

Morettin, Eduardo; Napolitano, Marcos;
Kornis, Mônica Almeida (Org.)
História e documentário

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Over the past 15 years audiovisual elements have occupied a privileged space in historiographic production, both as object and source, especially in its most engaging and instigating form: the cinema. Within this form, one genre, we can say, raises concerns with regard to analysis, precisely because it shares with history the treatment given to the notions of truth and reality: the documentary.

Seeking to enrich the debate about the use of audiovisual elements, specifically the documentary as an object and source of history, Eduardo Morettin and Mark Napolitano, professors from USP, and Monica Almeida Kornis, from Fundação Getulio Vargas, have organized *História e Documentário*, containing texts which, taken together, represent the result of research carried out by the CNPq research group called “História e Audiovisual: circularidades e formas de comunicação” (History and the Audiovisual: circularities and forms of communication), coordinated by the first two professors named above.

In their presentation the organizers emphasize two aspects that justify the publication of this collective work: the first, as already mentioned, is the expansion of historical research that privileges cinema as source and object, importing to the theoretical field of this analysis concerns with cinematographic aesthetics and narrative; and secondly, the leading role that the documentary has been occupying since the mid-1990s in Brazilian film production and, consequently, in research and critical academic reflection. The works presented here reflect these concerns: the connecting of historical narrative with the peculiarities of film narrative, and the representation of the past, working with the concepts of truth and reality, which are related to the concerns of both researchers and documentary film makers.

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Because of this general connection, the chapters form a harmonious whole, highlighting affinities between some in relation to the sources researched or the theoretical treatment used. The papers of Eduardo Morettin (“Dimensões históricas do documentário brasileiro no período silencioso” – Historical dimensions of the Brazilian documentary in the silent period) and Xavier (“Progresso, disciplina fabril e descontração operária: retóricas do documentário brasileiro silencioso” – Progress, factory discipline and worker relaxation: rhetoric of the silent Brazilian documentary), in discussing the early days of documentary film production shed light on the various uses of images produced at that time and their own historicity. In these two texts we can find an analysis concerned with the distance between the objective of the original production and the possible uses of the produced images; this distance is revealing and allows the construction of various relationships, which ultimately enrich the meaning of those same images.

A second group, analyzing documentaries inspired by the imagetic experience of the Department of Press and Propaganda (DIP) of the *Estado Novo*, contains texts by Monica Almeida Kornis (“Imagens do autoritarismo em tempos de democracia: estratégias de propaganda na campanha presidencial de Vargas de 1950” – Images of authoritarianism in times of democracy: advertising strategies in Vargas’ 1950 presidential campaign), Rodrigo Archangelo (“O Bandeirante da Tela: cenas políticas do adhemarismo em São Paulo – 1947-1956” – The *Bandeirante* On Screen: *Adhemarist* political scenes in Sao Paulo – 1947-1956), and Reinaldo Cardenuto (“O golpe no cinema: Jean Manzon à sombra do Ipês” – The coup in the cinema: Jean Manzon in the shadow of Ipês). Highlighted in these texts is a concern with the link between political propaganda and a certain aesthetic of documentary cinema inaugurated by DIP, but enriched through the expansion of the means of communication, such as radio, and the cinema exhibition market itself, with a greater number of cinemas and the apogee of popular musical comedies, the *chanchadas*. While at first, during Getúlio Vargas’ presidential campaign, we can find an aesthetic still attached to the proposals of the DIP, in a second moment, during Adhemar de Barros’s campaigns, a sensitive transition can be noted, and, at a third moment, the productions of Jean Manzon, we can note the incorporation of stylistic features characteristic of fictional US cinema and even of Brazilian *chanchadas*.

A third group includes the texts that deal with image archives. Mark Napolitano (“Nunca é cedo para se fazer história: o documentário *Jango*, de Silvio Tendler – 1984” – It’s never too early to make history: the 1984

documentary Jango, by Silvio Tendler) and Rosane Kaminski (“*Yndio do Brasil*, de Silvio Back: história de imagens, história com imagens” – *Yndio do Brasil* by Silvio Back: history of images, history with images) deal with national productions, analyzing films by two prolific filmmakers: Silvio Tendler and Silvio Back. In both papers the analysis of the narrative film is intermediated by the analysis of the historical narrative, since the filmmakers were concerned about presenting their versions and conclusions, linking images and discourses. In another text, Henri Arraes Gervaiseau (“Imagens do passado: noções e usos contemporâneos” – Images of the Past: notions and contemporary uses) examines the documentary *Videogramas de uma revolução* (Videograms of a revolution), by Harun Farocki and Andrei Ujica, about the overthrow of the Nicolae Ceausescu dictatorship, produced in 1992, drawing on the theoretical formulations of Georges Didi-Huberman, which privileges the moment of the production of the image, the experience of those who produce and their relation with the image produced, thereby consecrating the notion of contemporaneity, external to the film, but whose understanding becomes necessary for a better understanding.

Also in this third group are the works of Mariana Martins Villaça (“O ‘cine de combate’ da Cinemateca del Tercer Mundo – 1969-1973” – The ‘combat cine’ of the Cinemateca del Tercer Mundo – 1969-1973”) and Vicente Sanchez-Biosca (“A história e a providência: cinema e carisma na representação de Franco e José Antonio Primo de Rivera” – History and providence: cinema and charisma in the representation of Franco and José Antonio Primo de Rivera) work with antagonistic proposals: the Uruguayan production deals with Third World revolution, while the Spanish production praises Iberian fascism; each one of which, speaking from their own place, not only reveals the ideological options but also the stylistic options through which they seek to present their proposals in the most convincing way possible.

Finally, in Fernando Seliprandy’s paper (“Instruções documentarizantes no filme *O que é isso, companheiro?*” – Documentary instructions in the film *O que é isso, companheiro?*), he uses the concept of ‘documentary instructions,’ formulated by Roger Odin, to analyze Bruno Barreto’s production and the debate that surrounded it. Here, once again, the concept of truth, present in filmic narrative and historical narrative, is called into question: the induction of the viewer, led to understand the film as a representation of reality, is confronted by the induction produced by critical texts and analyzes of the same film, which also appear as revealing *what really happened*.

This collective work rejects the ambition to frame itself as a reference of rigid perspectives about the role of newsreels and documentaries for historical studies, proposing instead to start a debate about the rich relationship between this cinema genre and history. Since this debate started long ago, we believe that *História e documentário* has the function of enriching it and more than this it does serve, despite the modesty of its organizers, as an important reference for those interested in the relationship between history and cinema, whether or not they are researchers, but, certainly, for all those enchanted by the moving image.

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