

Embodying Citizenship in Brazilian Women's
Film, Video, and Literature, 1971 to 1988

by

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A catfish laughs.
It thinks of other catfishes
In other ponds.

— Koi Nagata

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To my parents
Linda and Larry Marsh,

with love.

To all those who helped and supported
me in Brazil

and

To Catherine Benamou,
whose patience is only one of her many virtues,

my eternal gratitude.

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Abstract

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This project considers the ways in which various women artists sought to transform society and politics in Brazil during the military regime and during the period of redemocratization, from 1971 to 1988. Through close textual analyses and a review of historical contexts, I discuss the ways in which Brazilian women's cultural works functioned as modes of political participation to rethink and redefine citizenship during and after the military dictatorship in Brazil. It proceeds by considering the representation of the body in three different arenas of cultural expression – literature, film, and video – as each mode became a viable outlet for women's voices. I discuss the collection of short stories A Via Crucis do Corpo (1974) by Clarice Lispector, the collection of short stories Nascimento de uma Mulher (1971) by Sonia Coutinho, the early feature-length fiction films by Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares (Mar de Rosas, 1977; Das Tripas Coração, 1982; Sonho de Valsa, 1986) and Tizuka Yamasaki (Gaijin: Os Caminhos da Liberdade, 1980;

Parahyba, Mulher Macho, 1983; Patriamada, 1984), and films and videos by the independent film and videomaker Eunice Gutman, and videos by The Lilith Video Collective and the non-profit women's organization SOS-Corpo. The women's works I have selected reference different modalities of cultural production as well as come from different economic and regional backgrounds. Lastly, this project addresses issues of women's sexuality and identity, both central to the discussion of citizenship in these women's works. As it considers the transition process(es) taking place in Brazil from the 1970s and 1980s, this project addresses the ways in which women cultural producers challenged cultural beliefs and political practices. My key questions are: In what ways did these women artists make the body a site of political struggle? In what ways does the representation of the body change over time? How do these works of women's literature, film, and video contribute to reinventing citizenship in Brazil?

Chapter 1

Introduction

This project considers the ways in which various women artists sought to transform society and politics in Brazil during the military regime and during the period of redemocratization. I argue that Brazilian women artists placed the female body at the center of their works to challenge and redefine citizenship during and after the military dictatorship in Brazil. Brazilian women took to three different arenas of cultural expression – literature, film, and video – as each mode became a viable outlet for women’s voices. Ultimately, women’s literature, film, and video from 1971 to 1988 functioned as modes of political participation in the process of rethinking citizenship in Brazil.

In this project, I discuss the collection of short stories *A Via Crucis do Corpo* (1974) by Clarice Lispector, the collection of short stories *Nascimento de uma Mulher* (1971) by Sonia Coutinho, the early feature-length fiction films by Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares (*Mar de Rosas*, 1977; *Das Tripas Coração*, 1982; *Sonho de Valsa*, 1986) and Tizuka Yamasaki (*Gaijin: Os Caminhos da Liberdade*, 1980; *Parahyba, Mulher Macho*, 1983; *Patriamada*, 1984), films and videos by the independent film and videomaker Eunice Gutman, and videos by The Lilith Video Collective and the non-profit women’s organization SOS-Corpo. The women’s works I have selected reference different modalities of cultural production as well as come from different economic and regional

backgrounds. These women artists explore issues of women's sexuality and identity, making both central to the discussion of citizenship in Brazil during the early 1970s to the late 1980s. In the process, they challenge a masculinist state and patriarchal imaginary that have served to draw the boundaries of belonging in Brazil.

As it considers the transition process(es) taking place in Brazil from the 1970s into the 1980s, I address the ways in which women cultural producers challenged cultural beliefs and political practices. Central to my interest rests the notion of citizenship and the reconfiguration of political practice in multicultural, multiethnic, and racially diverse societies. My key questions are: In what ways did these women artists make the body a site of political struggle? In what ways does the representation of the body change over time? How do these works of women's literature, film and video contribute to the reinvention of citizenship in Brazil after a period of political and social repression?

