

As the wind blows. Sound landscapes in Brazilian cinema: from Rocha to Mascaro

Según el favor del viento. Paisajes sonoros en el cine brasileño: de Rocha a Mascaro

Según el favor del viento. Paisagens sonoras no cinema brasileiro: de Rocha a Mascaro

JULIA KRATJE, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Universidad Nacional de las Artes/CONICET, Buenos Aires, Argentina
(juliakratje@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This article comparatively analyzes the films *Barravento* (1962), the first film by Glauber Rocha, emblematic of *Cinema Novo*, and *Ventos de agosto* (2014), by Gabriel Mascaro, from the *Novíssimo Cinema Brasileiro*. The focus on the wind seeks to think the relationship between cinema and politics. These two films capture the course of the wind from opposite dimensions –violence or emptiness, the storm or the swirling breeze– that allow us to reflect on the forms of the sensible from the dynamics of the imperceptible.

Keywords: Cinema Novo; Novíssimo Cinema Brasileiro; soundscape; gender.

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza comparativamente los films Barravento (1962), primer largometraje de Glauber Rocha, emblemático del Cinema Novo, y Ventos de agosto (2014) de Gabriel Mascaro, del Novíssimo Cinema Brasileiro. El foco puesto en el viento busca pensar los modos de figurar la relación entre el cine y lo político. Estas dos películas capturan el rumbo del viento desde dimensiones opuestas –la violencia o la vacuidad, la tempestad o la brisa arremolinada– que permiten ensayar una reflexión sobre las formas de lo sensible a partir de las dinámicas de lo imperceptible.

Palabras clave: Cinema Novo; Novíssimo Cinema Brasileiro; paisaje sonoro; género.

RESUMO

O artigo analisa comparativamente os filmes *Barravento* (1962), o primeiro de Glauber Rocha, emblemático do *Cinema Novo*, e *Ventos de agosto* (2014) de Gabriel Mascaro, do *Novíssimo Cinema Brasileiro*. O foco colocado no vento procura pensar sobre as formas de mostrar a relação entre cinema e política. São dois filmes que captam o curso do vento a partir de dimensões opostas –violência ou vazio, a tempestade ou a brisa em espiral– que permitem ensaiar uma reflexão sobre as formas do sensível a partir da dinâmica do imperceptível.

Palavras-chave: Cinema Novo; Novíssimo Cinema Brasileiro; paisagem sonora; gênero.

How to cite:

Kratje, J. (2018). Según el favor del viento. Paisajes sonoros en el cine brasileño: de Rocha a Mascaro. *Cuadernos.info*, (43), 107-119. <https://doi.org/10.7764/cdi.43.1419>

INTRODUCTION

“The wind is very photogenic”, said Michelangelo Antonioni (cited in Grüner, 2017, p. 33) in an interview about a Blow Up sequence shot that ends at the top of trees agitated by the breeze. Like a silent language always on the lookout, the wind expresses itself through the elements it finds on its path, displaying an atlas of worldly sounds. And when the cinema seeks to film the wind, it follows it, it waits for it, it confronts it, or it lets itself be carried away by its unpredictable air currents. “How to give home and warmth to what is fleeting without crushing its singularity?”, asks Laura Spiner (2017, p. 70) about the first aerodynamic photographs of Étienne-Jules Marey which, at the beginning of the 20th century, managed to register the air and made its intangible mechanics visible.

Windstorms, typhoons, squalls, tornadoes: the hyperboles of the wind intensify their invisible presence, which can nevertheless be devastating. As Gaston Bachelard (2012) points out, hearing is more dramatic than seeing: “In the daydream of the storm, it is not the eye that provides the images, it is the *amazed ear*” (p. 281). The song of the leaves, the clouds that float in space, the smoke of the chimneys, the fire embracing the tree: the wind is an air that travels. It was not by chance that Paracelsus, the alchemist, equated it to chaos.

Serge Daney (1998) says: “When the cinema was ‘silent’, we were free to lend it *all* the noises, the negligible and the intimate too. When it started talking, and especially after the invention of dubbing (1935), nothing would resist the irruption (*déferlement*) of dialogue and music. The weak, imperceptible noises would no longer have any chance. That was a genocide” (p. 129). *Trop tôt, trop tard* (1982), by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub, is for Daney one of those rare films that have taken care of catching the wind, of making it visible –and audible– to believe it. The sonorities of the landscape, the movement of the wind, would connect this meteorological cinema with its silent beginnings, as they appear in *The Wind* (1928), by Victor Sjöström.

In this regard, a certain type of cinema offers an acoustic map where its ephemeral resonances, its passing effects, and its original hallucinations are reflected. In the pages that follow, I want to present a comparative study of *Barravento* (1962), the first feature film directed by Glauber Rocha, an emblematic film from the early stage of *Cinema Novo*¹, and *Ventos de Agosto* (2014), by Gabriel Mascaro, filmmaker of the *Novíssimo Cinema Brasileiro*². The focus of the analysis uses the wind as an excuse to think about the ways in which we

figure out the relationship between cinema and politics, between cinema and politics of representation.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The comparison between both works, which belong to distant sociohistorical moments, highlights the relationship between poetics and politics through the meteorological phenomenon of the wind and its ideological implications to understand the tensions between community, religion, nature, and history. These questions are investigated from interdisciplinary qualitative perspectives that attempt to show the counterpoint that images and sounds provide regarding the ways of narrating social inequalities, mainly class and gender problems. From critical perspectives of film analysis and feminist film theory, in which this essay is grounded (Amado, 2009; Colaizzi, 2007; de Lauretis, 1996), this study entails a consideration of the visual and sound dimensions of film, with the latter constituting an original object of study in the current state of research on Latin American cinema³.

