SPACE, TIME AND THE POST-MODERN BRAZILIAN CINEMATIC CITY: INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN THE CINEMA AND CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY

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KEYWORDS:	ABSTRACT:
Cultural geography Cinema Time-space compression Post-modernity	This paper comments on a diversity of concepts drawn from different authors and on David Harvey's concept of 'time-space compression' to set a discussion around the matter of *cities* and *films* or, rather, the different ways cities have been represented in films and in what sense the diversity of representations have affected the understanding of the cities themselves. Moreover, thinking about the post-modern condition, this paper will also discuss contemporary Brazilian cinema production by looking at the representation of urban space and violence and its connection to the production of new paradigms for representing space (and time) and understanding cultural identity within post-modernity. It will also present an analysis of the cinematic representation of two Brazilian cities: Rio de Janeiro, in *Redentor* (*Redeemer*, Cláudio Torres, 2004) and São Paulo in *O Homem do Ano* (*The Man of the Year*, José Guilherme Fonseca, 2002).

ESPAÇO, TEMPO E A CIDADE CINEMÁTICA BRASILEIRA PÓS-MODERNA: INTERRELAÇÕES ENTRE CINEMA E GEOGRAFIA CULTURAL

RESUMO:	PALAVRAS-CHAVE:
Esse trabalho comenta sobre vários conceitos discutidos por diversos autores, e mais particularmente sobre o conceito de "compressão tempo-espaço" proposto por David Harvey, na intenção de estabelecer uma discussão em torno de *cidades* e *filmes*. Considera-se aqui as diferentes maneiras pelas quais algumas cidades têm sido representadas pelo cinema e ainda de que maneira a diversidade destas representações têm afetado o entendimento destas cidades. Considerando a "condição pós-moderna" esse trabalho discutirá também a produção do cinema brasileiro contemporâneo no contexto da representação do espaço urbano e da violência e as suas conexões com novos parâmetros de representação do espaço (e tempo) e a compreensão da identidade cultural na pós-modernidade. Como estudo de caso, serão apresentadas análises de representação de duas cidades brasileiras em dois filmes: Rio de Janeiro, em *Redentor* (*Redeemer*, Cláudio torres, 2004) e São Paulo em *O Homem do Ano* (*The Man of the Year*, José Guilherme Fonseca, 2002) respectivamente.	Geografia cultural Cinema Compressão tempo-espaço Pós-modernidade

VILLE BRÉSILIENNE : LÉSPACE, LE TEMPS ET LA POST-MODERNITÉ ET LEURS INTERRELATIONS ENTRE LE CINÉMA ET LA GÉOGRAPHIE CULTURELLE

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MOTS-CLÉS:	**RÉSUMÉ:**
Géographie culturelle Cinéma L'espace-temps Postmodernisme	Cette communication vise une discussion sur les villes et les films, ainsi que les différentes façons d'aborder la relation entre eux. Le travail se penche sur différents concepts abordés par plusieurs auteurs, et plus particulièrement sur la notion de compression espace-temps proposé par David Harvey. Je recherche comment les villes sont représentées dans les films et l'impact sur la compréhension des villes, après avoir représenté dans le film. Dans l'optique de «condition postmoderne», nous allons discuter la production de cinéma brésilien contemporain, en particulier dans le contexte de la représentation de l'espace urbain et de la violence, en plus d'aborder la compréhension de l'identité culturelle dans la postmodernité. Par conséquent, les analyses seront présents à partir des deux villes brésiliennes dans les deux films, savoir : Rio de Janeiro, dans *Redentor* "Rédempteur", de Claudio Torres (2004) et São Paulo dans *O Homem do Ano* "L'Homme de l'année", de José Guilherme Fonseca (2002), respectivement.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Who among us will refuse the opportunity on arriving in some unfamiliar city, to ascend to a convenient high point and look down upon the intricate landscape of streets and buildings and the restless flow of human activity among them? Why do we feel so curious to do what long-term residents rarely consider (except when visitors arrive) and what do we gain by it? Michel de Certeau [1994]… suggests an intriguing answer when he recounts his thoughts on ascending to the heights of New York's World Trade Center. The ascent, he writes, lifts us out of the city's grasp, out of the feverish motion of street life and allows us to become, if only for a while, "voyeurs". The elevation "transforms the bewitching world by which one was "possessed" into a text that lies before one's eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a God." We can, from such a vantage point, possess the city in imagination instead of being possessed by it.
[…] The relation between such a "God-like" vision of the city and the turbulence of street life is interesting to contemplate. Both perspectives, though different, are real enough. Nor are they independent, in fact or in mental construction. The seeing eye, when it scans the city as a whole, brings to its task a whole set of prejudices, concepts (such as that of the city itself) and even theories built up laboriously out of street experience. We thereby burden our interpretations from on high with a variety of associations and assumptions, hopes and fears, wants and desires. The eye is never neutral and many a battle is fought over the "proper" way to see. Yet, no matter what the associations and aspirations, a special satisfaction attaches to contemplating the view from on high, for we have seen the city as a whole, taken it into our minds as a totality. Afterwards, the experience of street life cannot help acquiring new meaning. (HARVEY, 1989a, p.1).

This quote serves as a useful baseline for the theoretical exercise I wish to undertake. The see-as-a-whole experience is very similar to the movie experience. In short, the movie experience is, in its own way, a 'God-like' vision of things. This is not to say, though, that film follows (only) the convention of a panorama where the city is revealed as a visible totality seen from an elevated or aerial vantage point as Harvey (quoting de Certeau) described.

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Likewise the city is not only 'experienced' through visual conventions such as that established in the early twentieth century whereby the city was mostly formed by streets and the crowds who inhabited them. The connection between the physical city and its cinematic representation – and the relationship it implies – is a complex one.

The extract above also suggests that a perspective is already given – an angle – as there must be a *spot* from which the 'God-like' vision can be achieved. The existence of this point in space (as well as in time) is by no means devoid of significance. Were it some alternative spot, the 'possession' of the city – in its 'totality' – would change and so, too, would the reading of the city: its transformation into 'text'. There are thus two important references to be considered: the image that *emanates*; the image that is *understood*. Both 'visions' are real and connected – '…in fact or in mental construction' (HARVEY, 1989a, p.1). The image that *emanates* is full of social meaning, as it has been constructed through the long, complex historical interplay between the city's subjects, constrained – as they are – by political, cultural and economic forces. The image that is *understood* is mediated through the lived and imaginary experience of the viewer – 'The eye is never neutral…' (HARVEY, 1989a, p.1). In representing the city experience through signs, the observer through the use and mediation of theory and/or despite their prejudices, attempts to get as close to the *object* of observation as possible. Yet, the result of this representation is situated somewhere between the *real* and *perceived* images of the city. Here, the similarity between *spot* (the vantage point) and *film* is striking. For film can also be experienced as a *spot*, the angle that is given in space and time from which the observer cannot hide and through which the observer will experience the city.

Not only space but also time is relevant here, even though a particular film remains – for the most part – unchanged over time. The initial image that emanates from the film is a social construction that changes over time. The spot then may be at the same spatial location but at a different temporality. By the same token, the viewer is also likely to respond to time as they will have lived through a different set of experiences; we '…burden our interpretations from on high with a variety of associations and assumptions, hopes and fears, wants and desires' (HARVEY, 1989a, p.1). The second 'God-like' vision of the city, taken from the same spot in space but not in time, may have an entirely different meaning, especially when the first has already been experienced, after which '…the experience of street life cannot help acquiring new meaning' (HARVEY, 1989a, p.1).