The historical period from the early 1970s to the late 1980s is one of intense contrasts and rich debates. At the same time the authoritarian military regime curtailed civil and political rights, it guided the economic development of the nation and sought to define national identity. Industries were modernized, mass media developed at break-neck speed and the gap widened dramatically between the rich and the poor. The State founded a number of institutions dedicated to promoting Brazilian film, art, and literature, while political dissidents were forced into exile or arrested, tortured, or disappeared. Participation in grassroots organizations swelled throughout Brazil despite violent repression. Although a repressive environment made nongovernmental organizations nearly impossible to found and develop in the 1960s and early 1970s, NGOs eventually

addressed a myriad of sociopolitical issues neglected by the authoritarian state in the later 1970s and 1980s.

Key to the continued existence of the military dictatorship in Brazil, which lasted from 1964 to 1984, was its ability to control as well as adapt to shifting sociopolitical landscapes. Prior to the period of redemocratization from 1984 to 1988, the dictatorship went through four phases. The first years of the dictatorship (1964-1968) are characterized by relative freedoms of expression, followed by the most repressive and violent period of the regime (1968-1972). A period of slow, political decompression, or distensão, describes the third period from 1974 to 1979, at which time political amnesty was declared. The fourth period, referred to as Abertura, represents a period of political opening during which time a reinvigorated civil society demanded the return to democracy. Lastly, the period of redemocratization began in 1985 and ended with the ratification of a new Brazilian Constitution in 1988.

Times of transition tend to be fervent cultural moments. Paola Cesarini suggests that periods of political transition are crucial moments for reshaping the nature of politics and moments for constituting “refounding myths” of the nation and the past.

¹ In contradiction to Leonardo Avritzer’s observation of a traditional lack of popular activity in the public space in Latin America, the years encompassing the dictatorship in Brazil also saw masses of civilians taking to the streets to fight for their rights and demand social and political justice.²

¹ Paola Cesarini, “Legacies of Injustice in Italy and Argentina,” in Authoritarian Legacies and Democracy in Latin America and Southern Europe (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 163.

² Leonardo Avritzer, Democracy and the Public Space in Latin America (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 3-4.

One of the effects of authoritarian regimes is to disrupt relationships between individuals and the larger collectives to which they belong. The body is central to any discussion of individuals' participation in political life and a departure point for personal identity and political subjectivity. Thus, the body became a key political site for expressing dissatisfaction with the political system under the military dictatorship in Brazil. Artists privileged feelings and action over reason. They distrusted intellectual and theoretical discourses and reevaluated previously accepted myths surrounding the body and the inclusion of individuals as members of the national community. In short, the previously drawn boundaries of belonging were challenged and redefined. In the women's works I discuss here, a focus on the female body serves to bridge different modes of women's expression and two main historical periods – the years during the military dictatorship and the years encompassing the process of redemocratization.

Scholars have demonstrated an increasing interest in the subject of citizenship. For some, this interest arises against a backdrop of sociopolitical shifts brought about by economic globalization. Why talk about citizenship in Brazil? The move to claim and reclaim civil, social, and political rights in the 1970s and 1980s takes on particular significance when contextualized within the history of Brazil. Since its independence from Portugal in 1822, the vast majority of Brazilians have not been politically enfranchised. A bifurcated system of social rights, one dedicated to citizen-workers and one dedicated to the poor, has effectively produced and reproduced subaltern groups.³ Although Brazilian national identity has relied on the notion of racial democracy – which is beginning to be questioned – (non-white) individuals are the poorest, least educated

³ Amélia Cohn, "A Questão Social no Brasil: A Dificil Construção da Cidadania," Viagem incompleta: a experiência brasileira: 1500-2000, ed. Carlos Guilherme Mota (São Paulo: Editora SENAC, 2000), 389-392.

and most vulnerable to police violence and the failings of the judicial system.⁴ Indigenous peoples have lived under a protected status akin to the legal status of children and, until recently, women could be killed by their husbands who were legally absolved under the “defense of one’s honor” clause.⁵

A key facet of democracies is participation. The ability to participate freely in political and cultural processes was denied the Brazilian populace. Indeed, scholars of Latin America have diagnosed a significant gap in the relationship between people and State institutions as a sequelae of authoritarian regimes.⁶ Consuelo Cruz argues that individual autonomy was minimized or negated in Latin American during the dictatorships that prevailed in the region in the 1970s such that there was no negotiation between citizen as subject and sovereign.⁷ In short, a legacy of colonial and authoritarian regimes in Brazil has created a highly unequal, paternalistic society where the boundaries of belonging and participation have been limited to an elite few.