First, I analyze Glauber Rocha’s film from the perspective of a series of significant sequences to investigate its audiovisual procedures regarding the relationship between politics, nature, and religion. Second, using the notions of gender and sexuality as a starting point for the comparison of *Barravento* and *Ventos de Agosto*, I conduct a critical study of Gabriel Mascaro’s film from the climatic repercussions of the landscape in the daily life of its characters. Considering continuity, as well as the inescapable disparities of the production and circulation contexts of both works, in the conclusions I offer a synthesis of the comparative study. These are two films that capture the course of the wind from opposite dimensions, violence or emptiness, the storm or the swirling breeze, which allow us to practice reflecting on the forms of the sensible from the dynamics of the imperceptible.

CINEMATOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

THE CRY OF THE STORM: ON *BARRAVENTO* (GLAUBER ROCHA, 1962)

The film by Glauber Rocha, dedicated to the fishermen of a town in Bahia, Brazil, opens with the following text that explains the meaning of the name *Barravento*:

On the coast of Bahia live the black fishermen of 'xareu', whose ancestors came as slaves from Africa. Until today, the cults to the African gods remain and this entire town is dominated by a tragic and fatalistic mysticism. They accept misery, illiteracy, and exploitation with the passive characteristic of those who wait for the divine kingdom. 'Yemanjá' is the queen of the waters, 'the old mother of Irecé', mistress of the sea who loves, cares for, and punishes the fishermen. 'Barravento' is the moment of violence, when the things of the earth and the sea are transformed, when sudden changes take place in love, in life, and in the social environment (Netto & Rocha, 1962).

During the opening lines and along the successive sequences, a song rooted in the candomblé culture begins. An expression of the religious syncretism led since the 18th century by the conceptions of the ethnic groups *jêje-nagôs*, the candomblé incorporates, melts, and synthesizes the cults of African blacks and natives with popular Catholicism and spiritualism. Thus, in this ritual, the worlds of gods, ancestral beings, and humans are confused and mixed. The song, which alternates choir and soloist, evokes the sea –the way by which Portuguese people arrived in America, the genesis of the conquest and the anti-colonialist struggles– as a founding myth for the fishing community of Buraquinho.

The first image of *Barravento* shows a moving shot of the sky full of thick clouds. Next, the camera focuses from the shore on the stormy sea, whose sound is incorporated into the visual scene. In the center of the next shot, a man playing with a fast rhythm and banging the *atabaque grande* (called *rum*⁴) looks towards the camera. The percussion, synchronized with the image (with some mismatches that are difficult to perceive at first sight), is superimposed on the previous music. With the title, another song is articulated by juxtaposition. The graphics of the different movie credits, which contain illustrations of fish, swirls, and other symbols associated with the iconology of the Bahian ritual, uses uppercase letters, drawings, and objects surrounding the environment, heavy with a baroque style, an excess that manifests itself, especially, in the superimposition of visual elements with the soundtrack. When the illustration of a *berimbau* is shown, the sound of this instrument appears, and after a few seconds, it is replaced by a song without music.

As shown by these first sequences, all musical inputs are introduced *in medias res* and articulated without foreseeable links. The sounds have a relationship

of coherence (which does not necessarily imply coincidence) with the rhythm of the bodies in the maritime environment. Indeed, the music turns the movement into a dynamic composition which staging exalts the collective coordination of bodies during different daily activities, such as fishing and dancing. The theatricality presented in the declamation of the characters, with their speeches, costumes, and choreographed actions, acquires its greatest strength in the density of the acoustic universe: just as the beach is not treated only as a landscape, intended for the viewer to contemplate the beauty of the Bahia coast, the convulsive, voracious, and excessive music is not purely a decorative element of the film either. There is, therefore, a soundtrack that, like the irrepressible wind that in a key moment causes the death of two fishermen, does not acknowledge clear limits between the diegetic and extradiegetic planes. In Rocha, to the beat of the wind, the sound transcends the enunciative borders.

Politics and religion are put in tension throughout the first part of the film: the candomblé is opposed, in principle, to the demystifying discourse of Firmino, a man who returns to the village with a certain aura of dandyism after fleeing poverty. Firmino says to the fishermen: "I am free like a fish in the sea, but nobody catches me. (...) Candomblé does not solve anything. You came to this life to suffer. We need to fight, resist, the time is coming. (...) When their stomach hurt, they will wake up" (Netto & Rocha, 1962). Men need suffering and a sudden conversion to initiate a transforming praxis: such is the message that this messianic figure brings against the oppression of capitalism and religious mystification. Thus, if the wind is a way to make the intangible present, then freedom is conceived as an action exercised against culture as a second invisible nature. Like a fish in the water, the man perceives the atmosphere to the extent that weather conditions (mainly climate) cause a more or less abrupt mutation of the environment. At this point, by opposing the myth that proposes the immobility of nature, the film communicates through Firmino its Brechtian perspective, which represents the hidden dynamics of the revolutionary force by drawing back the ancestral veil of nature as a background for the story.

The fishing village is the microcosm in which the drama of the black community expresses itself in society and in nature: the sea, palm trees, sand, sky, beach, shaken by the wind, participate in a cosmic, climatic, general revolt. Inspired by the choral

conception of Sergei Eisenstein's cinema, *Barravento* insistently loads the scenes with simultaneities and contradictions: "It infiltrates the dialectic into the idealism of *macumba*", as Rocha points out (2004, p. 346). Specifically, there are similarities with the musical structure of *Alexander Nevski* (1938), composed by Sergei Prokofiev following the counterpoint theory⁵, as well as some ideological affinities in the plot: "We should be fighting; not mending networks" (Vakar & Eisenstein, 1938), says the Soviet leader against the attack of the Teutons, and then tears up the fabric with his hands⁶.

However, beyond these approaches, as stated by Robert Stam (2015):

While Brechtianism deploys contradiction and disjunction between image and sound, here Rocha goes farther by a staging of the historical contradictions between vast cultural complexes existing in relations of subordination and domination, where the Chalice (or *Cale-se* –Shut up– as Chico Buarque would put it) of Catholicism is superimposed by music which incarnates precisely the religion historically suppressed by Christianity. Here music represents not merely a factor of disjunction but also the return of the historically repressed (p. 227).

