

Lights, camera, co-creation: documentary cinema as an inspiration to decolonize knowledge production

Luz, câmera, cocriação: o cinema documentário como inspiração para descolonizar a produção de conhecimentos

Marina Tarnowski Fasanello¹, Marcelo Firpo Porto¹

DOI: 10.1590/0103-11042022E6071

ABSTRACT The article discusses the role of documentary cinema as inspiration for the development of sensitive collaborative methodologies in interdisciplinary fields, such as collective health, involving the approximation between scientists, filmmakers, and social movements around health and environmental problems. The article is anchored on the notion of making common used by Paulo Freire and in the work of Boaventura de Sousa Santos, called Epistemologies of the South, and his proposal to decolonize knowledge, which includes the realization of ecology of knowledges. From such references, the documentary is reflected beyond an artistic and authorial work based on science, but as an emergence of new epistemes and knowledge connected to social struggles and emancipatory processes that can inspire theoretical-methodological renewal in the production of knowledges. In the article, we selected two documentaries that address the struggles against capitalist agriculture and the effects of the intensive use of pesticides, as well as the promotion of agroecology and agrarian reform as alternatives for fairer, healthier, and more sustainable societies. As a result, the analysis of those documentaries demonstrates the potential of bringing together science, politics, art, and ethics as interdisciplinary and intercultural practices of co-labor-action, co-production, and co-creation.

KEYWORDS Cinema. Epistemology. Public health. Pesticides. Agroecology.

RESUMO O artigo discute o papel do cinema documentário como inspiração para o desenvolvimento de metodologias sensíveis co-labor-ativas em campos interdisciplinares como a saúde coletiva, envolvendo a aproximação entre cientistas, cineastas e movimentos sociais em torno de problemas de saúde e ambiente. O artigo ancora-se na noção de tornar comum usada por Paulo Freire, e na obra de Boaventura de Sousa Santos denominada de epistemologias do Sul e sua proposta para descolonizar o conhecimento, o que inclui a realização de ecologias de saberes. A partir de tais referenciais, o documentário é refletido para além de uma obra artística e autoral apoiado na ciência, mas enquanto emergência de novas epistemes e saberes conectados a lutas sociais e processos emancipatórios que podem inspirar a renovação teórico-metodológica na produção de conhecimentos. No artigo, selecionaram-se dois documentários que versam sobre as lutas contra a agricultura capitalista e os efeitos do uso intensivo de agrotóxicos, assim como a promoção da agroecologia e da reforma agrária como alternativas para sociedades mais justas, saudáveis e sustentáveis. Como resultado, a análise de tais documentários demonstra o potencial de reunir ciência, política, arte e ética enquanto práticas interdisciplinares e interculturais de co-labor-ação, coprodução e cocriação.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE Cinema. Epistemologia. Saúde coletiva. Agrotóxicos. Agroecologia.

¹Fundação Oswaldo Cruz (Fiocruz), Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública Sergio Arouca (Ensp), Núcleo Ecologias, Epistemologias e Promoção Emancipatória da Saúde (Neepees) – Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brasil. mtfasanello@gmail.com



Introduction

This article seeks to approximate the interface between three interdisciplinary fields of knowledge, namely collective health, political ecology and the epistemologies of the South, to face different ongoing crises, such as the civilizational, social, democratic, sanitary and ecological¹.

The article is structured in three consecutive parts. The first part presents the conceptual fundamentals to address the meaning of decolonizing science and, in particular, its relevance for collective health, drawing on the contributions of Paulo Freire about the role of art and the notion of making common² for social transformation; also, the discussion conducted by Boaventura de Sousa Santos and the strategic concepts of epistemologies of the South, such as abyssal thinking and non-extractivist collaborative methodologies. Next comes the theme of the selected documentaries and the context of social struggles in which they were produced, forming an exemplary combination that gathers together scientists, filmmakers, social movements and activist organizations engaged in the social struggles against the perverse effects of capitalist agriculture (agribusiness) in Brazil and the consequent intensive use of pesticides (or agrototoxic as it is critically called in Brazil since the late 1980s). The following topic is the analysis of elements present in the two documentaries drawing on the context of their production, whose sources were narrative interviews conducted with filmmakers, scientists and leaders of social movements, which were compiled. There is also the narrative analysis of the scenes³ that show creative dynamics that articulate scientific knowledge and the audio-visual language of documentary cinema. Finally, this paper presents a discussion about how both the production and the circulation of films can inspire innovative practices of co-presence, co-creation and co-production toward the renewal of knowledge production methodologies directed to social transformation by means of interdisciplinary and intercultural articulations and dialogues³.