With this in mind, this paper comments on a diversity of concepts drawn from different authors and on David Harvey's concept of time-space compression to set a discussion around the matter of *cities* and *films* or, rather, the different ways cities have been represented in films and in what sense the diversity of representations have affected the understanding of the cities themselves. Referring to the different ways films make use of urban imagery as signifying systems will establish how and why the cinematic city – and also the physical city – should be read as being formed by a set of representations. Here, an understanding of the concepts of *space* and *time* – 'real' and imaginary – is crucial. The principal objective is an understanding of how images of different cities are thematised as lived-in and living structures of meaning and effect through what is here defined as the cinema's *motion condition*. This will provide the means to establish the concept of what should be understood as *the cinematic city*.

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This paper also establishes a 'conversation' between film studies and new cultural geography, a potentially useful cross-disciplinary conjunction. The intention is to reflect the interaction that takes place within these two theoretical fields, particularly in relation to the intrinsic relationship that exists between the city and its cinematic counterpart and the importance of this relationship to the understanding of spatial and temporal relations.

The potential for a creative dialogue between film studies and cultural geography has been established and proved productive (See AGRE, 1993; AITKEN; ZONN, 1994; BRUNO, 1987, 1997; DEAR, 2000; DENZIN, 1991; DONALD, 1999; JAMES, 1999; MCARTHUR, 1997; ROBINS, 1991, 1995). These two fields clearly share a mutual concern with the construction of space and social relations (and identities). Developed from the traditional Cultural Geography that was rooted in the belief that societies and cultures grow out of a landscape and also reshape the landscape, the New Cultural Geography came about in the 1980's and focuses on contemporary and urban cultures, examining non-physical elements such as gender, language, and identity. It focuses on understanding a cultural landscape by physically witnessing the practices, focusing on how the human cultures are actually performed.

Accordingly, there is much to be gained from sharing perspectives and understandings of how both 'fictional' and 'real' spaces are shaped, organised and understood as well as how they relate to each other. Taking into account authors such as Aitken and Zonn (1994) who argue that films provide 'maps of meaning' with which the contemporary world can be 'navigated', this paper will consider the cinema as one of the most important institutions in constructing an increasingly visualised world. The importance of film lays in what Denzin (1991) calls the 'cinematization of contemporary life', in which 'representation of the real have become stand-ins for actual, lived experience' (p.x).

Moreover, thinking about the post-modern condition, this paper will also discuss contemporary Brazilian cinema production by looking at the representation of urban space and violence and its connection to the production of new paradigms for representing space (and time) and understanding cultural identity within post-modernity. It will also comment on the concept of post-modernism through the analysis of the cinematic representation of two Brazilian cities: Rio de Janeiro, in the film *Redentor* (Cláudio Torres, 2004) and São Paulo in the film *O Homem do Ano* (*The Man of the Year*, José Guilherme Fonseca, 2002).

HARVEY'S TIME AND SPACE COMPRESSION

The concept of *time-space compression* in Harvey's (1989b) account refers to the overwhelming sense of the 'compacting' of the spatial and temporal dimensions that gives the impression of the 'speeding-up' of life as a result of the development of railways, automobile, jet aircraft, telegraph, radio, telephone, television, satellite communications system; that is, the result of the 'telecommunications revolution' (p.232). This speeding-up seems to be transforming the world or, rather, 'shrinking' it into what Marshall McLuhan called the 'global village'. Here, spatial and temporal barriers are diminishing. Harvey thus argues that the intense experience of *time-space compression* has had a disruptive impact upon political-economic practices as well as social and cultural life. He believes that this

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phenomenon can be identified in the way we represent the world to ourselves and therefore how we cope with this sense of 'compression'. Harvey's intention is, via a Marxian account of capitalism, to demonstrate that changes in distinct cultural representations took the direction of what is now called the *post-modern culture* and that these changes are intrinsically linked to the experience of time-space compression. Hostile to the concept of post-modernism[1], Harvey traces the postmodern condition thinking about the ephemeral and the fragmentation of space. Post-modernity in this instance then is an effect of the compression of space and time, which in itself is created by contemporary economic processes.

To explain historically how the experience of *time-space compression* should be understood in the cultural context, Harvey goes back to the European feudal and Renaissance periods and their forms of representation in the same way that Cosgrove (1984) has investigated these periods for his study on the landscape. In *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, Cosgrove connects the ways in which the land is materially appropriated and used as well as their cultural significance to different forms of landscape representation. That is, in Cosgrove's account landscape is understood as 'a way of seeing'. In his study, Cosgrove aimed to highlight the importance of changes in the ways Europeans *represented* themselves or '...thought about and signified themselves and their world' (p.6), suggesting that landscape represents a '...historically specific way of experiencing the world developed by, and meaningful to, certain social groups' (p.15). Within this context, Cosgrove (1984) concludes that 'Landscape is not merely the world we see it is a construction, a composition of the world. Landscape is a way of seeing the world' (p.13).

At a certain point, the practical rationalisation of space and time mentioned by both Cosgrove (1984) and Harvey (1989b) was disrupted because the certainty of absolute space has shifted to a more insecure 'relativation of space'. Now, the world to be represented is one of internationalism, synchronicity, insecurity and rapidly expanding spatial horizons. Finding in the stress of time-space compression the central motivation for a cultural force in the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century modernism, Harvey refers to examples from different cultural milieu such as architecture and urban design, painting and literature, and cinema and conceptualises them within the paradigms of social life and power.

Seeking to demonstrate how different media has elaborated the themes of time-space compression, Harvey chooses the cinema for a more close examination. He does so for two main reasons. Firstly because the cinema came into existence in the context of modernist culture and secondly because, of all the art forms, the cinema has an enormous capacity to free itself from the normal constraints of space and time (HARVEY 1989b). As the modern medium *par excellence* cinema had the capacity for handling and developing themes around space and time in very peculiar ways: it is able to cut back and forth across space and time and compress and decompress space and time.

Harvey looks at *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott 1982) and *Wings of Desire* (Wim Wenders 1988) to find and exemplify 'post-modern' characteristics and concerns. He

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[1] 'I cannot remember when I first encountered the term postmodernism. I probably reacted to it in much the same way as I did to various other 'isms' that have come and gone over the past couple of decades, hoping it would disappear under the weight of its own incoherence or simply lose its allure as a fashionable set of "new ideas"' (HARVEY, 1989b, p.vii).

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concentrates his analysis on the films elaboration of the 'fragmented' and 'ephemeral' qualities of human experience that, in his view, has a strong connection with the questions of time-space compression. Believing that this experience has provoked a crisis of representation in cultural forms, he situates both films, in their own particular ways, within this context. Harvey argues that the uncertainty with which they deal with time and space in the narrative is an indication of this crisis.

In his analysis of both films, Harvey claims that, even though they try to demonstrate that life is ephemeral and it is spatially fragmented, the films do not succeed in creating new ways of representing these qualities. Ultimately, Harvey's view is that they present a rather simplistic and romantic aesthetic that ends by taking the narrative to a traditional and predictable happy ending. This difficulty in representing something that is consciously present but not fully 'understood' results in a 'crisis' which is in itself a consequence, in Harvey's opinion, of the experience of time-space compression. Although a repeated theme in the book, Harvey neither elaborates nor makes any suggestions about how this 'crisis' could be overcome.

What has been said so far is that, because of the state of development of modern mass communications, which ease and speed up the ability of people and information to 'travel' around the globe, time and space are becoming less stable and comprehensible as well as confused, incoherent, disunited and, to use Harvey's term, *compressed*. It follows that culture is expected to encapsulate, accentuate and reflect these 'confusions' and 'compressions' of time and space. Space and time are no longer likely to embody a coherent sense of meaning. But how can that be? Strinati (1994) gives a hint:

> Try to identify the locations used in some pop videos, the linear narratives of some recent films, the times and spaces crossed in a typical evening of TV viewing, and you get some ideas of what is being argued. Postmodern popular culture is a culture sans frontiéres, outside history. (p.430).