Religiosity and political praxis appear as antagonistic forces that, in a certain way, are attracted due to the resonances of *candomblé*. The dualities between nature and culture, mysticism and Marxism, and geography and history become entangled as the film progresses. Thus, the criticism with Marxist reverberations of religion as alienation becomes tropicalized⁷. An Afro-Brazilian trance aesthetic is mixed with Firmino's posture to such an extent that, in the end, after showing a procession in mourning for the drowned fishermen, a capoeira song is incorporated that says: "*Vou para Bahia para ver si o dinheiro corre / Vou para Bahia para ver si o dinheiro corre / Si o dinheiro não corre, ay deus / Hoje de fome ninguém more / E, Barravento olelé, e Barravento olalá*".

Nature and politics are intricate in the struggle for survival. The relationships between body, work, and exploitation are aesthetically represented in the climatic phenomena of the coastal landscape (winds, storms, tides) and in the dances and rituals derived from a past of slavery (such as the *samba de roda*, capoeira, *candomblé*). Nature and social relationships share the experiences of convulsion, violence, and

sensuality activated by the wind. The main aesthetic treatment of this agitation movement is musical: the sounds of the environment, the songs, and the percussion move the bodies while intensifying the aggressive transformations of the landscape⁸. Under extreme precariousness, the climate becomes a determining factor of the life of the inhabitants. They struggle to survive the drama of the violent air. An unbridled whistle that makes the earth tremble reveals that climatic forces are a threat to life in situations of plundering.

For Gernot Böhme and Hartmut Böhme (2012), "the storm and the hurricane are synonymous to violent attacks and overwhelming powers that even designate, in different ways, the behavior and affective experiences of human beings. Thus, we can speak, militarily, of a 'stormy' attack, or of a sentimental storm and a hurricane of passions" (p. 350). In this same vein, Bachelard (2012) states that the wind is the symbol of "*pure anger*, of anger without object, without pretext" (p. 278). The author of *Air and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Movement* is thinking of a wind that crosses an immense void; a cosmos suddenly shaken by the action of a tempest without preparation, without cause (like the one that bursts into Joseph Conrad's *Typhoon*). Unlike these winds, in Rocha's film the waves are agitated with a fury that permeates society and which resonance box is the landscape: the wind shows the meteorological repercussions on the material conditions of existence. Its dynamism is a whirlwind that removes traditions (cultural, and of course, also cinematographic) and brings in the airs of disobedience and insurrection. The projection of the drama in the story (above all, the borderline experience of hunger as a source of violence) incorporates memories, imaginaries, and popular myths, and dismantles class interests, in line with a messianic conception of the revolution, which intertwines the magical dimension with the Marxist idea of material and historical determination, as stated by Xavier (2007).

If we make a revision of this turbulent current from gendered perspectives⁹, the disruptive effects around the desecration of the sacred and the criticism of the punishment that comes from the heavens find its main political limitations in the representation of eroticism and sexual difference. The ideological dismantling that *Barravento* intends to carry out collides with

the unequal distribution of power relationships and subordination between women and men, which is central to the film's argument: the fishing community, illiterate, religious, exploited by the city's merchants, does not pay attention to Firmino's reasoning, with the exception of Cota, who becomes his lover. Yemanjá, goddess of the sea for the candomblé culture, chooses Aruã as her protegee to guarantee good weather and abundant fishing to the inhabitants. But Yemanjá is jealous and, therefore, in order to not lose her favor, Aruã must remain a virgin (which causes him suffering, because he is in love with Naina, to whom Firmino is also attracted). Firmino convinces Cota to have sex with Aruã. After breaking the enchantment, a storm announces the *barravento* that ends up causing the death of two fishermen (one of them is Naina's father). Firmino takes advantage of this situation to reveal that Aruã had lost chastity. Naina, therefore, subjects herself to a ritual to be able to marry Aruã, who decides to go to the city to work and earn enough money to sustain a family. Towards the end, Firmino and Aruã meet in a duel of capoeira.

Although Rocha's Marxism sheds light on colonialism and on the economic situation of dependency –and its counterpoint with popular religion manifests a celebration of the plastic and sensual violence displayed in candomblé– the convulsive mutation of nature, presented as the cosmic counterpart of social and political changes, leaves intact the traditional ties that regulate the patriarchal order, where the destiny of female desire is polarized by recurrent historical classifications, expressed by two opposing figures: the prostitute and the virgin.

On the one hand, the gratification of the look is condensed in the visual pleasure that the film extracts from the exhibition of Cota's body (through the conjunction of Firmino's gaze and the camera): the attention is fixed in her physical attributes, like her neck highlighted by the buttoned dress, especially voluminous in the samba de roda while dancing in the center of the circle (her bust is shown in a low-angle shot and her backside, quite prominent too, stands out despite the high-angle shot); after this visual delight, Firmino approaches rhythmically from behind, emulating the gesture of *cuddling* through dance. In another equally eloquent sequence, the woman goes to fulfill the request to have sex with Aruã, bathing naked in the sea lit by the moon as if she were a nymph, while

Firmino spies from behind a palm tree: she lies face up in the wet sand, the camera zooms in on her, devoted to her mission of seducing the young fisherman, whose success is inferred from the close-ups of their kiss and the consequent focus on Aruã's pleased face, followed by an extensive panning from bottom to top of the vigorous stem of a very tall palm tree until it reaches its leafy leaves with its fruits exposed in their magnificence (I think there is no need to clarify the analogy to the phallic symbol)¹⁰.

On the other hand, the implicit threat that Cota's voluptuous desire entails for the male sexual imagery is counteracted by the sacrifice imposed on Naina, the white, virginal woman, with the sad or terrified look, who is forced to participate in the ritual to recover Aruã. In this regard, we could think that the mythical exuberance of the tropical landscape, revealed in the fecundity of nature, has an existential contiguity to the body of the female characters.