Contributions to thinking the decolonization of collective health: Freire and art, epistemologies of the South and post-abyssal transition

Collective health is considered as an interdisciplinary field of knowledge and practices strongly influenced by the social sciences and the critical thinking for the understanding and facing of health inequities. Academically, it resulted in the theory of social determination of health that traverses different themes and areas. The alliance with various social movements and the concern about the renewal of a Democratic State supported by public policies for well-being, which necessarily include public health, turned the Brazilian Unified Health System (Sistema Único de Saúde – SUS) into an important field of experiences and practices. Several areas seek dialogue and give centrality to various subjects and social movements in the construction of both knowledge and public policies, among which can be highlighted popular education in health, mental health concerning the anti-asylum struggles, workers' health, health and environment, and health promotion.

A conceptual and methodological challenge of these areas or subfields of collective health regards how to construct quality knowledge and simultaneously promote the participation of collective subjects, such as social movements and community organizations. Several propositions of qualitative-based methodologies have been used in in this sense in the past decades, such as participant research, action research, and community-based participatory research.

In the past years, the emergence of the activism of social groups and movements around struggles such as anti-racism, gender, indigenous peoples, *quilombolas*, peasants, and urban peripheries, have reinforced the interest on post-colonial approaches, including the

epistemologies of the South, which synthesize the work of the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos. As well as the mentioned participative methodologies, the emergence of the epistemologies of the South is justified, on the intellectual level, drawing on the two proposals that revolutionized pedagogy and social sciences: Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed and Orlando Fals-Borda's participatory action research. Both have influenced the more recent proposition of the non-extractivist collaborative methodologies⁴, which have also been renamed as sensitive and co-labor-active³. The aforementioned crises, not only in Brazil, have made more urgent the need to rethink the theories and methods for the production of knowledge and its connection with social transformation.

An important contribution for the construction of this article is found in the experience of a center of study, research and publication of stories of Oral Tradition that gathered story-tellers and education professionals, the Escola Granada, active since the 1990s in Região Serrana (the mountain region) of Rio de Janeiro state³. The proposal originated in articulation with and inspired by the Movimento de Escolas de Arte (Art Schools Movement) that had as one of its initial theoretical references the Education through Art thesis by Herbert Read⁵. A group of educators, including Paulo Freire, created the Art School of Recife in 1953, whose model was followed in several regions and cities of Brazil. The Art Schools operated as an education system parallel and complementary to the official system and in the training of art-education for teachers and artists. Later, Freire disseminated these methodologies among social groups under vulnerability, in an attempt to fill the gaps of the Brazilian educational system.

Besides the Liberation Theology and Marxism, Freire's inspiration came also from the perspective of Art as Experience of the North American philosopher and educator John Dewey⁶, who saw in art the capacity to expand the senses in the process of getting to

know, perceiving, feeling, making common and transforming the world. This premise is one of the bases for the paradigmatic transition in the construction of popular education and explains the existing openness for the incorporation of different artistic and popular languages that go beyond the frontiers of scientific canons, including in the social sciences. For this article, it is also evident that the idea of communication as making common has in the sensitive creative languages an energizing element for the approximation between people, collectivities and even cultures beyond the rational and logocentric discourse, and this gives Paulo Freire's work an additional element for the understanding of its universality. Making common, in Freire's conception, inspired on Dewey and assumed in this study, is connected to the idea of humanization in the construction of knowledge and narratives that resist to the marked processes in the logics of oppression in capitalism, colonialism and patriarchalism⁷.

Besides Freire's work, the epistemologies of the South⁷ are considered as a strategic referential for the understanding of the meaning of renewal and decolonizing the knowledge produced by capitalist modernity. In the context of academic interchange, the authors of this article have deepened the thinking about the epistemologies of the South with a permanence of 18 months in the research program conducted by Boaventura de Sousa Santos at the University of Coimbra. Thus, the reflections were matured, enabling the articulation of epistemological, theoretical, methodological and educational referential that sought to advance on the direction of sensitive co-labor-active methodologies³.

In a synthetic presentation, the epistemologies of the South seek to retrieve the dignity and relevance of knowledges and practices of social groups in regions historically dominated by colonialism, which persists as one of the axes of domination and oppression of modernity, together with capitalism and patriarchalism. There is the understanding that

colonialism (or coloniality) continues after the end of colonies, which posteriorly remained subordinated to capitalism in a peripheral form in the current world-system⁸, and is materialized in phenomena such as racism, misogyny, and epistemicides that disqualify the peoples of the global South, their knowledges, practices and visions of the world, considered primitive and disposable.

