

Trends in contemporary Brazilian documentary

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The Wexner Center's *Cruzamentos: Contemporary Brazilian Documentary* series proposes to provide us with a significant overview of what is being produced in the realm of documentary film in Brazil. With a historic bent, it goes as far back as *Iracema* (1974), by Jorge Bodanzky and Orlando Senna, a film that established parameters for paths that would later be explored. Brazilian documentaries recently experienced a sort of boom and have come to occupy a significant portion of the country's commercial film releases. Although they account for a small percentage of the total viewing audience, documentaries make up more than thirty percent of films released theatrically in Brazil. Recent alterations in cable television laws are expected to ensure these films reach that medium as well.

The documentary tradition has been present in Brazilian cinema since the first half of the twentieth century by way of films by our main classical filmmaker, Humberto Mauro, at the National Institute of Educational Cinema (Instituto Nacional do Cinema Educativo), or through the trailblazing experiments of the Cinema Novo movement with "verité" style in the 1960s.¹ Distinguished by an interest in social realism and the use of portable equipment, cinema verité arrived early on in Brazil and its stylistic elements were quickly incorporated by directors such as Leon Hirszman (*Absolute Majority/Maioria absoluta*, 1964), Paulo César Saraceni (*Racial Integration/Integração racial*, 1964), Joaquim Pedro de Andrade (*Garrincha: Hero of the Jungle/Garrincha: alegria do povo*, 1962), Arnaldo Jabor (*Public Opinion/Opinião pública*, 1967), Júlio Bressane and Eduardo Escorel (*Close-Up on Bethânia: About a Concert/Bethânia bem de perto: a propósito de um show*, 1966), and by the group that gravitated around producer Thomas Farkas. During the 1970s and 1980s, documentary filmmakers continued on these and other trails, which were wiped out in the profound funding crisis that engulfed Brazilian cinema in the early 1990s. With the gradual recovery that has come to be known as the *retomada*, or "rebirth," the production of documentaries reestablished itself on a different level. Beginning in the first decade of the twenty-first century, documentaries have affirmed themselves in terms of quantity, as well as a leap in quality, as evidenced by the prominence that they've acquired on the theatrical circuit.

The *Cruzamentos* series rightly selects *Iracema* as the key film for understanding the contemporary Brazilian documentary. Produced in 1974, it maintains ties with the second generation of the Cinema Novo movement, known as Cinema Marginal, particularly in the improvisational mode of the films of Júlio Bressane and Rogério Sganzerla at the production company Bel-Air. *Iracema* radicalized a trend that would run through Brazilian documentaries in the first decade of the 2000s, a mixed form of enactment and mise-en-scène that superimposes realist fiction and the documentary. In

¹ Cinema Novo was a vanguard movement that ushered in modern cinema in Latin America during the 1960s, following the trail blazed by the French New Wave. Its core group was composed of such directors as Glauber Rocha, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Leon Hirszman, Carlos Diegues, Joaquim Pedro de Andrade, and Paulo César Saraceni. It shared the documentary style of Direct Cinema, also known in America as cinema verité, characterized by an observational stance, with a handheld camera in the midst of the action. In its French version, cinema verité actively interferes with the world in a kind of interaction that filmmaker and anthropologist Jean Rouch called "cine-trance."

the case of *Iracema*, this form clearly leans toward fiction with a realist bent. The mise-en-scène is grounded around veteran actor Paulo César Peréio, a paradigmatic presence in Cinema Novo and Cinema Marginal films, who here plays a truck driver alongside Edna de Cássia, an ordinary girl from a humble family in the Amazon, who plays a prostitute. *Iracema* is a sort of road movie that progresses into the unknown, guided by a stylistic approach in which the actor's actions and expressions are not performed, but mostly improvised in unscripted dialogue and scenes as the takes go on. As the crew travels (and shoots) through the roads of the Amazon in this improvised way, we have as background the contradictions inherent to the "Great Brazil" project—the showcase of the military regime that overthrew the country's democratic government in 1964. In the wake of *Iracema*, Bodanzky went on to build an acclaimed career as a documentary filmmaker.