THE SWIRLING BREEZE: ON *VENTOS DE AGOSTO* (GABRIEL MASCARO, 2014)

Gabriel Mascaro's film takes place in a coastal village, northwest of Alagoas. Jeison and Shirley work in a coconut plantation. She moves there to take care of her grandmother and drive the tractor that transports the coconuts. *Ventos de Agosto* begins with the sound of the air that shakes the water and vegetation. The first image is of a canoe that advances slowly through a river where the mangroves are reflected. In the middle of this peaceful landscape, barely disturbed by the engine of the boat and the song of some birds, the sound of the environment seems increased: either on the surface or on the underwater shots the film produces a sensation of immersion.

Shirley listens to punk classics of the late seventies while sunbathing with her body covered in Coca-Cola¹¹. To increase the tan even more, she removes her bikini. The camera, from different strategic angles, shows her body, naked or in ordinary situations, from angles that impose a sexualized perspective (like the close-up of her, alone in the kitchen, licking a spoon). Her body is part of the visual landscape of the film, in which eroticism emerges as the effect of a refined look by the camera, ostensibly detailed, which in more than one occasion seems to be delighted by the spectacle of the images it captures. Even the natural environment is erotic: again, we see a palm tree in a low-angle shot,

with the leaves twisted by the wind, while we listen to Shirley and Jeison have sex on top of the coconuts.

The affective climate of the film is in line with the construction of a gaze that unfolds as an instance of pleasant, gratifying, enjoyable contemplation. As stated by Luanda Taveira Fernandes (2018),

Ventos de Agosto exalts the crisis of meaning embodied by the landscape that ‘separates an aesthetic of the present in a national-popular way adopted by the *Cinema Novo* and the New Latin American Cinema’ (Andermann, 2004: 52). Here, we are far from ‘a double regime of the landscape, as a diegetic space and as a historical place’ (Ibid: 54), used by the Third Cinema and also by movies of the 90’s as *Central do Brasil*, which visit and revisit the rural environment in terms of complaint and affection, respectively (p. 69).

The film builds an atmosphere that offers an immersive experience in the portrait of nature. As Régis Debray (1994) points out in terms of the transformation of nature through the landscape look, “frame, scale, symmetry, tabulation: these vision exercises transform a chaotic state of the universe into a picture. As if the displacement of the ‘point’ to better accommodate the look delivered the wonderful at home, suddenly unfolding before our eyes an amazing picture of splendors and curiosities” (p. 162).

According to Daney (2004a), “the *sine qua non* of the image is alterity” (p. 269). In contrast to the image, Daney calls the visual “the optical verification of a procedure of power –be it technological, political, propagandistic, or military–, a procedure that only provokes clear and transparent comments. (...) In this regard, clichés, stereotypes, are the visual” (pp. 269-272). It could be said that the vision that seeks to appreciate nature as if it were a postcard is the opposite to exoticism, which framing reproduces a look captivated by otherness. Both positions are put in tension in Mascaro’s film. The result of this visual treatment is a contemplative gratification through a soundtrack accompanied by slow travelings that underline the act of listening: it is a visual listening, a listening that the visual scene confirms and soothes, frames, orders. A kind of conceptual synesthesia? In other words, the scenography circumscribes the sound to the construction of a series of ideas confirmed by the visual scene. The sounds and the weather do not seem to affect the characters, but are rather aimed at provoking a landscape effect in the spectator. They

only have specific importance when a *pesquisador do som* (played by Mascaro himself) arrives at the village, conveniently located in an area of intertropical convergence, to register the trade winds with a microphone. Thus, the clarity of an intensified sound completes the picture, which as a counterpoint to the image exposes the following paradox: if the visual rests within a certain comfort of the record facilitated by the camera, the sound would grant it depth., It would elevate the images to the configuration of certain abstract ideas, such as the tension between life and death, memory and oblivion, alluded to by minimal events exposed as brushstrokes of the landscape: a photographer who offers porcelain pieces with the possibility of printing the image of a deceased family member in it, the discovery of a skull at the bottom of the sea, and the cemetery washed away by the tide¹².

Throughout the film two opposing forces can be identified: script and editing, on the one hand, and soundtrack and photography, on the other. The indifferent editing does not follow a plot of events but spreads occasional views of the characters and their activities, where everything seems dispersed. From contemplative shots taken from varying distances, the village presents itself as an ecosystem in which the inhabitants eat, have sex, bathe in the sea, work, rest, and fish. They practically do not talk. This apathetic attitude is also present in the figure of the *pesquisador do som*, for example, when he asks for a quiet place to be able to capture the sound of the wind, but does not get an answer; immediately afterwards, he starts recording a romantic *sertaneja* music that comes from a house. The film ends, in fact, with a postcard of resignation: despite Jeison’s effort to build a defense against the tide to preserve the tombs of the cemetery, the work proves useless. The final shot shows him sitting next to the gravestones with his eyes lost on the horizon.

Additionally, there is a will to expose a fixation executed on the bodies and on nature, giving prominence, on the one hand, to the work on the visible (the rain causes the scene to be blurred, out of focus, literally watery) and, on the other, to the contrasts of the audible. In a key sequence, the television broadcasts the news that in the northeast the ocean is causing havoc because the tide rose more than normal. Immediately, the sounds of the sea and the wind are introduced at full volume. Opposed to the

concept of air that becomes perceptible by the violence of the wind, as in Rocha's film, the figure of the sound engineer is precisely the one who perceives the acoustic thickness of the air due to his social role, opposed to that of the daily life of fishermen.

Instead of the opposition between the backwardness of the coastal village and the social mobility of the city where Firmino comes from, with his petulant demystifying speech, and to which Aruã goes in search of advancement, in *Ventos de Agosto* the city and the coast do not appear as antagonistic because, in the global context (as reflected by the diverse origins of the soundtrack and the names of the characters), none of these sites guarantee the possibility to prosper. In a way, it could be said that a swirling current drowns the tempest of progress which, according to Walter Benjamin's well-known interpretation of Paul Klee's painting, irresistibly dragged the angel into the future. The eclectic music shows the mix of Brazilian culture and the influence of foreign styles, past and present, in the characters. Kill yourself (1979) and Kill the hippies (1978), two of the most successful tracks of the punk bands The Lewd and Deadbeats, play in a portable device while Shirley sunbathes and Jeison dives into the sea to fish. Other songs are played in different moments of the film: *Meu pintinho amarelinho*, by Gugu Liberato, a classic of children's music; *Saudade bandida*, by Zeze de Camargo & Luciano, a *sertaneja* music group; *Segura na Mão de Deus*, composed by Nelson Monteiro da Mota, one of the most sung and played gospel hymns; Baby can I hold you, Tracy Chapman's 1988 hit; and Bali' Hai, from Blaze & The Stars, an instrumental music with oriental reminiscences that plays over the final credits, which title (a show tune of the musical South Pacific, composed in 1949 by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein) refers to the mythical paradise island, visible in the distance, but which is never reached.