The emphasis on the continuity of colonialism is strategic to understand the relevance of concepts such as cognitive justice and ecology of knowledges, and understand one of the precepts of the epistemologies of the South: there will be no global social justice without global cognitive justice. What is at stake, in this conception, is the surpassing of lines – named abyssal⁹ – that separate the metropolitan reality of modernity, its values and forms of social organizations – such as the State, Law, Science and its institutions – that characterize the so-called global North, from the reality of the global South. The latter tends to be ignored, undervalued and made invisible by different and complex processes of ontological, social, cultural and psychological nature, manifested in phenomena like racism, misogyny, violence and radical exclusion that affect indigenous peoples, blacks, women and homosexuals, among others, and whose oppressions are added to those produced by workers' exploitation by capitalism. In the words of Santos⁹, the abyssal line

Prevents the co-presence of the universe of 'this side of the line' with the universe of 'the other side of the line'. On the other side, there are not the excluded, but the sub-human beings that are not candidates to social inclusion. The denial of this humanity is essential to the constitution of modernity, since it is a condition so that this side can affirm its universality. Therefore, practices that do not fit into the theories do not question these theories, and inhuman practices do not question the principles of humanity⁹⁽¹⁴⁾.

A task of the current emancipatory processes relates to reinventing the utopias in the face of the exhaustion of the liberal and socialist utopic ideals that forged the main conquests of modernity (State, Law and Science). By centering on the struggle for social emancipation, they systematically considered as primitive, silenced and eliminated (epistemicides) the knowledges and experiences of the peoples of the global South that did not follow the canons of modernity, specifically modern science and its methods. Obviously, this does not mean that the advances of modern science should be denied or be necessarily considered as racists. The idea of decolonization goes through a continuous process of (de)(re)construction of thoughts and practices that point to post-abyssal societies that re-signify, and do not ignore or underestimate, knowledges and social practices that provide meaning and wisdom to innumerable peoples in the global South⁷. Irreducible experiences of the human adventure of living in search of wisdom in the face of beauty and mystery were enclosed by walls in the parallel and smaller worlds that persist in philosophy, arts, religions and various cosmogonies.

The abyssal thinking seeks to explain how modernity divides and coexists with realities of protection and citizenship next to another marked by violence and the suffering of radical exclusions, which are systematically made invisible through cultural, cognitive and political processes, such as racism. Abyssal thinking is also present in science that, with its canons, considers itself superior and universal. This perspective becomes clear when the relation between science and society is thought of mainly in terms of scientific education and communication, limiting to disciplines and approaches, such as anthropology and ethno-sciences, the relations with the so-called non-scientific knowledges, e.g., of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples.

Another abyssal dimension is the idea that policies called democratic and inclusive imply universalizing to all communities and peoples

the benefits and rights of modernity from the metropolitan logic. Even redistributive policies of left-wing governments tend to think development as restricted to the increase of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, consumption standards, education and health, which can have other logics by other peoples and their cosmologies. This justifies why a considerable part of current social struggles – often mistakenly called identity struggles – are struggles for cognitive justice.

Several emancipatory struggles in the global South express the search for recognition and legitimation of other forms of knowing and relating with the material and immaterial world, including community and economic relations, nature, spirituality and innumerable practices of (self)care, whose holistic sense of integration is remarkable in peoples as the indigenous, Afro-descendant, peasants, and many expressions of hybridism characteristic of several traditional peoples. This reflection justifies the emphasis on the epistemological dimension (together with the ontological) as central to the contemporary struggles for social emancipation. Integrating such emancipatory struggles and processes into the production of knowledge surpasses the Freirian dimension restricted to the field of education to reach transversely several fields of knowledge and disciplines, as long as they are open to a dialogic process of alterity. The epistemological challenge has an interdisciplinary and intercultural nature that, in the conception of this study, goes through the construction of sensitive methodologies, co-labor-actives around making together (and not only for) that updates the mission of science as supporter of contemporary emancipation processes.

Santos¹⁰ proposes a civilizational transition toward post-abyssal societies drawing on deep changes in the manner how knowledge is produced, its theories and methods. This implies a realignment that surpasses the indolence of modern reason, an indifference that builds barriers between thinking and acting in the face of

human dignity. In this sense, another dialectics of emancipation has a central challenge to face unresolved dualisms of modernity and its science, advancing toward new possibilities of connection before these various dualisms: absence-presence, oppression-emancipation, indifference-attention, abandonment-care, society-nature, paid work-(re)production of life. In this perspective, such overcoming implies a re-approximation between the worlds of science, art and politics. The documentary cinema is one of the possible ways in the direction of broadening the creative imagination for transformation.