This is not to say that history can no longer be grasped as a whole but that – due to the speed that events take place in space and time – this is an increasingly more complex task. However, it is still through representations of space and time, or rather, compilations of different representations, that one can identify this implicit 'postmodern' confusion. While Harvey (1989b) diagnoses a 'crisis' in the cultural response to the recent compression of time and space[2], Strinati (1994) gives examples of representations, which work with the sense of 'confusion', and shows that confusion is born out of the compression of time and space. In his consideration of cinema in relation to popular culture such as architecture, television, advertising and pop-music, Strinati (1994) suggests that the most obvious examples of postmodern films are those '...which emphasise style, visual look and appeal, at the expense of content, character, narrative and comment...'(p.432). His examples are films like *Dick Tracy* (Warren Beatty 1990) and *9 1/2 Weeks* (Adrian Lyne 1986). This being so, our 'confused' understanding of today's (postmodern) world results from these confused – in both form and content – representations.

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[2] Moreover, basing his assumptions on historical-geographical evidence, Harvey considers that different societies 'produced' different ideas about space and time. But, if ideas differ from one society to another, their representations are likely to do so too.

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To reiterate: for Harvey, the act of representing the 'compressed' and confused contemporary world can no longer make use of classical narrative format where time and space are represented in a highly inefficient way compared to the postmodern condition. What Harvey insists, it seems, is that the break should be one of *form*, and not necessarily of *content*. Life goes on as always, but at a different speed, and this has to be reflected in a different narrative structure. But how would this apply to filmic representation? It seems that the answer would be the development of a new form of narrative or simply a break with the classical realist narrative style[3]. However, is the 'confusion' in sensing the change in the pace of life – the time-space compression – responsible for the attempt to 'break' with the classical narrative construction (as exemplified by Strinati)? Or rather, could not this 'break' be a consequence of calculated attempts[4], which can be better explained on artistic or even geopolitical grounds?

Cinema is the medium that cuts through the 'fragmented' or 'fragments' of space and time whatever the form of its narrative. A 'crisis' in the representation of this new condition is not so straightforward. At most, the 'postmodern' condition exists more as a potential or virtual reality for the great majority of the world's population rather than a fact. Though Harvey (1989b) uses film to exemplify his theories, he writes: 'Any system of representation, in fact, is a spatialization of sorts which automatically freezes the flow of experience and in so doing distorts what it strives to represent' (p.206). Even though he accepts the 'function' and 'power' of film (as a system of representation) in relation to the 'production of space' and to represent spatial relations, Harvey supposes that to spatialise (to represent) is to make the object represented stationary. But to agree with Harvey represents to understand space independently or even opposite to time.

However, as Lury and Massey state, the aim must be the opposite, that is, to imagine space and time always in terms of integration, because '...spatiality is always in the process of being made' (LURY; MASSEY 1999 p.234). From this standpoint, it is not surprising that Harvey (1989b) maintains that there is a split between film and reality, and in doing so, he is obliged to conclude that film is, in the final analysis, just '...a spectacle projected within an enclosed space on a depthless screen' (p.308). In the end, it is as if Harvey was reducing a system of representation such as the cinema to the simple role of a 'flat' story-telling machine.

The problem with Harvey[5] is that he pays limited attention to the different factors that frequently influence and shape a film. Genre conventions, the filmmaker's attempts to challenge such conventions or his/her interest in one particular subject, for example, are part of an intertextual context that Harvey seems to overlook. Harvey's reading of films seems to

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3 The classic narrative denotes a set of formal parameters involving practices of editing, camerawork, and sound that promote the appearance of spatial and temporal continuity.

4 At different times in the history of cinema one can always find intentions of breaking with classical film narrative: avant-garde films, Alfred Hitchcock's innovations in *Vertigo* and *Psycho*, and most of the films directed by Jean-Luc Godard in the 1960s are good examples. Though not regarded as postmodern films they took steps 'against' the classical form of narrative construction imposed by Hollywood (COSTA, 1993).

5 One can find some restrictions on David Harvey's *Condition of Postmodernity*, however, this is not relevant to the ideas developed by this paper. For a better understanding of these restrictions one should look at Deutsche, R. 'Boys Town' in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* n.9, 5-30, 1991 or Gregory, D. *Geographycal Imaginations*, Blackwell, 1994, among others.

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incur in the mistake of implying a mimetic relationship between film and reality and this takes him to ignore (and deny) the ways in which cinematic representations might shape reality. Harvey, thus, completely ignores the more complex relations of intertextuality. This paper, however, will consider that a stronger relationship between the city and the cinema is in play. The main argument here, thus, is that films must be understood as attempts to articulate broader understanding of the urban experience.

What is also important to retain from the discussion above – and for the more instrumental purpose of this article – is the notion that space and time can be regarded as a signifying system that regulates the cinematic representation. So, time and space are theoretical and analytical instruments that work together to validate the structure of meaning. It must be pointed out that the analysis of film is not solely concerned with the visual image, it has to be always conscious of the 'real' historical temporal qualities of film – significantly, this means that it is always about space *and* time.

SPACE-TIME COMPRESSION AND THE MOTION CONDITION

Harvey (1989b) focuses his analysis of films on the narrative searching for the intrinsic characteristics of a 'postmodern' representation of time and space. He finds an *intention* on the part of the filmmakers to represent but not actually a successful form of narration: 'It seems as if the film makers are unable to break free from the power of the images they themselves create' (p.322).

Accepting that existing forms of film narrative may be both modern and postmodern in Harvey's terms should not be a problem. This is because, permitted by its technical apparatus, the cinema manipulates space and time for its own purposes. The cinema is able both to compress and decompress space and time, moving forward and backward in space and time. Films can both compact a life time into two hours of narrative or spend two hours on a ten-minute occurrence or even break into a coherent spatio-temporal narrative in which both space and time are actually embedded in what one calls the 'classic narrative' discourse or text.

As for space, the cinema by no means depicts it as a succession of fragmented pieces, which are reassembled by the narrative to make sense (or not). Films are always constructed with references to space and time. Even when, for instance, a sequence starts with the detail of a given object (a close-up) it is important that the 'space', which this object is part of, is shown or at least indirectly given at some point, as well as its temporality. Space and time can also be discontinued – through montage for example – for the sake of the narrative continuity itself or for aesthetic choice. In sum, because of its power to manipulate space and time, the cinema can easily adapt to the 'speeding-up' of both the 'modern' and 'postmodern' world. Again, one can find similarities between space and time organisation in 'real' life and within a medium of representation such as the cinema.

> To begin with, space and time, once they are set, are a primary means to individuate and identify objects, people, relations, processes, and events. *Location* and *bounding* are important if not vital attributes for the definition of the objects, events, and relationships existing in the world around us. To

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choose one ordering principle rather than another is to choose a particular spatio-temporal framework for describing the world. (HARVEY, 1996, p.264). (His emphases).

If space and time are imperative conditions for the *experience* of living, they ought to be also imperative to the *representation* of living. It thus becomes necessary to conceptualise how space and time work within the paradigms of the cinematic representation, as they are crucial to the cinematic construction of the film narrative and what is defined here as the *motion condition.*

The many possible ways to manipulate movement and artistic intentions open up the whole question of space, its quality in films and the different ways of representing it. To start with, how can a specific city be represented and what are the qualities and specificity of its *cinematic space*? Or, to rephrase this, what kind of cinematic techniques[6] are 'appropriate' for representing the city, and what are the implications of the process of 'transferring' a physical city's imagery to the screen?

The *experienced* space (spatial practice) corresponds or refers to the '...physical and material flows, transfers, and interactions that occur in and across space...'(HARVEY 1989b p.218), that is, '...the everyday routines and experience that "secrete" their own social spaces' (MCCANN 1999 p.172). The *perceived* (representations of space) refers to '...all of the signs and significations, codes and knowledge that allow such material practices to be talked about and understood...'(HARVEY 1989b p.218). This is the 'conceptualized space' of scientists, planners, architects, and so on. It is a space, as McCann (1999) interprets it, '...only encountered through the understandings and abstractions contained in plans, codes, and designs that shape how we conceptualize ordered space' (p.172). The *imagined* (the spaces of representation) encompasses the

> [...] mental conventions (codes, signs, "spatial discourses", utopian plans, imaginary landscapes, and even material constructs such as symbolic spaces, particular built environments, paintings, museums, and the like) that imagine new meanings or possibilities for spatial practices. (HARVEY, 1989b, p.218-219).

