passage as a flow of constant ruptures. After all, if the crime is something of the past, promoting a gathering to make the movie and remember the events, rehabilitating the living and the dead - as Michel de Certeau wanted - it is also what remains as the dark side of humanity of men and what confuses the reenactment of Tonacci and which diffuses the violence (from the past and the present).

In the reenactments of the rituals of *civilization* which the Indians pass through, the malaise is reinstated, even in the midst of so much affection and complicity between the Indian and the white man. There is an uncomfortable duality in the film and which the scene of the bow passing through the Indian's head and then to child's head well illustrates. The small bow head, a female ornament to hold the hair, is the element that evokes an ambiguous portion of the past in the

present, it is what confirms the indigenous body as a body outside of the man's law. In the kitchen, around the stove, the Indian and the family that received him in the first time play with the bow head and it is this unpredictable element, offspring of the reenactment, which is put on Carapiru's head. Everyone laughs – and everything is displaced, both the reencounter and the spectator, touched by the gratuity of the scene, by the innocence that is submitted in the second time the crime of being different.

They are thus two contradictory dimensions that surround the image of *Serras da Desordem* and which build a place of hesitation, because the indigenous body testify a paradoxical experience: the banishment of his being and his social – and uncomfortable – reintegration, because it happens through a smiling and cordial presence, but in a speechless, opaque, non-resistant body. The act of repeating, which is an Indian demand, ironically exposes the crime of this representation, and it exposes him a second time, because he is in the unavoidable gap of these images. Repeating the history is to restore a possible return to a real that is repeated. After all, being an Indian - yesterday, today, tomorrow - is what makes life disposable, worthless. Repeating the history, then, is to do the cinematographic mise-en-scene of the victim's body, is to bring the suffering to the look of the ones who does not suffer, is to fulfill a role of historical justice and of historical document.

The cinematographic reenactment that occurs by the indexical presence of (social and historical) places, bodies, gestures and voices, captured in the very moment in which the relationship between documentary and character constitutes, is what allows us to return to the history at the point in which it bifurcated and took the wrong way; is what allows us to resume the course of history to put it on track, breaking the strict chronology of events, breaking the chronic of time (of the institutions of power / knowledge) to work with the history as a kind of workshop, in which distant and different elements are brought together.

If since the beginnings of cinema itself, the documentary record and the reenactment coexist in most diverse ways, it is in the contemporary cinema (*Serras da Desordem*, but also *Jogo de Cena*, by Eduardo Coutinho, 2007, *Juízo – o maior exige do menor*, by Maria Augusta Ramos, 2007) which emerges a new inflection on the combination of the presence and the artifice, the spontaneous and the constructed elements. How do we stand before the indistinction between what is on the order of singularity and what is in the order of repetition? It emerges from there a series of issues that interest as the reenactment can open the films to the duration of events - be they trivial or grand, ordinary or extraordinary - exploring the "trail of the empirical world" in the image (Xavier, 2004: 75) and shifting the place of the spectator who must experience the images, not as an

illustration of a preexisting reality, but as a field to be worked, to be understood, to be associated with other times, other stories and other memories.

This criminal, this corpse, this rifle, this Indian. Now, the reenactment in the cinema shows that the precise place of such beings in the world, its referentiality, is not so important. What is important is its place in the film, the way the bodies, sound and images act to fill gaps in the historical memory, without losing sight that this work of reconstruction do not ever want to restore a whole.

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