An experience of margins and borders, in this film that bets on minimalism in a post-dramatic context, the landscape can be read, following Denilson Lopes (2012), as an in-place due to the construction of other territories and forms of belonging that are not reduced to a reversal of the established geopolitical hierarchies. Its austerity and its search for dispossession contrast with both the multiplication of baroque elements and the deconstruction or Brechtian distancing. Faced with the current proliferation of mediatized images and

information, the film highlights the ethical role of its poetics, which reshapes the bodily affections: "Figures in flow, rarefied, stains on the fabric, dematerialized bodies. No allegories, no symbols, only experiences that soon disappear. Fleeting (...). The cinema, if it exists, is an oasis", says Lopes (2012, p. 219).

DISCUSSION: HOPEFULLY THE WIND WOULD BLOW

Due to its ability to evoke nostalgia, the wind of Mascaro's film turns towards the configuration of memory tinged with *saudade*, while in *Barravento* it advances as a force that carries prophetic winds. In Rocha, the wind is unpredictable, and its impact is more forceful where there is no shelter. Unstable and, therefore, very nomadic per se, its movement seems incompatible with the circularity of time in *Ventos de Agosto*. However, since more than half a century has passed between these works, their conditions of production, circulation, and reception must be studied considering their geopolitical and historical timeline. As indicated by Ismail Xavier (2008), "each specific context generates new motivations in the orientation of aesthetic choices" (p. 227).

The *Cinema Novo* movement had a foundational character, since in Brazil, due to technical and economic underdevelopment, there was no consolidated film industry (unlike in Mexico or Argentina)¹³. Towards the sixties, alternative and independent film, with anti-industrial modes of production, was seen as a conquest associated with a national and collective project that had the figure of the militant and intellectual filmmaker as its privileged spokesperson. For this reason, the opponents of Rocha's cinema are clear: the cinema is a laboratory of formal experimentation against classical cinema and realism, dramatized against the psychologization of experiences, and epically against the narration of private stories. Brazilian cinema enters the aesthetic of modernity not only going against the commercial cinema of entertainment, but also against the cinema of European *auteurs*: *Barravento* shows the dances, the songs, and the rituals while deconstructing them according to a clear political and pragmatic orientation¹⁴.

This critical operation is staged by Rocha himself in his "gag appearance", as Daney calls it (2008, p. 226), in *Vent d'Est* (1969) of the Dziga Vertov Group¹⁵. Standing in the middle of the field where the roads

fork, arms extended in the shape of a cross and looking down, in a pose reminiscent of the scarecrow from the Wizard of Oz (Victor Fleming, 1939), he sings some verses of *Divino, Maravilhoso*, song composed by Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil in 1968: “Atenção / É preciso estar atento e forte / Não temos tempo de temer a morte / É preciso estar atento e forte”. A girl approaches him and asks about the direction of political cinema. Rocha responds: “There, there is the unknown cinema, the adventure cinema. Here, there is the cinema of the Third World; it is a dangerous, divine, and wonderful cinema” (Groupe Dziga Vertov, 1969). According to the interpretation of David Oubiña (2016): “Authorial cinema, then, not in the sense assigned by the bourgeois individualism, but as a vibration committed to history that, when expressed, puts on stage all the social logic driven towards change” (p. 3). In *Barravento*, this vibration materializes in the storm which clarifies the dimension of time that seeks to get rid of the past (in terms of capitalist and colonialist oppression). Moreover, the proposal of Mascaro’s film is adjusted to an individual expression and a stylistic question, which in the contemporary international context seems to have displaced the axis of the discussions on the political towards the enthronement of diversity as a value in itself, as indicated by Xavier (2008): “It is not so much the author/system opposition but the problem of the linkage ‘representation method/ideology’” (p. 59).

From these considerations, to finish this brief comparative study, let us turn our attention to the song of the wind. Unlike the sky that shakes in Rocha, in Mascaro’s film it becomes rather peaceful. Instead of being a wind that excites, that screams, that carries violence with it, it is a breath of air that can be captured by a device made for investigative purposes. A melancholic wind, full of yearnings, in which the memories of a past storm resound remotely. *Ventos de Agosto* places emphasis on the origin and the echoes, while Rocha’s film is oriented towards the goal of the wind: the imminent future of political praxis. The loneliness in Mascaro’s film is opposed by the collective gale of *Barravento*.

The images and sounds of *Cinema Novo*, as stated by Rocha (cited in Xavier, 2011, p. 9), participate in an “affective contribution” to the knowledge of Brazil, rooted in a geopolitical sensitivity that is incorporated into History (capitalized) from the perspective of the Third World. Rocha focuses on collective issues: the characters condense group, social, class, and national

experiences linked to racial and economic oppression. The metaphors and the materiality of the landscape project the dramas of History: the tsunami and the convulsion of the wind transport a revolutionary prophecy, religious myths, class clashes, and locate the affections at the level of natural, political, and economic conflicts. Mascaro’s film, conversely, focuses on the relationship between the wind and the social problems of the periphery from a cosmetic treatment of images and sounds¹⁶.

From the *Cinema Novo* to the *Novíssimo Cinema Brasileiro*, the symbolic characters change, as it happened with the *Cinema da Retomada* for common individuals. In *Ventos de Agosto*, the adolescent decides to assume a redemptive mission (Jeison, which comes from the Greek, means healer).