Through the use of symbolism and the construction of discourse, the spaces of representation open up the possibility of thinking differently about space (MCCANN 1999). It makes sense to include films within the notion of spaces of representation. In view of the above, this article will consider films spaces of representation that work in the realm of the imagination through non-verbal image systems of symbols and signs drawn from the material practices and ordered spaces of everyday life.

According to the concept of narrative space developed by Heath (1993), filmic space also represents space. It is a spatial discourse projected by the medium of visual representation that is the cinema. But as filmic space is also a construction which not only acquires meaning but can also be full of symbolism, it is also an *imagined* space, a space of representation. If the *experience* (of space as an instance of material practice) is *perceived*

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[6] Film techniques include the use of camera angles, depth of focus, framing, camera mobility, altered motion, special lenses and special effects and lighting.

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and represented in a cultural form such as the cinema, the final result, this particular representation of space, the cinematic space, will also constitute a *space of representation*. To think otherwise is to accept the main realist idea that cinema is mimetic and it is completely detached from reality. McCann (1999) arrives at the conclusion that *spaces of representation* can be

> [...] pulled apart from spatial practices and representations of space for heuristic purposes, but in the end they are mutually constitutive moments in a single process. They are part of the production of the social/physical spaces we experience, perceive, and imagine on a daily basis. (p.177-178).

In this context, the *cinematic city* can be considered as 'three-tiered' space: 'real' space as part of physical reality, the space actually represented (the 'perceived', the 'spot' given in space and time); and *the space of representation* - the 'imagined'.

But, as assumed so far, if space in film is a *film construction*, what links does it have with the physical space that it 'represents'? There has been a tradition of taking for granted that the mechanical device – the photographic and cinematographic camera – has the ability to 'reproduce' objects in the form of images, hence strengthening the image's relation to physical reality. Much work has already been done of the 'reality effect' or the 'impression of reality' inherent in the cinema (ALLEN 1993; BAUDRY 1974-75; BAZIN 1967; BORDWELL, STAIGER; THOMPSON 1985; COMOLLI 1990; HEATH; LAURETIS 1985). Following this tradition, it is said that 'Photography and cinema share the camera' (HEATTH 1993 p.68). But while photography projects and fixes 'solids on a plane surface', the cinema uses photographic images to reproduce movement, *motion*. It is through *motion* that cinematic images *represent* reality that images gain life and can become 'real' statements about what is going on in the 'world out there'. So, a narrative that tends to be realistic aspires to capture through *motion* the *spirit* of real time and space. I will not discuss realism in films in any detail. Rather, I will utilise some realist theories to build upon the concept of *space*, *time* and *motion* that I use in my analysis.

To turn to the mirror illusion, that is, the definition of mechanically recorded (photographic and cinematic) images as incontestable truths as they are perceived as 'real' images, it can be said that the filmic construction of space draws a fine line between reality and image to portray an ultimate similarity:

> [...] the space [in films] is "unlike" but at the same time "reconstitutes", using elements litted from real space. In fact, we are back in the realm of "composition", where composition is now the laying out of a succession of images in order to give the picture, to produce the implication of a coherent ('real') space; in short, to create continuity. (HEATH 1993 p.79).

The association of the cinema with the notion of *mirror* is here apparent. As the cinema works with 'real' images, these images are powerful enough to pass the test of incontestable truth – as 'the world out there' or the world of experience. No one can

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reasonably deny this quality of the cinema and this explains why films have long been regarded as the most successful product of the realist ideology[7].

Returning to the initial question of what kind of relationship exists between the physical city, the movie camera, and the film narrative, one could understand this relationship as a simple record of images of nineteenth century life in the streets, united by montage or linear editing and put in motion by the movie camera, as Benjamin (1992) states in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* [1935]. Benjamin's focus at the time was modernity and its representation. He argued for the character of the film as the modern critical aesthetic, and in so doing, was instrumental in securing the link between film text and city text. The 'movement' of modern life seemed to be always, and almost insistently, represented by movement in the streets, leading to the conclusion that that alone was sufficient to operate as representation. However, this matter is not that simple. To be a manifestation of modernity, the image of the city cannot be just a 'record of reality' because 'representation', in its wider sense, is not just a matter of carrying a camera (as Vertov did), framing and shooting the motion of modern life. 'Representation' is also not only a matter of 'composition'. When meaning is achieved, a 'new reality' is created which *expresses* the lifelike quality of reality. Similarly, to represent a city, to be its manifestation, the film has to achieve meaning, to give meaning to the city imagery.

Benjamin (1992) is referred to here in order to comment on his assertion that what constitutes the radical difference between reality and film is that (or was that) in contemplating the film's image, the audience takes the view-point of the camera. In doing so, film images of the city become not just 'recordings', but, they are, in some 'magical' way, *imaginary cities*. This is so because they have resulted from the recording of physical reality, the filmmakers individual experience and priority of choice, and the point of view of the camera. Imaginary cities thus acquire their own quality and identity through editing or montage and subsequently turn the spectator into an active element in the process.

The cinematic city thus is not just a direct record of a physical city, but that which, recorded from reality, acquires meaning through movement, through montage, through its narrative space, so becoming an *imaginary city*. In conclusion, if the city and its spatial form are the material essence through which to represent contemporary reality, they also bestow distinct symbolic meanings, opening a plethora of iconographic types and genres in the process of imagining and imaging space. Still, according to Benjamin (1992) – and this is here his most valuable contribution – the experience of modernity is both complete and changeable when reality is given meaning through different representations as unseen elements in real life can become seen in a different format and, therefore, gain meaning.

> By close-ups of the things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects, by exploring commonplace milieus under the ingenious guidance of the camera, the film, on the one hand, extends our

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[7] Film realism has to do with the construction of an unified diegetic world conveyed through spatio-temporal coherence and rational cause-effect editing. The term 'realism' evokes the 'classical cinema' and the 'classic realist text' (STAM, 2000). Moreover, one must be aware that realism and its 'objective image' of physical reality only represents a limited range of perspectives and values. Within the film theory context, the 'naturalism' that dominated classical film theory in the past (the view that film reproduces the real world) is now rejected by critics who point out that film is not nature but culture, not reproduction but a sign (DEAR, 2000).

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> comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives; on the other hand, it manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of action. Our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories appeared to have us locked up hopelessly. Then came the film and burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go traveling. With the close-up, space expands; with slow-motion, movement is extended. The enlargement of a snapshot does not simply render more precise what in any case was visible, though unclear: it reveals entirely new structural formations of the subject. (BENJAMIN, 1992, p.677).

Benjamin's reference to the cinematic manipulation of time and space is interesting precisely because he gives it credit for the cinema's ability to show things that otherwise would be impossible to see[8]. Interestingly, he also calls attention to the fact that the cinema is able to show at the same time different dimensions and angles of the same object, that is, film allows us to contemplate an object in a manner that otherwise would not be possible. Moreover, and, to some extent contradictorily, it is exactly this 'ability to show things' which also creates the 'imaginary' or 'magical' world. It is thus, and most importantly, through the creative mediation of space and time that the connection between film and palpable reality is established.

Now, the dual and contradictory relationship between *real* and *fantasy* – the imaginary – needs to be re-explored. In view of the above, there are direct links and simultaneous influences occurring between the real (physical) object and its representation. To simulate a real object through its representation is to 'imagine' it and, at the limit, this imaginary object could even serve as a replacement for the real one. There is a fusion of 'realities' and fantasies that occur simultaneously to construct the 'real'. 'Materiality, representation and imagination are not separate worlds' (HARVEY 1996 p.322). The representation of a specific city is constituted by the 'materiality' of the real object, the 'simulated' object through the cinematic medium and the 'imagination' which influences the cinematic construction of the images of this city by setting its images in motion.