Making documentaries as inspiration for decolonizing knowledge production

To illustrate the central idea of this article about the pathways of theoretical-methodological renewal of knowledge production drawing on interdisciplinary and intercultural dialogues that enable the decolonizing of the academia, we present the encounter of science, arts and social struggles in the production and circulation of documentary cinema. With this purpose, we selected two documentaries produced with a strong articulation between filmmakers, social movements and militant researchers engaged in struggles about health and environment, in which socio-environmental determination of health is very much present. In this case, the social struggles denounce, on the one hand, the intensive use by the agribusiness of pesticides and their impact of health and, on the other hand, announce as alternative the construction of another agricultural model based on family agriculture and agroecology. It is, therefore, about struggles that also denounce the three axes of oppression in modernity: capitalism, from an agricultural model of commodities export that serves the interests of transnational enterprises, the rich countries,

ultimately, the international and national elites (financial, industrial and agrarian); colonialism, expressed in the ignorant and violent form of disdain for knowledges, rights and territories of indigenous, quilombolas and peasants; and patriarchalism, considering the role of women and feminism in the struggles for agroecology, food safety and sovereignty, besides the traditional and community practices of care, which includes food.

These documentaries can be analyzed as strategies of communication, plurality of voices and encounter of knowledges, i.e., as simultaneously communicational and epistemological dimensions. Seeking social transformations and spaces of dialogue with society, these social struggles involve narratives and knowledges that are counter-hegemonic, anti-hegemonic or alternative, produced to face the interests of agribusiness, capitalist industrial agriculture inserted in the current economic globalization, which in the Brazilian context characterize the neo-extractivist model¹¹. The agribusiness model has the support, besides the large media, of several State institutions and public policies, including the scientific ones that defend 'development' and 'progress' without questioning the socioeconomic, sanitary and environmental injustices resulting from the model of agribusiness based on large scale monocultures and on the intensive use of pesticides.

To this are added two concepts (anti-hegemonic and alternative) together with counter-hegemonic knowledges with the aim of broadening the communicational, educational and epistemological understanding of social struggles beyond the disputes for hegemony in Gramsci's perspective. From the viewpoint of this study, this contributes to a more precise and flexible grammar that broadens the possibilities to understand and articulate social struggles and resistances without the weight of having as a more general objective conquering the power, with the retreat of an oppressive political elite and its substitution by another one supposedly libertarian. Often, this perspective

of dispute for hegemony intensifies divisions between different oppressed social groups around of revolutionary and political-parties' strategies and tactics. Anti-hegemonic or alternative knowledges and practices are part of a subaltern social group, but do not imply the seizure of power within a broader social-political system. They seek making viable the conditions to increase self-organization and autonomy to face the forms of domination and extend the degrees of freedom and self-determination. It is an utmost relevant issue in the search of convergences and collaborations between different oppressed subjects who fight for dignity. Thinking of knowledges and practices as anti-hegemonic or alternative (and not necessarily counter-hegemonic) may avoid that other forms of oppression and making invisible are produced in the disputes of hegemony between different social movements and subjects who struggle for dignity.

In this article, we have centered the attention on the articulation of three social spaces where the subjects engaged in the production of the films are: i) social movements; ii) scientific production drawing on militant scientists engaged in the impacts of agribusiness and pesticides; and iii) the space of creation of the film drawing on the filmmakers and their production teams. Some elements that mark each of these spaces will be explored next.

The social movements, though mainly related to the rural area, are not limited to it in the sense that they are articulated and are the focus of movements and organizations that are active in the cities, around issues as food safety and sovereignty, consumption of healthy food, urban agriculture, sustainable healthy and democratic cities, among others. According to Gohn¹², several social movements that emerged in the past three to four decades are characterized by their pluri-agendas and new modalities of leaderships, mottos and political subjects. Innumerable issues are raised and updated in the social struggles that were elected, among them, those for agrarian reform and agro-ecological transition

drawing on peasant and family agriculture. These struggles also incorporate issues like identity, race and gender, territories, cultures and cosmovisions. This implies the retrieval, updating and re-signification of the senses of life, work, economy, development, health and nature, among others. Therefore, the dimension of the struggle against colonialism and for cognitive justice is also very relevant.

In relation to the place of the academy, several groups of collective health research, particularly in the areas of health and environment, worker's health, health promotion, and nutrition and health, have focused their work in the past 20 years on the issue of pesticides, and many of them have been assuming a militant perspective articulated with social movements. These groups gather researchers of various disciplines (clinical, toxicology, social sciences, nutrition, and engineering, among others) with an interdisciplinary approach. They incorporate what the authors of the epistemologies of the South have called internal plurality of science, referring to scientists who work the interfaces between various paradigms and, in the case of the authors of this study, are open to the dialogue with social movements and their struggles. Besides the universities, these groups included institutions on the federal sphere that have been assuming an outstanding role in this discussion, such as Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (FIOCRUZ) and the National Cancer Institute (INCA), the latter due to the increasing concern about the consumption of pesticide-contaminated food as risk factors for cancer.