If in *Iracema* we have a plot of fictional origin seeking to show the contradictions of the Brazilian economic model in the Amazon, *The Hills of Disorder* (*Serras da desordem*, 2006), directed by Andrea Tonacci, is a documentary that turns its attention to these same contradictions. The film's main protagonist is Carapiru, an Indian from the state of Maranhão at edge of the Amazon who survives the massacre of his tribe by land-grabbers. Carapiru is found ten years after the massacre wandering in the state of Bahia some 1,200 miles from his tribe. Taken to Brasília by Sydney Possuelo, an expert deeply familiar with the country's hinterlands, he is identified by another Indian hired to be his interpreter (no one else was fluent in his dialect) as one of the last survivors of the Awá-Guajá tribe. Fate would have it that they recognized one another as father and son during their first meeting. Each had believed the other dead in the 1978 massacre. Carapiru's errant journey and his reunion with his son receive a wave of media attention and then are forgotten. Tonacci presents this epic story in a particular way, establishing a narrative that shies away from media sensationalism. The film uses archive images from various sources, but its core is structured around reenactments by Carapiru of the scenes of his life wandering throughout Brazil, alongside shots, in a documentary mode, of his actions and expressions. *The Hills of Disorder*, in this sense, gives continuity to the exploration of mixed modes of performance—between fiction and documentary—begun with *Iracema*, though here the structure is fundamentally documentary, with a narrative plot structure based on real episodes from the lives of Carapiru and his son.

As referenced by the series' eponymous *cruzamentos*, this overlapping or intersecting of modes of enactment and mise-en-scène is a trademark of the contemporary Brazilian documentary, and Eduardo Coutinho's *Playing* (*Jogo de cena*, 2007) illustrates the accompanying complexities. It is explicitly dedicated to the various modalities of "playing," or performing, in the documentary form. The evolution of Coutinho's style—which begins in *Santa Marta: Two Weeks in the Slums* (*Santa Marta duas semanas no morro*, 1987) and is more clearly defined in *The Mighty Spirit* (*Santo Forte*, 1999)—achieves its most elaborate architecture in *The End and the Beginning* (*O fim e o princípio*), from 2006, and then leads to the mannerism that rules *Playing*. In *The End and the Beginning*, Coutinho shows us a group of rural inhabitants of Brazil's arid *sertão* (or "backlands"), exploring his method of portrayal through personal testimonies, interviewing his subjects face-to-face with the camera. The personages in this film are clearly outlined, with each subject delineating their personality for the camera, creating memorable characters. The theme that surrounds the documentary (death, the beginning of the end) seems to have united characters and director in a transcendental sensitiveness to life slowly dripping toward its end through the course of words and gestures.

Playing possesses the same structure of Coutinho's earlier films, with frontally shot monologues seeking the characters' transfiguration through the camera, but here varies in a random way, accentuating permutation among different modes of mise-en-scène. Here Coutinho works with ordinary women describing their lives, unknown amateur actresses who perform the testimonies of those women, and professional actresses (Fernanda Torres, Marília Pêra, and Andrea Beltrão) who play characters *and* themselves. These modes of enactment are blended on different levels, creating ambiguity for viewers as to who is acting out someone else's life and who is giving actual life testimony. This oscillation shows a point off the curve, reflecting the exhaustion of the style Coutinho ushered in twenty years before. In this way, Coutinho harmoniously fuses form and content to reflexively examine the status of performance in documentary, a theme dear to many contemporary Brazilian documentarians.

Santiago (2007), by João Moreira Salles, also delves into the themes of performance and representation in Brazilian documentary. The film questions the way mise-en-scène was directed in its original takes, filmed by Salles in May 1992, which depict his family butler and childhood steward, Santiago Badriotti Merlo. With a searching, self-critical, first-person voice (spoken in voice-over by Fernando Moreira Salles, João's brother), the film sees Salles return to the original footage in 2005, both questioning the manipulative directing method that he employed in order to achieve certain actions and monologues from his former butler and mixing a kind of personal guilt with class issues as a boss filming his employee. With Santiago already having passed away by the time the film was finalized, the character filmed in 1992 remains as the ghost of a mode of documentary staging and directing whose validity Salles questions more than ten years later. Salles's proximity in this film to Coutinho's style is clear and accentuated by the fact that both work at the same production company, Videofilmes, which fostered Coutinho's work in the early 2000s.