Thus, there is a relationship between the construction of the filmic diegesis[9] (emphasising the use of framing, landscape, architecture and *misé-en-scène* and the placing of characters within particular geographical locations) and the living world of actual social relations (CRANG 1998; LURY; MASSEY 1999). Film constructions help either to criticise or to reorder the 'geographical imaginations' we have of the world. As Crang (1998) points out: '...most people's knowledge of most places comes through media of various sorts, so that for most people the representation comes before the "reality"' (p.44). This is to say that the cinema cannot be taken as simply describing cities and places because it plays a central role

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[8] Similarly, in his theorisation, Kracauer (1960) states that the function of films is to confront us with our visible environment. He significantly comments on those 1920s' occasional big-city film scenes as having the power to strike deep into the consciousness (SUTCLIFFE, 1984).

[9] The word *diegesis* derives from the Greek word for narrative. As Nichols (1981) explains, 'Using it allows us to designate the imaginary world of the fiction without building in a bias toward realism or even illusionism, as the word mimesis does. The concept of a diegesis emphasises the fabrication of this imaginary realm, its lack of immediate (unmediated) transparency with any external reality, and guards against the danger of short-circuit leaps between reality and realism' (p.318).

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in shaping people's 'geographical imaginations' therefore helping to 'invent' these places. This is crucial to the understanding of the *cinematic city*.

THE CINEMATIC CITY

> The hunting ground of the motion picture camera is in principle unlimited; it is the external world expanding in all directions. Yet there are certain subjects within that world which may be termed 'cinematic' because they seem to exert a peculiar attraction on the medium. It is as if the medium were predestined (and eager) to exhibit them. (KRACAUER, 1960, p.41).

If some objects are inherently cinematic – as Kracauer (1960) asserts – the city proved certainly to be the best example. Being for long a constant subject in films the city established an intrinsic and powerful relationship with the cinema in such a way that one can state it is through the cinematic imagery that one makes sense of the urban world (the city) and of the representations of that world. The city imagery is the familiar image; it is the metaphor for the state of living in a modern (or postmodern) world. As Donald (1999) asserts:

> One thing cinema – or at least film – has continued to do since the nineteen twenties has been to teach its audiences across the globe ways of seeing and so imagining the modern city, whether or not they live in one. The imagined landscape of the city has become, inescapably, a cinematic landscape. (p.68).

One can narrowly define the cinematic city in terms of describing or registering any city recorded by the cinematic apparatus. The definition of the word *cinematic* can help this misconception: 'belonging to the cinema, proper to the cinema' (JACKSON, 1998). However, I will suggest a different definition. The word cinematic has a more ambiguous definition: 'having the qualities characteristic of the cinema; or 'relating to the cinema' (Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary 1995) or 'resembling the cinema' (JACKSON, 1998). The words 'characteristic', 'relating' and 'resembling' imply something from outside the cinema that has acquired characteristics or qualities of something within.

It seems to be quite difficult to understand the *cinematic city* without connecting it to the physical city or, as Harvey (1992) creatively writes: '…that giant screen which is the city' (p.589). First, the cinematic city, although not a straightforward depiction of physical space, is essentially recognised through association with 'the real'; second, the cinematic city discourse is connected to the way the real city is experienced. Social, economic and political aspects of life are recognisable either as being connected to a specific city or to city life in general. But the cinematic city is hardly just a *re*-production; the concept of 'cinematic' implies separation and observation: an image, a representation. The *cinematic city* thus becomes an *imagined city*.

Not only is it a *reflection* of the physical city itself, that is, the one built by nature, architects, urban designers, builders, and so forth and transformed by its inhabitants and passers-by, but the cinematic city is also the city of imagination. The city of New York is not just constituted by buildings, streets, and related social problems; it is also the city of

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symbolic representations through the cinema and other media. That the cinematic reading of New York – or any other city – helps in the understanding of the real city is not new. Accordingly, like in Harvey's long quotation at the start of this paper, once a view of New York is experienced in films, the street experience in the actual city cannot help acquiring new meanings. Thus, the 'city out there' is in the end transformed in the sense that it becomes a product conceived within a medium of representation: the cinema. Because the very essence of a representation is its being an *interpretation* rather than a *record* (in the case of mechanical reproduction), the *representation* (of a city in this case) can say much about the city's reality and can also influence the way this reality is judged, interpreted, acted upon, used, lived through, and so forth.

To 're-present' implies a removal, a drawing out from an original location and a movement of 'objects' from one level to another. It is a process that involves the transposition of worlds; a movement of social, local, cultural elements from its original plane into another. The 'new world', the representation, provides the potential 'place' for the manipulation and control of images. Images, once freed from their 'original' context, become infinitely malleable but, at the same time, still retain signification within the original context.

Just like any form of representation, the cinema is subjected to the same factors that influence – if not constitute – reality. So, how – being itself part of it – could it be purely a recording of reality? Films are, more than anything else, cultural signs of the real world. There is a correspondence or an interrelationship between an urban reality (one that exists or is presumed to in the physical world) and the image of that reality revealed by cultural representations, which also influence the behaviour of the actors or organisations interacting within that reality (See HALL, 1997; RODOWIN; HOLLISTER, 1984).

> The cinematic landscape is not, consequently, a neutral place of entertainment or an objective documentation or mirror of the "real", but an ideologically charged cultural creation whereby meanings of place and society are made, legitimized, contested and obscured. Intervening in the production and consumption of the cinematic landscape will enable us to question the power and ideology of representation, and the politics and problems of interpretation. More importantly, it will contribute to the more expansive task of mapping the social, spatial, and political geography of film. (HOPKINS, 1994 p.47).

Images of the city – and particularly the cinematic city – influence the way we see, behave in, and approach the city. In this case, the real city also becomes the city of representation, a signifying system of meanings. The physical city and the cinematic city become the city of imagination. As Cosgrove (1984) writes: landscape is 'a way of seeing' (p.1), it is a way 'to make the world visible' (p.8). There are as many *ways of seeing* as ways of *representing*. Accordingly, the cinema is both a way of seeing and of representing the physical world.

To reiterate: the cinematic city has connections with reality where it finds its referential system of meanings. Through its text and language it helps to interpret reality, connecting us to it. It thus transforms, re-creates and establishes the real. As Daniels and Cosgrove (1988) state: '...every culture weaves its world out of image and symbol' (p.1). It is then plausible to say that the *cinematic city is image and symbol* and thus also 'moulds' our

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views of the world, in particular, of the city. The city is itself a continuum of representations; different images and layers intersect. To make sense of the city – or rather the world – it is necessary to examine its physical, sociological, political and economic elements. This examination is then transformed into text, becoming also a representation. It is then of paramount importance to look at representations of the imaginary city of literature, films, and so on, because this helps the understanding of the meaning of the real city. Daniels and Cosgrove (1988) arrived to similar conclusion from their thoughts on the idea of landscape: 'A landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings' (p.1).

> To understand a built landscape ... it is usually necessary to understand written and verbal representations of it, not as "illustrations", images standing outside it, but as constituent images of its meaning or meanings. And, of course, every study of a landscape further transforms its meaning, depositing yet another layer of cultural representation. (DANIELS; COSGROVE 1988, p.1)

The cinematic city is a cultural representation. As a landscape is more than a material display of things, more than an 'illustration' of a specific place at a specific time, the same also applies to the cinematic city. The specificity of the cinematic city is its *motion condition*. The cinema is peculiar in that the construction of its aesthetic is strongly mediated by the ideology of realism. This drives the way that the cinema represents things, the city in particular. Its *motion* condition leads it to an apparent association with reality, therefore connecting it more strongly with the 'real' object that it represents. It follows that, once subjected to the cinema; the meaning of the cityscape will be further transformed.