In the same way, the filmmaker no longer pretends to be the representative of a collective: if Rocha conceives himself as a man of action based on anti-colonialist ideology, in Mascaro’s film the filmmaker is a man of contemplation who operates alone; he does not only represent the voice of the oppressed or the triad of the epic, the lyrical and the dramatic (as they were conceived by the Marxism of the sixties, which, in more general terms, no longer affects the spirit of the present times), but also the limits with which the transnational audiovisual trends condition his aesthetic choices and, of course, define his political nature¹⁷.

Paradoxically, in a cinema like the one of Mascaro, where everything is atmosphere, the experience of sensitive contact with the world is reduced to the field of ideas to which the images and sounds of the landscape are subordinated. Memory is associated with the embalming of time: “time will never extinguish the memory of a person like you, made of small moments and unforgettable moments” (Ellis & Mascaro, 2014), says a portraitist to sell paintings with the image of a deceased person. The sea appears as a force that washes away the tombs of the cemetery. Death is seen as a ruin that must be preserved, like the skull that Jeison finds among the corals or the body of the drowned person waiting for a burial.

If the image and the sound of Rocha’s film are tactile, sensual –the allegory, the instability and the discontinuity are submerged in a way of touching the skin of the bodies that makes “the camera feel”, as Xavier says (2013, p. 15)–, in Mascaro, the audiovisual surface seeks to be filled with the depth of ideas: it is, in one case, a dialectical movement between the wind as a metaphor and metonymy of the insurrection; in

the other, a set of relays between abstract ideas and postcards of the margins. On the one hand, a manifesto against world cinema, where the exuberant beauty of the tropical landscape is a plastic and conceptual figure that becomes a territory of violent transformations; on the other, a cinema that seems to be conceived as a docile source of impressions and ideas.

In any case, an extensive and delicate plot of power links both films in terms of the distribution of male and female characters. From a gendered perspective, the articulation between critical reflection and aesthetic creation remains suspended in each case: between the poetic and the political there would seem to be no contradictions. The sexual polarizations and the visual delight of the nature disturbed by the wind show the tenacity of some blind spots, from the *Cinema Novo* to the *Novíssimo Cinema Brasileiro*, linked to the pleasure extracted from female bodies as showed by the filmmakers.

In both Rocha and Mascaro, the configuration of community begins and ends with the balance of living conditions. But if the character of Firmino in *Barravento*, with its theatrical, didactic, and disruptive tone, equates the conflicts to the exasperation of the

wind –“Firmino is a *barravento*”, says Xavier (2007, p. 47)–, the *pesquisador do som* in *Ventos de Agosto* maintains a rather external relationship with the climatic phenomenon and with the environment of the village, which distances him from the doctrinary ethos of the leader who aims to enlighten people, as if it were a mission to fulfill¹⁸. Both characters act alone, although in Firmino we can recognize some information from his past that confers him a personal depth, and in the second film there is no existential solidarity between the windy weather and the characters.

However, to finish, evoking Ezra Pound, “let the wind talk” (1970): just as nature contains an untamable force, the different winds confronted in this work drag a sound that, perhaps, will remain in the air as storm clouds that pile up and make visible the persistent questions regarding the ways of imagining the political. “Toda la sangre puede ser canción en el viento” (“All blood can be a song in the wind”), says a well-known Latin American anthem (Tejada Gómez & Isella, 1969) popularized by Mercedes Sosa (Sosa, 1974, track 17), to which we could add that, for its scream to have resonance, “*Precisa que haja vento sem parar*” (Jobim & de Moraes, 1958).

FOOTNOTES

1. Rocha was one of the leaders of *Cinema Novo*, a movement that between 1960 and 1970 consolidated alliances between the new cinemas of Latin America and those of other continents, especially Neorealism and the Nouvelle Vague, using critical approaches of the visual and of the political that sought to articulate avant-garde art with languages capable of revealing social contradictions. Among its main exponents are Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Roberto Santos, Ruy Guerra, Roberto Pires, José Hipólito Trigueirinho Neto, Sérgio Ricardo, Mário Carneiro, Paulo César Saraceni, Joaquim Pedro de Andrade, among others.

2. It is a generation after the rebirth of the Brazilian cinema of the mid-nineties known as *Cinema da Retomada* –marked by the films *Carlota Joaquina. A Princesa do Brasil* (1994) by Carla Camurati, *A terceira margem do rio* (1994) by Nelson Pereira dos Santos, *Capitalismo Selvagem* (1994) by André Klotzel and *Terra estrangeira* (1995) by Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas–, that occurred after the promulgation of a new law for the audiovisual field in 1993, which generated some sort of boom in the production and consumption of films made, mostly, by a new group of national filmmakers. *Cinema da Retomada* and *Novíssimo Cinema Brasileiro* do not separate themselves completely of previous cinematic traditions, but trace continuities and even a certain return to the typical *Cinema Novo* universe, as in *Corisco and Dadá* (1997) by Rosemberg Cariry or in the remake of the same name of *O cangaceiro* made in 1997 by Anibal Massaíni, Mascaro's filmography is located in the aesthetic horizon of *Novíssimo Cinema*, as it has been studied by Denilson Lopes (2012), Marcelo Ikeda (2015), and Luanda Taveira Fernandes (2018), because his films are characterized by a minimalist staging of scattered features of everyday experiences and common characters.

3. Following Damyler Cunha (2013), the different dimensions of sound can be classified for analytical purposes according to four fundamental components: voices, sounds, environments, and music. I am interested in analyzing the possible similarities and points of convergence between Brazilian films paying attention to the interactions between their auditive and visual aspects.

4. This drum, which according to tradition can only be played by men in the *terreiro*, is used in *candomblé* rituals as a communication channel between man and spirit to summon and greet the arrival of the *orixás*. Since music and dance are the primordial means of linking up with divinities, the aesthetic expressions are not separated from their transcendental ends.

5. See Eisenstein, Pudovkin, & Alexandrov (1967).

6. In addition to the connection with the Eisenstein film, which development exceeds the scope of this work, the network is a subsistence resource that is also displayed in two scenes of *Avenida Brasília Formosa* (2010), by Gabriel Mascaro, being mended by a character who lives from fishing in Recife. Regarding the role of the fishermen, it is worth mentioning as background *La tierra tiembla* (1948), by Luchino Visconti, and *Stromboli* (1950), by Roberto Rossellini.