Finally, the place of the documentary, the filmmaker and the work team is, possibly, the least known in the field of collective health and requires a quick reflection. For Jean-Claude Carrière¹³, French screenwriter and writer, who is a reference in the studies on the relation between education, philosophy and art, the film and its production team retrieve, with the current technological resources, an ancient function, simultaneously magic and educative: that of telling articulated stories,

but differentiated from other narratives like poetry, romance and philosophy.

In a more social and critical perspective, cinema, especially the documentary cinema, has been a privileged space to reflect about the perverse effects of the current capitalist, colonial and patriarchal society, as well as to circulate ideas and practices to a broader public about the denounces and alternatives for social, economic and political transformations. In Brazil, the documentary as transformative social practice is known for several decades, especially after the emergence of Cinema Novo (New Cinema), in which several filmmakers reflect about the country and its problems, the inequalities, the periphery, the *favela*, the miserable, the struggle for agrarian reform, the *sertão* (the backlands) and hunger.

In this study, we seek to understand the audio-visual as a strategy of knowledge production and visibility of the emancipatory struggles³. In this perspective, the sociology of images of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui¹⁴ advances on the proposal of a visual anthropology connected to the social struggles, because it enables a variety of voices and expressions that multiply to visions produced in them. There is not only the author's text, but the emergence of the vision on other visions in a collective construction. For the author and her proposal, the audio-visual presents itself as a democratic principle through image, in which the others do not emerge as elements of capture, but as collective subjects of action that express their forms of being and getting to know by means of their gestures, speeches and visions. In this sense, the audio-visual is harmonized with the ecology of knowledge and the intercultural dialogue by working with the emergence of multiple languages, senses and expressions originating in the territory and in popular culture. An audio-visual that does not belong to a subject and that enables the escape of the capture and imprisonment of a narrative of loyalty to the so-called facts that the colonial writing so much seeks to value as to validate its discourse. Therefore, the similarity

between the colonizer's audio-visual narrative and the scientific practice that also distances itself and undervalues knowledges and experiences originating from the movements and communities. This proposal of expression of movement image is immerse in the strength of daily life, enabled by the audio-visual and by its meanings, speeches, colors, poetry and knowledges that approximate the presence of the other as subject and actor, making daily life be an element capable of promoting other sensitive and perception possibilities of communication of knowledges and affections.

In the case of the documentaries that are the empirical object of this study, the central issue lies in the bet that they can express multiple voices and knowledges, being spaces of articulation, co-labor-action and co-creation, promoting the construction and broadening of intercultural dialogues around the mottes that move them, as well as the encounter of interdisciplinary dialogues involving distinct knowledges and collaborative practices³. In this logic, they express possibilities of approximation between scientific knowledges and those produced by the social subjects, including ethical, artisanal and artistic knowledges and processes that merge reason and affection, the basis of *corazonar*¹⁵. Therefore, the documentaries promote, articulate and create possibilities of communication that are more dialogical and polyphonic, as well as are able to inspire new forms of knowledge production, more shared and creative, directed to social transformation.

Presentation of the documentaries analyzed: voices and knowledges on scene

This section presents a brief analysis of the two documentaries that illustrate the proposal of this article. They were selected drawing on criteria such as the articulation with the struggles

of social movements against pesticides and for agroecology; they are considered as relevant for the set of networks, forums, articulations and engaged research groups that work on the theme; they comprise in their production the participation of representatives of the three aforementioned spaces (social movements, academia, and engaged cinema).

Three questions oriented the analysis of the selected documentaries:

1. Notions like the abyssal line and the construction of an ecology of knowledges are translated in the production of the documentaries, by means of the incorporation, explicitness and articulation of a plurality of knowledges in a dialogue beyond the scientific knowledges, besides pointing to radical exclusions?
2. In what manner do the documentaries express a plurality of voices that compose the movements and struggles against pesticides and for agroecology, promoting an intercultural dialogue?
3. How does the production of the documentaries suggest clues for the construction of an ecology of knowledges, insofar as they raise the visibility of subjects excluded with their knowledges and experiences (sociology of absences¹⁶), or indicate new alternatives for the transition to post-abyssal societies (sociology of emergences¹⁶)?