Although Daniels and Cosgrove (1988) make no mention of the cinema, much of their work on literary texts and landscape art can be applied to films. Consider now the notion of landscape as both image and symbol. Consider the image acquired through the filmic representations. As the vision is socially constructed and/or culturally located the notion that any representation *per se* 'mirrors' the real world has become increasingly untenable. The argument is now that there is no pre-interpreting reality to be reflected within any system of representation.

> The world is not pre-formed, waiting to be "seen" by the "extro-spection" of the "naked eye". There is no-thing "out-there" intrinsically formed, interesting, good or beautiful as our dominant cultural outlook would suggest. Vision is a skilled cultural practice. (JENKS, 1995, p.10)

But if film does not reflect 'what is out there' (what is out there is not really there), if it does not reflect a concrete reality, what does it reflect?[10] Barnes and Duncan (1992) consider the same question in relation to literary texts, arguing for consideration of intertextuality.

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[10] Considering this matter Jenks (1995) identifies a problem: '...in the practice of abstracting phenomena from one plane, locus or level up on to another visual dimension, we are led to ask 'which image should we finally attend to?' or '...which image (re) presents the world?' (p.9). This 'confusion' on how to approach the matter of representation is normally, as we have seen, what might end in a natural attitude to think of cinematic representation as a copy of the world. Nevertheless, this account of film as the record of the world suppresses any social/cultural character of the image and its reality as sign/symbol.

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Intertextuality is defined as '...the process whereby meaning is produced from text to text rather than, as it were, between text and the world' (RYLANCE quoted in BARNES; DUNCAN 1992 p.2-3). What once was simply defined as 'physical reality', now has a more complex meaning. Reality can now be considered a 'text', an image, a concept that defines physical elements but not only them. Within this context, Barnes and Duncan conclude that writing is not simply 'reflective' but 'constitutive', '...new worlds are made out of old texts, and old worlds are the basis of new texts' (p.3).

To understand critically our own representations – and also those of others – a knowledge of '...the kinds of factors bearing upon an author that makes an account come out the way it does' (BARNES; DUNCAN 1992 p.3) is necessary. These factors refer to social, institutional, political and historical forces and they are contingent on particular times and places. In sum, when we 'tell it like it is' we are at the same time 'telling it like we are' (BARNES; DUNCAN 1992).

Once again, there is a correlation between the *motion condition* and the *cinematic city*. When a film gives a specific image (of a city for instance), this image is necessarily given in a local setting, from a particular point of view (the camera) and inevitably is influenced by the filmmaker's[11] particular set of interests, views, technical resources, and so on. 'The world out there' and its representation are a mixture of textual representations. Thus, one text should not be privileged over another because it is precisely the plurality of texts – the different layers of cultural representations – that make up our understanding of the world. So, as a counterpoint to Harvey (1989a),

> We ground things, now, on a moving earth. There is no longer any place of overview (mountaintop) from which to map human ways of life, no Archimedian point from which to represent the world. (James Clifford quoted in BARNES; DUNCAN, 1992, p.3)

The God-like vision in Harvey's text quoted in the opening of this article has to do with the pleasure of gazing upon shapes and surfaces, light and shade, colour and textures, movements, sounds and smells, that is, the pleasure of watching as tempting desire: 'voyeurism'. That is why the city's spatiality has to do with, and is bound by, experience, movement, pleasure and imagination, rather than only with architecture, and social, economic and political interaction. Therefore, the 'God-like' or 'mountaintop' visions do not stand alone in a world in which the understanding of reality do not only consist of concrete elements. Here, 'reality' is a conjunction of discourses that are not only the consequences of the 'world out there'. These discourses are not only influenced by 'reality' but also influence and modify it.

The 'world out there' becomes, in the end, the conjunction of acts, beliefs, thoughts, and images that emanate from cultural representations. Cityscapes are then constructed by different discourses that not only make sense of them but also interact in a way that can also modify them. Cityscapes are, indeed, fascinating and stimulating. The cinematic city reveals much about the world it represents though we are all well aware of the role of perception and

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[11] This matter can also be put within the context of the cinema of *auteur*, though this would restrict the image to the state of 'object' of reflection. There is also the problem referred to by Stam (2000) about 'auteurism' downplaying the collaborative nature of filmmaking.

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imagination. In other words, in the case of the cinematic representation, as Dear (2000) points out, '...our desires and actions become conditioned by the movies and similar forms of entertainment. We may even go on to imagine and create a life, a city that mimics the movies' (p.193). If it is true that we construct the world and our attitude towards it from texts that speak of who we are, or wish to be (BARNES; DUNCAN 1992), the filmic text is one in which this identification and our desires can be powerfully visualised, represented and interpreted. The images give the impression that the old and new worlds referred to by Barnes and Duncan are both 'out there': on the screen.

So, the cinematic city, the image of the perceived (imagined) city reflected upon a screen, is not just a reflection of an object given in reality. The object in itself is formed by a conjunction of elements and text. The cinematic city is a meaningful city, a city created by and upon a diversity of previously chosen images that, joined together, not only become another city, but still say a lot about the 'original' city – the object – and its subjects. As the cinematic city is, to some extent, a product of our imagination, it provides a bridge for understanding the development and formulation of some paradigms of our sense of the place we live in. This does not mean the 'transference of meaning' from the real to the image, but about a given meaning and sense acquired by the image that could not be imagined before the image had itself been created.

The cinematic city is diverse – as diverse as cities in real life. It can assume different forms and have different functions and significance for the film narrative. It is never a neutral film background. As Dear (2000) states: 'It is extremely rare, if ever, that the city (or any other backdrop) is simply "there" in a movie' (p.184). Muzzio (1996), however, makes a distinction between 'true city movies' and 'urban local colour movies'[12]:

> In the true city movie, the city actively participates in shaping character and plot. In an urban local color movie, substitution of another background might affect the detail within the movie but not the essential patterns of plot, characterization, and theme. (p.212)

The cinematic image of cities incorporates an enormous range of contexts as 'the city' has the potential to individualise and symbolise specific social and cultural conflicts. A set of meanings and symbols can also be constructed through cinematic representations of the city which can lead to different interpretations of urban and architectural imagery. There are 'projections of the future' in the cities of *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang 1927), *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott 1982), *The Fifth Element* (Luc Besson 1997) and *The Matrix* (Larry Wachowski and Andy Wachowski 1999) or in the modernist cities of Godard and Antonioni. There are utopian – *The Crowd* (King Vidor 1928), *Sunrise* (F.W. Murnau 1927) – dystopian (for example, most of the American *film noirs*) and juxtaposed utopian and dystopian discourses. Be that as it may, the 'construction', the 'imagination' of the city will, interestingly, always be grounded on imagery already established. However, the same city can be represented differently or can acquire different meanings. The 'New York' of Woody Allen's *Manhattan*

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[12] In relation to the films analysed within this thesis one can consider *Manhattan* (Woody Allen, 1979) as an example of a 'true city movie' and *Smashing Time* (Desmond Davies, 1967) as an example of an 'urban local colour movie' following Muzzio's.

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(1979) is not the same 'New York' as the one in Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976), though both New Yorks are references to the physical city. The way the cityscape is represented, interpreted and read creates similarity or difference, but one does not exclude the other.