7. Rocha (2004, p. 101) has pointed out that *Barravento* was initiated by Luiz Paulino dos Santos (who filmed the first part); due to accidental causes, Rocha had to continue the film in a short time, with 3,000 dollars and 6,000 meters of film. When he saw the material, he put it aside because he did not like it. He returned to work on it eight months later, when Nelson Pereira dos Santos told him that the copies did seem interesting to him. One could, then, recognize tropical Marxism as Rocha's authorial mark.

8. The paradisiacal coastline where the tropical village is located is the geographic Other of *sertão*, a desert, arid, infertile land as presented in *Vidas secas* (1963), by Nelson Pereira dos Santos, or in *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* (1964), by Glauber Rocha.

9. Here, gender refers to a historical way of conceptualizing a set of disciplinary practices and discursive relationships that act on subjects, both between the sexes and within each one, as part of a field of inequalities where other forms of power, exclusion, and social subordination (racism, classism, heterocentrism, androcentrism, etc.) intersect.

10. In *Desnuda en la arena* (1969), by Armando Bó, starring Isabel Sarli, at minute 29:40 there is a low-angle shot of a palm tree, which could be read as an echo representative of the sexualized treatment of the coastal landscape resorting to an element of the tropical nature as characteristic as the palm tree. In this vein, unlike the other transitions between the narrative blocks of *Barravento*, which Xavier investigates meticulously (2007), from a gendered perspective –which I propose here as a plausible reading– one can consider that the scene of the palm tree enhances the sexual strength of the character, in line with the previous sequences of the desecration of Aruã's body.

11. *A summer with Monika* (1953), the first Ingmar Bergman film starring Harriet Andersson, presents a famously erotic scene in which she sunbathes on a boat with a sensual pose that Mascaro's shot seems to honor.

12. On the hypothesis about a certain trend of contemporary Latin American cinema that can be thought of as a cinema of ideas, please see the article by Julia Kratje (2018).

13. Regarding classifications, it should be kept in mind that, according to Xavier, "the classification of films in the same category can be misleading, even when they belong to a specific movement promoted under certain conditions" (2008, p. 104).

14. Daney puts Glauber Rocha "among the great creators of disturbances in modern cinema" (2004b, p. 100), who "disconcerted, invented, annoyed, disappointed" (2004b, p. 102), but then clarifies that from the *Cahiers* it was the one they felt the furthest away from, as much as the distance that separates Brazil from France. "Western critics, always curious about folklore and drunk with labels, loved this new cinema, this *Cinema Novo* that Glauber symbolized" (Daney, 2004b, p. 100). At this point, it is interesting to observe how at the time when Rocha premieres his films in Europe the conceptions around the critical scope of his aesthetic and political arguments naturally depend on the context of reception: following Daney, the exoticism was not absent from the perspective of certain spectators fascinated with the images that came from Brazil.

15. In addition to the mention of the wind in the title of the work that Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin made with the Dziga Vertov Group, following Mateus Araújo Silva (2007), it is interesting to note that, despite the differences in context, Rocha and Godard have converging trajectories regarding the filmmakers' parallel movement of progressive self-exposure. It is also worth noting that the crossroads exposed in the emblematic scene of the 1969 film accounts for the pragmatic and formal disagreements between both authors, and for the geopolitical inequalities between the cinemas of the central countries and those of the so-called Third World, which mark ideological and poetic limits to the programs or trends of the cinematographic culture in which each one develops.

16. In this point, I take up the hypothesis proposed by Ivana Bentes (2003) in her comparative study of the locations of the *Cinema Novo* and the *Cinema da Retomada*, where she indicates that if the *sertão* was in the seventies the other side of modern Brazil that gave rise to an aesthetic of hunger, in recent years it has returned as a cosmetic of hunger.

17. I want to stress that the features analyzed here cannot be generalized to the rest of Gabriel Mascaro's filmography, since his other films (especially documentaries, but also those of fiction) display different poetics, in several ways opposed to the audiovisual procedures of *Ventos de Agosto*. In other words, the landscape components that in *Ventos de Agosto* are hegemonic, components that on *Avenida Brasília Formosa* (2010) appeared as brushstrokes in tension with the story told from a non-exotic point of view, are mostly abandoned in *Boi neon* (2015) without losing the charm of the sensual atmosphere in which the narrated actions are inscribed.

18. See Xavier's (2007) detailed analysis of *Barrovento*, in which he discusses the positions that identify in this film a total disconnection with the religious values of the fishing community: despite its demystifying discourse, condensed in Firmino, from the narrative point of view, the film intermingles with popular practices. Conversely, the subject that in the film of Mascaro comes from another place offers a detached look.

REFERENCES

- Amado, A. (2009). *La imagen justa. Cine argentino y política (1980-2007)* [The right image. Argentinean cinema and politics (1980-2007)]. Buenos Aires: Colihue.
- Araújo Silva, M. (2007). Godard, Glauber e o Vento do leste: alegoria de um (des)encontro [Godard, Glauber and the Wind of the East: allegory of a (dis) encounter]. *Devires – Cinema e Humanidades*, 4(1), 36-63. Retrieved from <http://www.fafich.ufmg.br/devires/index.php/Devires/article/view/277/142>
- Bachelard, G. (2012). *El aire y los sueños* [Air and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Movement]. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Bentes, I. (2003). The sertão and the favela in contemporary Brazilian film. In L. Nagib (Ed.), *The New Brazilian Cinema* (pp. 121-138). New York: The Centre for Brazilian Studies, University of Oxford.
- Böhme, G. & Böhme, H. (2012). *Fuego, agua, tierra, aire. Una historia cultural de los elementos* [Fire, water, earth, air. A cultural history of elements]. Barcelona: Herder.
- Colaizzi, G. (2007). *La pasión del significante. Teoría de género y cultura visual* [The passion of the signifier. Gender theory and visual culture]. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva.
- Cunha, D. (2013). *O som e as suas dimensões concretas e subjetivas nos filmes de Lucrecia Martel* [The sound and its concrete and subjective dimensions in the films of Lucrecia Martel] (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <http://www.teses.usp.br/teses/disponiveis/27/27161/tde-12092013-154104/pt-br.php>
- Daney, S. (1998). Trop tôt, trop tard. In *Ciné journal*, vol. 1 (1981-1982) (pp. 125-131). Paris: Cahiers du cinéma.
- Daney, S. (2004a). Antes y después de la imagen [Before and after the image]. In *Cine, arte del presente* [Cinema: the art of present] (pp. 269-276). Buenos Aires: Santiago Arcos.