In this study, narrative interviews were conducted with representatives of these three spaces, filmmakers, scientists and social movement leaders, involved in the production of the documentaries, enabling to involve them as storytellers. Considering that the aim was to construct inter-subjectivities that enabled the emergence of significant accounts³, the research was thought in the perspective of a co-creation with these subjects. Thus, they are not merely sources of information, but adopt an active role in the production of knowledge,

i.e., they co-elaborate in an ethical, political and epistemological nature, so that they are strengthened in their emancipatory struggles for recognition and dignity. The interviews are comprised in the project approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Sergio Arouca National School of Public Health of FIOCRUZ, and the interviewees signed the Free Informed Consent Form.

The narrative interviews are presented as an artisanal, non-structured resource that seeks the deepness of the content, from which emerge the life stories, subjective experiences, i.e., significant accounts that can be transmitted. It is in this conception that a sensitive and co-labor-active methodology was developed, which becomes close to *corazonar*, in the sense that it proposes that the interaction with the research subjects enables a space for the exercise of perceptive and intuitive resources.

The first documentary is 'The Poison is on the Table', 48 min., directed by Silvio Tandler, released in 2011. It results from the creation of the Permanent Campaign Against Pesticides and for Life (Campanha Permanente Contra os Agrotóxicos e Pela Vida). The film was produced in a strong articulation with the Campaign, the social movements and the participating militant researchers. The dynamics of the film sought to follow the five initial strategic objectives of the Campaign: i) construct a process of awareness about the threats of pesticides and transgenics; ii) articulate environmentalists, peasants, urban workers, students and consumers in the defense of the environment and healthy food; iii) denounce and make responsible the firms that produce and commercialize pesticides; iv) create forms of restrictions to the use of poison and to prevent its expansion, including new legal bases and governmental policies; v) changes in the current agricultural model toward a peasant and agro-ecological agriculture.

Interviews were conducted with the filmmaker director of the documentary, with the national coordinator of the Campaign at the time and social movement militant of the

Movimento dos Pequenos Agricultores (MPA) (Movement of Small Agriculture Producers), and a militant researcher of FIOCRUZ who supported its realization. The narrative analysis of the film divided it into 17 scenes, with an intense variety of voices, images and data that presented, often in a denouncing tone, the various elements that compose the objectives and the focus of the denounce. There is a profusion of speeches providing a fast and intense movement to the documentary, with frequent use of news from the hegemonic media to reinforce the denouncement of the impacts of pesticides, but also to present the concurrent and hegemonic discourse of the agribusiness. The denouncement is predominant during most of the film, but the final minutes shed a light of hope with the ongoing experiences of agro-ecological production and healthy food.

The second documentary is 'Chapada do Apodi, morte e vida' (Plateau of Apodi, death and life, Free translation), 27 min., directed by Tiago Carvalho, released in 2013. The film is part of the project Curta Agroecologia (Short Film Agroecology) launched by the Articulação Nacional de Agroecologia (ANA) (National Articulation for Agroecology) at the People's Summit in Rio+20 in 2012, with the aim of depicting experiences in agroecology in Brazil. The selection of the history of pesticides in Chapada do Apodi, in Ceará state (CE), was based on two aspects: on the one hand, the region was a reference in agroecological production in the coexistence with the semi-arid; on the other hand, it was part of the territory coveted by agribusiness and with a history of conflicts. Documenting the occurrences was considered important so that the society could reflect about the different models of agricultural developments in Brazil. This study conducted interviews with the film director, the executive secretary of ANA at the time, the researcher and coordinator of the Nucleus Tramas (Work, Environment and Health) of the Federal University of Ceará (UFC), and a peasant and union leader of the region. The narrative analysis of the film

divided it in 21 scenes, many of them with beautiful images and moments when the sound design merges music with the sound of footsteps or rain. In the documentary there is no narrative voice; a voice-off narrates and conducts in the background the sequence of images. The interviewees' narratives, occupying a relatively shorter part, merge with scenes of daily life, like people going to work, applying pesticides, or the dramatic collective walk of the São Tomé community's tribute to the leader Zé Maria three years after his brutal murder. According to later judicial investigation, an agribusiness entrepreneur of the region ordered the murder. These scenes narrate the story, like embroidering a carpet with vibrant colors of a live memory of experiences of the subjects involved in this struggle.

Unfinished dialogues: light, camera and co-creation to inspire knowledges production

The set of films seek to make clear that many voices are disregarded when it comes to the issue of agribusiness, pesticides, and the alternatives of peasant and agroecological agriculture. Through the lens of the sociology of absences, the documentaries seek to demonstrate how the hegemonic media and several public spaces disregard such discourses and voices. The films raise issues such as the health of workers and excluded populations, the disrespect for nature and biodiversity, which largely result from an active process of making invisible realities considered as unqualified, unintelligible and disposable by the logic of globalized neoliberal capitalism. The alternative voices that emerge in the documentaries articulate with the aim of transforming these absences into presences seeking to retrieve the autonomy of silenced voices of peasants and family agriculture producers.