THE POST-MODERN CONDITION AND THE BRAZILIAN CINEMA

There are many Brazilian films that can be used as examples of the above regarding the relationship between the 'city and the cinema'. There is no reason or sufficient space here to talk about all of them. However, it is necessary to point out that the cycle of Brazilian films produced from the mid-1980s to the 1990s centered its attention on discussing the experience related to social, political and economic conflicts so commonly associated to the urban scenario. Interestingly, the urban scene is always represented by the image of well-known Brazilian cities such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Films such as *Cidade Oculta* (Francisco Botelho, 1986), *Anjos da Noite* (Wilson Barros, 1987), *A Dama do Cine Shanghai* (Guilherme de Almeida Prado, 1988), *Faca de Dois Gumes* (Murillo Salles, 1989) and *A Grande Arte* (Walter Salles Jr., 1990), are part of this 'urban cinema' that is mentioned here in order to call attention for the importance of the emergence of another cycle: the so called 'cinema da retomada'[13] (from the mid-1990s to date).

The films of this period have, very often, touched on many relevant matters related to the understanding of contemporary post-modern urban life. The city is one of the imagination, that is also a product of a certain 'cultural uneasiness' in relation to current concerns about identity and its confusing relationship to time and space. The world created in most films of this period is one based on the 'universal' image of the city. Standing for the whole, 'the city' embodies the entire urban subject.

Accordingly, urban space in Brazilian films of the period has benefited from visual appropriations of the cityscape of the two biggest Brazilian cities: Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The urban space image is presented as 'visual identity' because it is recognized by everybody and understood as spatial image of place where all qualities and questions, associated to modern urban life, take place. On the whole, these two cities appear as the signifier of place of Brazilian identity.

In addition, the Brazilian metropolis, shaped by the cinema, combines two almost opposing poles: the city as a civilized and modern space and the city as traditional and primitive space. The dichotomy of these representations reveals itself through the opposition of images of internationally known places that have become 'the identity' of the places themselves: the *Pão de Açúcar* and the *Corcovado*, for instance. Confined spaces which are supposedly chaotic and violent, like city centers and shantytowns, are also 'organized' as images within the same paradigm, to show the other side of this inherently uneven city.

So, in the case of the city image constructed by the Brazilian cinema, the city is an ambiguous territory. In this, elements like technology and progress are not necessarily

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[13] The "cinema da retomada" refers to the reactivation of national cinematographic production after a long period of decline during Fernando Collor de Melo's government. Some authors, such as Oricchio (2003) e Butcher (2005), refer to the film *Carlota Joaquina, Princesa do Brasil* (Carla Camuratti, 1995) as the beginning of a new era. The films that followed had a clear and strong aesthetic and narrative reference from this 'urban cinema' of the 1980s.

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associated or equivalent. Films, such as *A Grande Arte* (Walter Salles, 1989), *Central do Brasil* (Walter Salles, 1999), *O Invasor* (Beto Brant, 2001), *Cidade de Deus* (Fernando Meireles, 2002), *O Homem do Ano* (*The Man of the Year*, José Guilherme Fonseca, 2002), and *Redentor* (*Redeemer*, Cláudio Torres, 2004) are good exemples.

Redeemer comes out in the 'retomada' period and assumes a new position towards the representation of violence. This film seems to have 'exorcized' the phantom of the explicit representation of violence so common in Brazilian cinema. In this film, violence is connected to a diversity of symbols and metaphors for the purpose of building an 'inner film geography'. It is shown as an important and implicit part of the city's life – and representation – because the city is also the *locus* of marginality and social difference. Though a less realist universe is constructed, it is nonetheless disturbing: violence, though not explicit, is constant.

Emphasizing the choice for parody and allegory, *Redeemer* deals basically with the Brazilian 'misfortune' of not having a serious housing policy that would give people the opportunity to reach everybody's dream: owning a home. This film talks about the Brazilian house building market, economic and social decadence of the middle class and the elite's corruption. The "Condomínio Paraíso", key to the drama, stands as the representation of the destruction of this dream. It congregates the diversity of conditions related to appropriation, desapropriation, inclusion and exclusion from space. Throughout the film, we understand that the Condomínio Paraíso is not owned by nobody and it will never be – nor by the builders who left the job unfinished, neither by the owners who are still paying the mortgage of a flat that will never be theirs, or by the homeless people that have invaded the Condomínio. The Condomínio Paraíso represents here the 'space that never was', a 'nobody's land'.

Though the film deals with serious themes, the narrative's option is for allegory, unrealism and hyper-artificiality. As the film critic Cleber Eduardo (2004) defines: a delirious allegory, where reality is treated as a 'symbolic surface'. The introductory music score (*O Guarani*, de Carlos Gomes), in Eduardo's (2004) opinion, is in itself the representation of the 'state of spectacularity' because it exacerbates the negation of mimesis. Reality in this case is almost just alluded to, not 'reflected', or intended as a 're-creation' of the real. Eduardo (2004) explains:

> The neon lights and the moving camera flying over a undefined surface, giving a virtual impression of hardness, metallic blue, which only after a few seconds finds the inert face of the Christ, just before the titles burst shining onto the screen, highlights the hyper-artificiality on which the narrative will be based. Everything on the screen reveals the option for the fake, reaffirmed by the camera's 'flying' view over the lagoon, with its surrounding vegetation, buildings and hills at the back, this gives the images of real things an impression of virtual nature. *Reality, when appears, looks like fake*. (My emphasis).

Shooting a film in location, using the city and its topography, is a way of building an urban *mise-en-scène* that is constructed from and by the city life. The 'motion' of the landscape is related to the sense of place that is effectively produced by many images that, taken from the location, transform themselves through the medium and the association and

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recognition of the images. This relates to a strategy of constructing an idea of movement, giving the spectator a way of visualizing the cityscape through what one can call a 'navigation cartography'. For somebody who is sufficiently used to the images constructed by Brazilian cinema and the imagery related to it, it is not so difficult to see that in *Redeemer,* the landscape image subverts the conventional association with the natural landscape with liberation.

Redeemer, it seems, places the spectator within a 'flux' defined by Bruno (2002) as 'psycho-geography'. There are no street scenes in this film: the city – Rio de Janeiro – comes on the screen as a fragmented image. The main character, Célio Rocha, played by actor Pedro Cardoso, knows the city intimately; he knows all its entrances and exits, he knows how it 'happens', works, exists. As a journalist who is used to 'look for the news wherever he can find it', he knows all the ways, streets, corners, and darker sides of the city. That is why he is the voice that narrates the story, even though he is dead. However, in spite of knowing the space where he circulates so freely, we do not see him actually doing it.

The cinematic construction of sites of transit represents another spatial mobility that is in *Redeemer* presented in the shape of a 'spatial perception', which is not integrated or associated to the body's mobility in the urban space. Mobility is shown in the film through the importance given to the 'still moments' that happen in specific spaces – apartments, offices, the Condomínio Paraíso etc., mostly in spaces where the architecture of the city can be shown as a powerful background image. An example is the sequence in which Otávio Sabóia, character played by Miguel Fallabela, threatens to jump from the top of a high building. At this moment he ends up talking his way out of the deed trying to convince Célio Rocha to help him in another sting. The whole sequence of the dialogue between Otávio and Célio is evidently 'a time' for the city architecture to be shown in all its magnitude and grandiosity.

Like *Redeemer* (Cláudio Torres, 2004), *The Man of the Year* (José Henrique Fonseca, 2003) is a good example for discussing about post-modern film representation. This film discusses about many of the contradictions associated to post-modernity articulating questions about cultural identity's fragmentation.

The Man of the Year tells a story of an 'ordinary' man, Máiquel (Murilo Benício), who lives in the periphery of Rio de Janeiro. After getting involved in a fight and killing a man, Máiquel becomes 'famous' and respected by the community as he is now seen as a kind of 'hero' fighting for justice Máiquel becomes the head of a security company which the main job is to protect the people who live in his neighborhood. The 'Man of the Year' ("Homem do Ano") – title given to Máiquel by the people of his community – gets involved in situations that makes him as much a marginal as the people Maiquel himself tries to eliminate with the justification of doing his job for the community. His 'job' is called, by his dentist friend Dr. Carvalho (Jorge Dória), 'hygienic and patriotic'.