- Daney, S. (2004b). La muerte de Glauber Rocha [The death of Glauber Rocha]. In *Cine, arte del presente* [Cinema: the art of present] (pp. 99-102). Buenos Aires: Santiago Arcos.
- de Lauretis, T. (1996). La tecnología del género [Gender Technologies]. *Mora*, 2, 6-34. Retrieved from <http://genero.institutos.filo.uba.ar/sites/genero.institutos.filo.uba.ar/files/revistas/adjuntos/Mora2.pdf>
- Debray, R. (1994). *Vida y muerte de la imagen. Historia de la mirada en Occidente* [Life and death of the image. Look at history of the West]. Buenos Aires: Paidós.
- Eisenstein, S., Pudovkin, V., & Aleksándrov, G. (1967). Una declaración [A declaration]. In *Eisenstein. El sentido del cine. La forma en el cine. Problemas de la composición cinematográfica. Notas de un director de cine* [Eisenstein. The meaning of cinema. The form in the cinema. Problems of cinematographic composition. Notes of a film director] (pp. 369-372). La Habana: Ediciones ICAIC.
- Ellis, R. D. (Producer) & Mascaro, G. (Director). *Ventos de agosto* (2014) [August Winds]. Brazil.
- Grüner, E. (2017). El justo viento [The just wind]. In *Siwa V. Biblioteca Universal de Literatura Geográfica. Historia natural y moral de los vientos* [Siwa V. Universal Library of Geographic Literature. Natural and moral history of the winds] (pp. 33-36). Buenos Aires: Argentina.
- Ikeda, M. (2015). *Cinema brasileiro a partir da retomada. Aspectos econômicos e políticos* [Brazilian cinema from the beginning. Economic and political aspects]. Sao Paulo: Summus.
- Jobim, A. C. & de Moraes, V. (1958). A felicidade. On *Black Orpheus* [Film]. Brazil.
- Kratje, J. (2018). Un cine de ideas. Fotografía y afecto en *Histórias que só existem quando lembradas* (Julia Murat, 2011) y *Viaje sentimental* (Verónica Chen, 2010) [A cinema of ideas. Photography and affect in *Histórias que só existem quando lembradas* (Julia Murat, 2011) y *Viaje sentimental* (Verónica Chen, 2010)]. 452°F, *Revista de Teoría de la literatura y Literatura Comparada*, 18, 88-105. Retrieved from <http://revistes.ub.edu/index.php/452f/article/view/19844>
- Netto, B. (Producer) & Rocha, G. (Director). (1962). *Barravento* [Motion Picture]. Brazil.
- Lopes, D. (2012). *No coração do mundo* [In the heart of the world]. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco.
- Oubiña, D. (2016). El fin de lo nuevo (cineastas, autores, Argentina, 1969) [The end of the new (filmmakers, authors, Argentina, 1969)]. *Cuadernos Lírico*, (15), 1-12. Retrieved from <https://journals.openedition.org/lirico/2980>
- Pound, E. (1970). *Selected Cantos of Ezra Pound*. New York, United States: New Directions.
- Rocha, G. (2004). *Revolução do cinema novo* [Revolution of Cinema Novo]. Sao Paulo: Cosac Naify.
- Spiner, L. (2017). El viento [The wind]. *Revista de cine*, 4(4), 69-72.
- Stam, R. (2003). Cabral and the Indians: filmic representations of Brazil's 500 years. In L. Nagib (Ed.), *The New Brazilian Cinema* (pp. 205-228). New York: The Centre for Brazilian Studies, University of Oxford.
- Taveira Fernandes, L. (2018). Cuerpos, deserción y cotidiano en el nuevo cine pernambucano [Bodies, desertion and quotidian in the new Pernambuco cinema]. *Toma Uno*, 6(6), 61-77. Retrieved from <https://revistas.unc.edu.ar/index.php/toma1/article/view/20895>
- Tejada Gómez, A. & Isella, C. (1969). Canción con todos [Recorded by Mercedes Sosa]. On *Canción con todos*. Mercedes Sosa [Phonogram]. Argentina.
- Vakar, I. & Eisenstein, S. (1938). *Alexander Nevsky* [Motion Picture]. Russia, Amkino.
- Xavier, I. (2007). *Sertão Mar. Glauber Rocha e a estética da fome* [Sertão Mar. Glauber Rocha and the aesthetics of hunger]. Sao Paulo: Cosac Naify.
- Xavier, I. (2008). *El discurso cinematográfico. La opacidad y la transparencia* [The cinematographic discourse. Opacity and transparency]. Buenos Aires: Manantial.
- Xavier, I. (2011). Prólogo [Foreword]. In G. Rocha, *La revolución es una eztétyka* [Revolution is an eztétyka] (pp. 9-21). Buenos Aires: Caja Negra.
- Xavier, I. (2013). *Cine brasileiro contemporâneo* [Contemporary Brazilian Cinema]. Buenos Aires: Santiago Arcos.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Julia Kratje, Ph.D. from the Universidad de Buenos Aires. Her research on Latin American cinema, funded by CONICET, is based in the Interdisciplinary Institute of Gender Studies of the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature of the Universidad de Buenos Aires. She works as a professor at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, at the Universidad Nacional de las Artes, at the master's degree in Gender Studies (UCES) and at the master's degree in Power and Society from the gender issue (UNR).