The two documentaries became instruments for the struggle of the communities involved both directly in the production and later in the circulation of the videos, which was made by means of different strategies, like debates in schools, universities, rural unions, and even on the local level in communities and small municipalities, with large-screen projections on the public square. The interviews conducted with filmmakers, social movement leaders and militant researchers show everyone's active action in the films production, though with differentiated roles and weights. In 'The Poison is on the Table', these three types of actors participated actively in the entire production process, from the construction of the argument and screenplay, the selection of experiences and places to be registered, the final edition and, later, the documentary's circulation, with a qualified process of debates in several places and contexts throughout the country. In the 'Plateau of Apodi, death and life', the voices of the filmmaker and the social movement appear around the proposals of ANA, with the participation of its executive secretariat in the entire production process. The voice of the militant science appears strongly as research source for the argument and screenplay; and due to its relevance in the region, it contributes in an essential way to the approximation of the filmmaker with local communities and entities, besides being present along the film.

The existence of different knowledges and the various encounters between them are present in the two analyzed documentaries. This results not only from the influence of Boaventura de Sousa Santos' work on the researchers, but also from the commitment of researchers and filmmakers with the social struggles.

In the documentary 'Plateau of Apodi, death and life', the rural workers presented in some parts have knowledges circumscribed to their insertion depending on the work they perform in the fruit cultivation of agribusiness and the lack of other options. This demarcates one of the most complex challenges addressed

by the film about how to advance in the social struggles drawing on the articulation of two situations that tend to be opposed. On the one hand, the recognition and broadening of alternatives of fighting agribusiness through agrarian reform and agroecology; on the other hand, the local and innumerable families' economic dependence on agribusiness, even in circumstances in which there is recognition and experience of the suffering caused by pesticides and other forms of labor exploitation. The solution is in the capacity to reinvent the struggle in the face of extreme adversities, which is made clear from the highlight given to the demonstration in a tribute to the community leader Zé Maria three years after his death, and from the voice of the local peasant leader, who does not admit to lose the conquests achieved with the struggle for the land and agroecology. Knowledge impregnated in the bodies and experiences faced in the celebration of the dignity of Zé Maria's struggle and life.

The film 'The Poison is on the Table' also expresses an ecology of knowledges by the strong articulation built through the Campaign Against Pesticides between social movements and militant scientists, particularly of collective health. It combines voices and knowledges of agricultural producers, technicians and scientists, many as voice-off, which are complementarily articulated with each other. The film follows Paulo Freire's teachings that there are no higher or lower knowledges, those that are more than the others; there are different knowledges. The scientific argument is followed all along the film by the voices and knowledges of the agricultural producers who lived or live the perverse effects of the impacts of pesticides on their bodies. Another significant characteristic is the systematic connection between the origins and structural causes of the health problems presented, which associate the use of pesticides to wars and multinational industries that, later on, supported the industrial agricultural model dependent on pesticides. The initial and final

voices by the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano address the central contradiction to be overcome in Latin America in relation to the development model, adopted even by so-called left-wing progressive governments.

These films potentiate the realignment between creativity, autonomy and social transformation, both in the understanding and social production of new meanings and the in knowledge production. This occurs by means of conceptions that re-signify themes such as work, health and nature. This capacity to ally the production of new knowledge and practices, inseparable in the post-colonial approaches of relations of power and knowledge, seeks the rupture with the existing alienation in the very academic world, whose pretense exemption and objectivity functions as a trap that distances science from ethics.

In the films, the feelings are either of indignation or vibration and passion, from not only the agricultural producers engaged in the resistances, denounces and the announcements of agroecology, but also of the militant researchers. Therefore, the engaged documentaries analyzed in this study enable, through co-labor-action, co-production and co-creation, to create communicational and epistemological strategies that help to re-approximate science, art, social transformation and wisdom.

The importance of this theme stands out when considering that the approximation of creative and engaged work processes of science and documentary can serve as source of inspiration for the construction of sensitive and co-labor-active methodologies. In these, the production of knowledge should promote more fluid and hybrid forms of integration of creative languages and practices, commonly separated, to be used by science, art and political action toward social transformation. In other words, this fluid circulation of frontiers enables the theoretical-methodological renewal and the emergence of scientific practices not only more socially engaged, but also sensible, precisely for connecting the capacity

of understanding and the experience, or still, reason and affection. This is central in Paulo Freire's work and his idea of communication as making common, which Latin American authors connected to Andean cosmologies have recently denominated *corazonar* the academia. This perspective complements and advances the idea of decolonizing the academia, proposed in post-colonial schools of critical thinking such as the epistemologies of the South.