Coutinho effectively works with the camera focused on performing, filmed bodies, without leaving space for the insertion of scenes illustrating or explaining the figures and expressions we see on the screen. Any heterogeneous image would introduce the distance he wants to avoid and would make the narrative abandon the subjective contact between the filmmaker-body and the body-en-scène. The danger he perceives is that of falling into a sort of objectification, a distant and illustrative representation. In the interviews in his films, Coutinho makes explicit his procedure of not illustrating the character's speech. The first film in which he applies his method firmly, *The Mighty Spirit*, has religiosity in Brazil as its theme and was released in the same year as Ricardo Dias's *Faith* (*Fé*, 1999), another documentary on religion made in a more traditional style. *Faith* alternates between testimony, images illustrative of religious expression, and assertive explanations. The shots of religious expression exemplify what is said by the subjects in front of the camera, opening the narrative to a more distanced exposure of its object.

Brazilian society has a particularly unjust distribution of income and is marked by social extremes. As cinema, even documentary cinema, is an expensive art, most contemporary film production is made by members of economically favored classes. Since the 1960s, an uprising in Brazilian cinema has questioned the representation of the "other" (the masses) by the "self" (the middle-class filmmaker). At its extreme, this movement touches upon the pronounced absence of film production from the poor and other excluded Brazilian populations. It is in this light that the idea of giving the camera

to the other, of giving the camera to the masses, has been a recurring concern of the Brazilian documentary. This is the case in ***Prisoner of the Iron Bars*** (*O prisioneiro da grade de ferro—auto-retratos*, 2003), in which the camera is handed over to inmates themselves, although the editing of the images remained the responsibility of director Paulo Sacramento and his editor Idê Lacreta. As the inmates at Carandiru prison are all from lower classes, handing them the camera to film their cells from inside more than carries these desired connotations of transferring the camera to the “other” class.

The documentaries made on the fissure that divides Brazilian society occupy a prominent place in contemporary production. They are constituted around a guilty class conscience that exposes the unease of the Brazilian middle class with the country’s social fracture. This is the case with documentaries such as ***News from a Personal War*** (*Notícias de uma guerra particular*, 1999) and ***Bus 174*** (*Ônibus 174*, 2002), but also *Falcão: Traffic Boys* (*Falcão: os meninos do tráfico*, 2006), *The Little Prince’s Rap against the Wicked Souls* (*O rap do Pequeno Príncipe contra as almas sebosas*, 2000), *Housewarming Party* (*Dia de festa*), *Estamira* (2006), and *On the Fringes of São Paulo: Squatting* (*À margem do concreto*, 2007), among others. In these films the class dilemmas of Brazilian society appear exposed, opened in violent confrontation combining crime and social vindication.

The rediscovery of the idealized poor of the 1960s, now armed with money from drug trafficking and living, literally, in the midst of Rio de Janeiro’s bourgeois buildings, is the main theme of *News from a Personal War*, codirected by João Moreira Salles and Kátia Lund. The new situation takes the spectator by surprise as it quickly crystallizes. The film’s tone is cuttingly existential and raw, at times making use of intense images shot for television reports. This documentary and José Padilha’s *Bus 174* closely portray the armed youth from Rio’s slums who live in direct confrontation with civil society. The narrative voice of these documentaries (conveyed through voice-over or interviews) characterizes in a critical way the country that formed these youth and presents a positive understanding of their violence as a contradictory form of expression.

The representation of the masses in the Brazilian documentary has its point of origin in ***Twenty Years Later*** (*Cabra marcado para morrer*, 1984), a film in which the image of the “people” begins to take shape in cinema vérité style. In this film, the representation of the masses is still straightforward for the good conscious of the bourgeoisie. Ethical boundaries are clear, and the moral ambiguity introduced by crime and drug trafficking has not yet appeared on the horizon. The dividing line clearly places the oppressed masses on one side and the military regime, torture, and an unjust economic model on the other. In *Twenty Years Later*, Eduardo Coutinho goes out in search of the peasants with whom he began making a neorealist Cinema Novo fiction film on the life of peasant leader João Pedro Teixeira, who was assassinated in April 1962. The film’s footage, shot between February and March of 1964, was literally interrupted by the military coup. The crew was in the midst of shooting in the sertão near where the assassination had taken place when the government was overthrown and their set was invaded. In 1981 and 1982, near the end of the dictatorship, Coutinho once again made contact with João Pedro’s widow, Elizabeth Teixeira, in her hiding place in a small town in the state of Rio Grande do Norte. He then gathered together the 1964 film crew for interviews and statements and also interviewed the relatives of Elizabeth Teixeira, including her eleven children, who were by then scattered all over Brazil. Elizabeth, who in the original docudrama played herself, is placed at center stage and becomes the main character in the documentary that Coutinho ended up making. Twenty years later, she remains

isolated and in exile in her own country, a sort of frozen personage, portraying in time the poverty and transformations Brazil underwent between 1964 and 1981–82.