Coincidently, Máiquel's new visual style (his hair is dyed *platinum blond*e after a bet) is placed by the narrative as a metaphor for his new identity. Living in a world where everybody wants 'a place in the sun', Maiquel desires to be someone, to be part of the high class. Maiquel's recognition by the others, his social and economic class ascendance, and his attitude towards life has changed at the same time, and coincidently, at the moment when his appearance has changed too. With his *platinum blonde* hair, Máiquel starts to see himself in

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a different manner and ends up turning himself into a different man. He actually describes himself as *'a guy who he was, but who wasn't him' (*'um cara que era ele, mas não era ele'), a new Máiquel.

The interesting element regarding the character of Maiquel is the use of Maiquel's identity as the main element through which the narrative comments on cultural diversity. One can see that Máiquel is a cultural gig-saw, 'composed' and played with different peaces that, even though contradictory, most of the film looks as if they were in apparent harmony. The main character is the image of someone that reflects the world through his fragmented identity – represented visually here basically by his looks. A post-modern character! Máiquel's admiration for everything that relates to the north American culture represents the way that most people today understand the contemporary context of a global world.

The Man of the Year deals with mixed post-modern contradictions – for instance, the contradictory personalities of the film's characters, the diversity of temporalities and cultures represented by setting, wardrobe, etc. Post-modernism is not characterized by an unique style, but by the mixture which characterizes it. One can note a subtext commenting on the end of the concept of a unified nationality or an inherited identity.

In this way, throughout the film, many elements that are referent to other cultures, can be seen as incorporated by the Brazilian culture. In the opening sequence, for instance, we see the symbol of the McDonald's, one of the biggest icons of the North American culture that, in the Brazilian scenario, represents the multinational capital taking over the country. It is interesting that the big 'M' is located in a periphery of the city where most of its inhabitants are from lower classes. The film builds a discourse that situates the globalization process as a generalized and spread one that crosses borders and also carries with it the super-valorization of consumption that in itself is characterized by the strong power of the media.

The strong influence of foreign words in the film – the names of characters (Maiquel), pets (Bil), shops (Nato's alumínio), industrialized products (pizza mixta, Big Fest Midnight), compose what Stuart Hall (2001) calls "cultural supermarket". This is a very appropriate term once recognition and identification has to do with the capitalist system of buying and selling. The culture of the other is then negotiated through this system, and this allows the association and incorporation of 'the other' to our own culture.

Television is also used to illustrate the 'cultural mix' on which the contemporary world has become. The TV programs appreciated and watched by Máiquel are always foreigners – the advert of the Japanese knife *Ginsu*, the soap-opera *Samantha,* the news about the US president and the US currency etc. Influenced by all these, Máiquel gives the name *Samantha* to his daughter and *Bil* to his piglet pet. All this reminds us of what Teixeira Coelho (1995) refers to as the "culture of entertainment". This concept of culture brings about the idea that the references and quotations taken before from books have now been replaced by television adverts and programs. Television is now responsible for many cultural changes as it is the main responsible for influencing behavior, style, language, cultural practices, time and space perception.

> As much as social life becomes mediated by the global market of styles, places, and images, by international traveling, media images and linked global communication systems, the identities become more and more

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unarticulated and dissociated – misplaced – from time, place, history and tradition and they seem to be freely floating.

If we are living through constant changes of information, knowledge and cultural practices, resulting in new types of culture, which Stuart Hall calls hybridism, we are hybrids, floating and incorporating many identities. In the film, this idea is represented through the diversity of elements that indicate the influence and the change of identities. Máiquel lives as a 'temporary person'. In every new 'impulse', a new identity replaces the previous one, and transforms itself accordingly to new events that are taking place. Every new identity can be abandoned at anytime and be replaced again and again. Actually, this is what happens in the end of the film. Running from the police, Máiquel has now got his hair dyed back to the original color and drives off the city to 'anyplace'. This final scene is assertive in its meaning. Máiquel frees himself from the former identity and looks for another way of life. He now looks for another identity that, most probably, will not be a definitive one.

CLOSING UP

Setting the scene for establishing the way cities are represented in films and the way these cities' imagery works as a signifying system within the cinematic context, this article has considered the cinematic city from different theoretical stand-points and explored the notion of the *motion condition*. While Harvey (1989b) used the concept of *time and space compression* to point to a 'crisis' in postmodern representation, I draw from his concept and related it to the capacity of the cinema to compress and decompress space and time and to the diversity of ways that this can 'shape' the representation of cities. The intention here was to develop a more overarching notion of the *cinematic city* rather than the simple and mere recording of the city streets put in motion – as Benjamin (1992) once suggested–, or a 'construction' for the sake of cinematic space (or narrative space) acquired through different notions of motion.

The cinematic city is constituted by references to 'real' cities and is a space represented by film through the construction of different notions of motion, as referred to by Heath (1993). But this it is not all. The cinematic city is the narrative city, the space within the film that can explain or can, in itself, impersonate (represent) and also symbolise the different types of motion working together within the filmic space. Space, here, acquires meaning through the diversity of motion. The *cinematic city*, instead of being mere background, is recorded and constructed, acquires meaning, and as a cultural creation, influences the reality it comes from as it helps to shape our perception of that 'reality'. In the end, the city on the screen is not just a direct image reflected from reality.. During the process of linking different images and motion together, and depending on the way they are connected, the 'final' constructed image of the city can acquire distinct meaning. Though this construction is not completely freed from the influence of its 'real' counterpart, because the real (the physical) influences the way cultural forms take place; the cinematic city is not only a different city but it can also, in many ways, influence the way we perceive and experience the 'real' city.

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Here, the 'false' and the 'true' react to and influence each other. Taking into account that cinematic space is an imaginary space (BENJAMIN, 1992), the cinematic city, in this context, can be also 'real' as it is a representation of its 'real' counterpart that, through the process of the 'imaginary', becomes also a space of representation. The city represented is thus an imaginary city, an 'imagined space'. In addition, it can be regarded as a symbol (COSGROVE; DANIELS, 1988) of a city. As Daniels and Cosgrove (1988) and Jenks (1995) claim, there is no pre-interpreted reality to be reflected by a representation, but rather a gain in meaning and symbolism. Thus, the reality itself only acquires 'life' when it is interpreted, when it has a representational counterpart. The physical city only becomes 'real' when it is represented, when it is *presented* through different interpretations, through different layers of readings. Therefore, the representation of the city by the cinema is also a fundamental part of the construction of actual cities themselves and of the lived experience of the individuals who inhabit these particular places.

Recently, geographers have begun to draw on a wide range of representations – mostly literary and pictorial – as a potentially rich field for cultural geography to highlight the importance of geographical analysis in conveying the character of place (BARNES; DUNCAN 1992; BURGES; GOLD 1985; COSGROVE; DANIELS 1988). My suggestion here is that cinematically constructed images should also be considered. The idea is to highlight the importance of investigating how cinematic images of the city are thematised as a living structure of meaning in the context of space, time and motion.

Thus, I assume that there is a circular 'chicken-or-egg' interplay between the 'city out there', its representation and its reading. In investigating and analysing the cinematic image of cities, or, in short, the *cinematic city*, one will shift, as Jackson (1989) puts it, 'from the interpretation of a world of exterior surfaces and appearances to an inner world of meaning and experience'.

Thus, there is a fundamental interplay between the 'city out there', its representation and its reading. It works through mutual and simultaneous movement. As Cosgrove and Daniels (1988) claim about contemporary visual representations, there is no pre-interpreted reality to be reflected by a representation, but rather a gain in meaning and symbolism. Thus, the reality itself only acquires 'life' when it is interpreted, when it has a representational counterpart. The physical city only becomes 'real' when it is represented, when it is *presented* through different interpretations, through different layers of readings. Therefore, the representation of the city by contemporary Brazilian cinema is also a fundamental part of the construction of actual cities themselves and the lived experience of the individuals who inhabit these particular places.

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