To conclude, the arguments of Walter Benjamin¹⁷ reverberate when reflecting about the contemporary loss of knowledges woven in the experiences, the wisdom, and expressed by different non-logocentric or abstract narratives, which are by excellence the principal language of scientific knowledge, hence, become distant from life and social struggles. In consonance with Benjamin, Ailton Krenak¹⁸ affirms that this era is specialized in creating absences in the sense of living in society and the very sense of life experience. To confront these absences, Krenak proposes to maintain the capacity of narrating stories that unite people, because the narratives are the fruit of the experience of circulating through the world; and being able to tell one another these stories enables to continue to live. Cinema, as other arts, can assume a strong artisanal character in its process of realization and

creation in the capacity of generating alternative narratives. In the case of the engaged documentaries analyzed in this study, emerge collaborative and solidary practices that contribute to producing syntheses, facing limits and constructing alternatives drawing on what arises from the dialogue between social movements and scientists. A beautiful example of *corazonar* to be followed by collective health in knowledge production.

Acknowledgment

We would like to thank the Graduate Program in Public Health at Sergio Arouca National School of Public Health, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (PPGSP, ENSP/FIOCRUZ) for their support.

Collaborators

Fasanello MT (0000-0003-4759-5075)* contributed to the conceptual and methodological development, analysis and discussion of results, and manuscript production. Porto MF (0000-0002-9007-0584)* contributed to the discussion of results, elaboration of introduction and conclusion of the manuscript, and final revision. ■

*Orcid (Open Researcher and Contributor ID).

References

1. Porto MF. Crise das utopias e as quatro justiças: ecologias, epistemologias e emancipação social para reinventar a saúde coletiva. *Ciênc. Saúde Colet.* 2019; 24(12):4449-4458.
2. Freire P. *Extensão ou comunicação?* 3. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra; 1977.
3. Fasanello MF. *O documentário nas lutas emancipatórias dos movimentos sociais do campo: produção social de sentidos e epistemologias do Sul contra os agrotóxicos e pela agroecologia.* [tese]. Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Oswaldo Cruz; 2018. 320 p. [acesso em 2021 mar 25]. Disponível em: https://neepes.ensp.fiocruz.br/sites/default/files/tese_final_marina_fasanello.pdf#overlay-context=users/acavalcanti.
4. Santos BS. *O Fim do Império Cognitivo.* Coimbra: Almedina; 2018.
5. Read H. *A Educação pela Arte.* São Paulo: Martins Fontes; 2001.
6. Dewey J. *A arte como experiência.* São Paulo: Martins Fontes; 2012.
7. Santos BS, Meneses MP. *Epistemologias do Sul.* São Paulo: Cortez Editora; 2014.
8. Wallerstein I. *The capitalist world-economy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University; 1979.
9. Santos BS, Araujo S, Baumgarten M. As Epistemologias do Sul num mundo fora do mapa. *Sociologias, Porto Alegre.* 2016; 18(43):14-23.
10. Santos BS. *A crítica da razão indolente: contra o desperdício da experiência.* São Paulo: Cortez; 2000.
11. Gudynas E, Acosta A. La renovación de la crítica al desarrollo y el buen vivir como alternativa. *Utopía y Praxis Lat.* 2011; 16(53):71-83.
12. Gohn MG. Abordagens teóricas no estudo dos movimentos sociais na América Latina. *Caderno CRH, Salvador.* 2008; 21(54):439-455.
13. Carrière JC. *O Círculo dos Mentirosos.* São Paulo: Códex; 2004.
14. Cusicanqui SR. *Sociología de la Imagen: ensayos.* Buenos Aires: Tinta Limón; 2015.
15. Guerrero-Arias P. Corazonar el sentido de las epistemologías dominantes. Desde las sabidurías insurgentes, para construir sentidos otros de la existencia. *Calle 14: Rev. Invest. En El Campo Del Arte.* 2010; 4(5):80-95.
16. Santos BS. Para uma sociologia das ausências e uma sociologia das emergências. *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais.* 2002; 62:237-280.
17. Benjamin W. O contador de histórias: Reflexões sobre a obra de Nikolai Leskov. In: Benjamin W. *Walter Benjamin: Linguagem, tradução e literatura. Obras Escolhidas de Walter Benjamin 5.* Porto: Assírio & Alvim; 2015 (edição e tradução de João Barrento). p. 147-178.
18. Krenak A. *Ideias para adiar o fim do mundo.* São Paulo: Companhia das Letras; 2019.

Received on 11/01/2021

Approved on 08/09/2022

Conflict of interests: non-existent

Financial support: Foundation for Research Support of the State of Rio de Janeiro (FAPERJ). Doctoral Scholarship Note 10