With this film, Coutinho reconstitutes not only his career, interrupted by the military coup, but also the path taken by his generation (leftist youth who fought for the country's social transformation) and the very trajectory of the Brazilian people, in their social exclusion and poverty-driven dispersion among the country's big cities. His work has the epic tone of the resumption of a story suspended—a sort of filmstrip that was paused at the moment the shooting of the first fiction film was interrupted, and that begins to move forward once again decades later. Running throughout the film are scenes in which Coutinho himself and the movie camera are shown, in the best possible cinema vérité style, which was still a novelty in Brazil in the 1980s.

Also hailing from this period is ***ABC of a Strike*** (*ABC da greve*, 1979–90), a posthumously released film shot in a diverse style by Leon Hirszman. Here a more classic narrative structure predominates, with the presence of a voice-over, showing the emergence of union leader Lula (Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva), who would later become President of Brazil. However the film's narrative isn't quite anchored, although Hirszman had begun editing prior to his death. Shooting took place in a somewhat improvised way. The union movement led by Lula, and filmed by Hirszman, burst forth when the director was preparing to direct the fictional movie *They Don't Wear Black Tie* (*Eles não usam black-tie*, 1981), with a plot centered on a union leader. Hirszman grabbed a camera and went into the field, never giving final form to the documentary.

João Moreira Salles directs ***Intermissions*** (*Entreatos*, 2004), about Lula and Brazil's 2002 presidential elections, using a fly-on-the-wall approach characterized by the retreat of the filmmaker in the circumstances of the take (no interviews are carried out, for example), following the vérité or "direct" documentary style of US filmmaker Robert Drew's group (and especially Drew's film *Primary*, 1960) as a model. As the title itself indicates, the activities filmed steer away from political rallies and other official commemorations, the director seeking instead to seize the subjects in actions and expressions from their ordinary lives. The film's cinematographer, Walter Carvalho, manages to perform with nimbleness within this structure, producing notable images of an informal Lula overflowing with personality in his gestures and everyday speech.

Also marked by the stylistics of Direct Cinema is ***Justice*** (*Justiça*, 2004), a film by Maria Augusta Ramos that is part of a trilogy (which also includes *Behave* and the recent *Hill of Pleasures*) about the Brazilian judicial system and how its laws affect citizens. Ramos also stands back somewhat in her takes, recalling the approach of US documentarian Frederick Wiseman, as she works inside the state institutional environments of the Second Lower Court of Justice of Rio de Janeiro. She follows court hearings and gathers testimony (but doesn't interview people) with distant and cool, albeit sharp, directing. Through the way the takes are edited, the film puts forth a clear stance on the universe it represents. In true vérité style, we see some personalities puffing up like peacocks, transforming themselves into grand or ridiculous characters without realizing what they're revealing to the camera. At other moments, intense dramas are narrated with simplicity. In *Behave* (*Juízo*, 2007), the second film in the trilogy, the director appears to encounter the dilemmas of mixing *mise-en-scène* that occur throughout the contemporary Brazilian documentary. In spite of its stylistic resemblance to Direct Cinema, the film relies on children from the community to perform, portraying real underage lawbreakers and reenacting in this way prison scenes, or

speaking before the judge using authentic dialogue.

This reflexive movement that affects the more creative Brazilian documentaries is particularly developed in what could be called “apparatus documentary.” Here, the narrative structure is proposed beforehand as a game, or method. Based on this structure, the takes follow predefined rules (*Playing*, in this sense, would be an “apparatus” film). These rules may include handing the camera to the subjects being filmed in a particular sequence, or simply choosing a random space or form that determines what to film. The director and his or her editor usually carry out the montage and final editing.

In ***Two-Way Street*** (*Rua de mão dupla*, 2002) by Cao Guimarães, the apparatus is constructed around the idea of two people exchanging their places of residence for twenty-four hours, each filming the other’s space with no prior knowledge of the resident of the house to which they have moved. The new resident then explains his or her impressions before the camera. Guimarães selected the images and testimony of three pairs of people and successively opposed them, alternating their ideas and images to create the final film. In ***Accident***, also by Guimarães (*Acidente*, 2005, codirected with Pablo Lobato), twenty cities in the state of Minas Gerais are selected according to the strangeness of their names (Espera Feliz, or “Happy Wait”; Olhos d’Água, or “Watery Eyes”; Descoberta, or “Discovery,” etc.). Based on those names, a poem is made to guide the takes filmed in each of the municipalities.

Housemaids (*Doméstica*, 2012), by Gabriel Mascaro, is an apparatus documentary constructed around a simple and creative device. After interviewing some one hundred applicants, Mascaro and his team selected fifteen teenagers, gave them filming equipment, and asked them to film their housemaids. The footage was then shot autonomously, based on general instructions provided beforehand. Mascaro, with no contact whatsoever with the teenagers doing the filming or their maids, choose seven characters to follow, took the raw material (120 hours of footage), and worked with editor Eduardo Serrano to cut it down to the completed 76 minute film. Handing the camera primarily to young members of the upper-middle class (it is not the “bosses,” per se, who are filming the maids, but rather their children) makes the social fissure between boss and housemaid come through in a novel way. The images shot have the texture of home or amateur movies, but are compiled with professional editing and sound mixing. This lends unity and personality to the work, which in turn offers an excellent social portrait of contemporary Brazil.

In ***High-Rise*** (*Um lugar ao sol*, 2009), Mascaro constructs his device by looking through real-estate catalogues featuring penthouse owners. Based on the names and addresses gathered, he requested interviews with all of them regarding what it means to live in a penthouse apartment. Several replied and, with the filmed material, Mascaro composed a significant panorama of the Brazilian haute-bourgeoisie. The narrative takes on lyrical tones, with various scenes shot from angles that allow the interviews to resonate beyond the actual content of what is said.

All Is Brazil, ***A Night in 67***, ***Tropicália***, and ***Hélio Oiticica*** are documentaries that work with archive footage in the more traditional sense, making extensive use of images shot in other eras, and borrowing them from public or private audiovisual collections. ***All Is Brazil*** (*Tudo é Brasil*, 1997) crowns a lifelong project by director Rogério Sganzerla who, after his involvement with the Cinema Marginal movement, dedicated himself to

studying and documenting Orson Welles's tumultuous 1942 trip to Brazil, promoted by the United States government as a part of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration's Good Neighbor Policy initiatives. *A Night in 67* (*Uma noite em 67*, 2010) and *Tropicália* (2012) portray the Brazilian cultural environment of the late 1960s, characterized by the contradictory coexistence of a youth-led, leftist armed opposition to the military regime and the attractions of counterculture ideology. The Tropicália movement, present in both films, stimulated the shock between archaic rural Brazil and the modern urban youth of the time, who were engulfed in guerilla movements, Coca-Cola, drugs, sex, and rock & roll. *A Night in 67* and *Tropicália* can equally be seen as part of a strong trend in contemporary production: musical documentaries that revolve around the lives of famous composers and various different events in the history of Brazilian popular music. Directed by the artist's nephew César Oiticica Filho, *Hélio Oiticica* (2012) has the particularity of using the artist's own voice as narration thanks to the archive of "heliotapes," cassette recordings that he obsessively recorded throughout his life.

Flavia Castro's *Diary, Letters, Revolutions* (*Diário de uma busca*, 2010) also employs archive footage, but its narrative is enunciated as the voice from a great "self." This represents another strong tendency in contemporary Brazilian documentary production. Various filmmakers, such as Cao Guimarães in *Otto* (2012), Karim Aïnouz in *Seams* (1993), Petra Costa in *Elena* (2012), Sandra Kogut in *A Hungarian Passport* (*Um passaporte Húngaro*, 2001), Evaldo Mocarzel in *From Grief to Struggle* (*Do luto à luta*, 2005), Marina Person in *Person* (2007), Kiko Goifman in *33* (2002), Mariana Pamplona in *Looking for Iara* (*Em busca de Iara*, 2013, directed by Flávio Frederico), and Isa Grinspum in *Marighella* (2012), appear in their films or narrate landmark events in their personal lives in the first person, and often these events take on historical dimensions. As with Grinspum and Pamplona, Castro delves into her personal past to bring a little-known historical reality to light. She does this with the ample use of interviews and archive footage, all stitched together by a voice-over that speaks in the first person.

The tension between a personal, embodied voice (that has its own body in a "self") and its articulation of assertions with social reach marks a creative aspect of contemporary documentary practice that distinguishes itself from the classic documentary's more distant and objective mode of enunciation. Advancing along a line of proximity between the body and filmic representation, and moving one step closer to the transfiguration of film image into an opaque screen, we find a truly avant-garde tendency of Brazilian documentary that approaches a kind of phenomenological sensibility. Cao Guimarães's series of short films actively engage in this tendency, particularly *From the Window of My Room* (*Da janela do meu quarto*, 2004), *Weightless* (*Sin peso*, 2007), *Concert for Chlorophyll* (*Concerto para clorofila*, 2004), *Peiote* (2007), and *Through the Eyes of Oaxaca* (*Atrás dos olhos de Oaxaca*, 2006). Some of his full-length documentaries, such as *The Soul of the Bone* (*A alma do osso*, 2004) and *Drifter* (*Andarilho*, 2008), also move along this line, pushing to its limit the filmic representation of the body as a sensual organ, and trying to represent images by achieving an almost corporeal tactility.

Marília Rocha, in works such as *Cattle Callers* (*Aboio*, 2005), and particularly in the sensitive *Like Water through Stone* (*A falta que me faz*, 2009) loads this corporeal tactility with a strongly feminine sensibility. *Like Water through Stone* is first and foremost a work about the female universe, filmed by a woman (although the camera operators are men). The film impressively penetrates into this intimate universe, finding

a style that latches onto women's speech and manages to meddle its way into the very matter of girls' bodies. Its takes are long, seeming to bind characters and the duration of their speech. Voices and gestures take place in their own time, in a way that is intrinsic to the rural world of Minas Gerais. The camera moves extremely close to its object, as if trying to melt itself in the skin of the body it is portraying. Marília Rocha is a member of the Belo Horizonte-based collective Teia (alongside Clarissa Campolina, Helvécio Marins, Pablo Lobato, Sérgio Borges, and others), which has produced many films and artworks along this same line that borders documentary and avant-garde cinema. Guimarães, another Belo Horizonte native, circulates closely with this collective. Both filmmakers often employ soundtracks produced by O Grivo, a duo of composers and sound artists, who give their films a prominent aural personality.

Also from the state of Minas Gerais, and working along these lines of sensory engagement with the world, is Rodrigo Siqueira, the director of *The Earth Giveth, The Earth Taketh Away* (*Terra deu, terra come*, 2009), a kind of ironic mockumentary. The film uniquely portrays the cultural universe of a rural community descended from runaway slaves: speech is allowed to flow and time to go by, the camera dwelling on the characters and their rituals. Siqueira deftly explores the expressions and personality of the protagonist, Pedro de Alexina, making the narrative itself adhere to his fabulation about the community and its traditions. The director's portrayal of class otherness is singular, sometimes oscillating to a very abstract representation, sometimes leaning toward an anthropological reenactment of behavior. The end of the film is surprising and illuminates much of what came before. We are no longer certain about what has been constructed as a spectacle for an urban film crew in the countryside of Minas Gerais and what is an actual ritual being performed in a funeral ceremony. This ambiguous oscillation between different modes of *mise-en-scène* is a point of attraction to which the modern Brazilian documentary frequently returns. *The Earth Giveth, the Earth Taketh Away* is a part of this trend as, in its unstable modes of performance, it establishes a kind of corporeal proximity, discussed above, with what has been defined as the "flesh of the world."²

Corporeal documentary, apparatus films, autobiographical documentaries, musical documentaries, films geared toward the composition of strong characters, documentaries marked by the social divide and a concern for representing popular culture: these are some of the themes running through the contemporary Brazilian documentary. On one hand, today's documentaries appear marked by a more classic and expository style, open to the demands of cinematic exhibition but also geared for a television audience. On the other hand, we encounter a very creative platform in the documentary's exuberant interface with avant-garde cinema. In any case, the Brazilian documentary reflects a history marked by social cleavages. In its most significant works, we feel a breath of exasperation pondering over the strong social dilemmas that give the country its particular character.

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² See Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and the Invisible* (*Le visible et l'invisible*, 1964) for a discussion of this idea exploring the connection (and communion) of body and consciousness in the act of perception.