The (re)claiming of citizenship in Brazil in the mid-late 1980s is one of the most important cultural and political processes to have taken place during the second half of the twentieth century. From the beginning of the military regime in 1964 until the end of

⁴ See for example Teresa do Rio Pires Caldeira, City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

⁵ See Wânia Pasinato Izumino, Justiça e violência contra a mulher: o papel do sistema judiciário na solução dos conflitos de gênero (São Paulo: Annablume: FAPESP, 1998). See also Denise Dourado Dora, Feminino masculino: igualdade e diferença na justiça (Porto Alegre: Editora Sulina, 1997). Regarding the law and women, noting the proposals made to the Constitution and the laws passed that most affected women’s position in society and independent, legal entities, see Florisa Verucci, A mulher e o direito (São Paulo: Nobel, 1987).

⁶ See for example Paula Capellin, “As mulheres e o acesso à cidadania no Rio de Janeiro: anotações sobre a pesquisa ‘Lei, justiça e cidadania’,” in Cidadania, justiça e violência, ed., Dulce Chaves Pandolfi (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas Editora, 1999), 205-228; and Katherine Hite and Paola Cesarini, eds., Authoritarian Legacies and Democracy in Latin America and Southern Europe (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004).

⁷ Consuelo Cruz, “Latin American Citizenship: Civic Microfoundations in Historical Perspective,” in Authoritarian Legacies and Democracy in Latin America and Southern Europe, eds., Katherine Hite and Paola Cesarini (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 313.

the redemocratization period in 1988, citizenship for women dramatically changed. Women fought to change women's legal status, patriarchal practices in the legal system were challenged, and the state established organizations dedicated to women's rights. This last achievement can be largely attributed to the success of the women's movements in Brazil that made gender and women's sexuality an issue of social and political import.

Citizenship as Process

Contemporary approaches to the question of citizenship often begin with T. H. Marshall's 1950 text Citizenship and Social Class in which he asserts that citizenship takes place as an evolution consisting of three stages.⁸ Civil and political citizenship precede a third and final stage he refers to as social citizenship. Marshall cites certain premises upon which citizenship rests. First, there is the question of equality. Second, rights are universal. Third, citizenship is a status – of civic, political, and social equality – that is bestowed upon full members of a community.⁹ His assessment is that citizenship involves continual tensions and that social class differences are relatively harmless once civil and political citizenship have been achieved.¹⁰

Marshall concludes his essay stating that his objective was to show how citizenship and other forces outside it have altered patterns of social inequality. I'd like to reframe

⁸ T. H. Marshall, Citizenship and Social Class (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950).

⁹ Ibid., 84.

¹⁰ Marshall defines citizenship as being composed of three elements: civil, political, and social. The civil element he defines as those rights necessary for individual freedom, meaning "liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice." He goes on to note that the courts of justice are most associated with civil rights. By the political, Marshall refers to the right to participate in political process "as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body." Lastly, Marshall defines the social element as "the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society." The institutions associated with assuring the social element are the educational system and the social services. Ibid., 71-72, 84.

his conclusion by asking if social inequalities have altered citizenship. Scholars have taken up this question and contributed to Marshall's discussion of citizenship, noting the importance of the social and the cultural, and questioning the role of those "other forces" in the development of citizenship.

Michael Mann builds on T. H. Marshall's work but offers two key departures from Marshall's evolutionist explanation. First, Mann argues that the ruling classes determined the nature of tensions and struggles for citizenship.¹¹ Second, Mann also notes that not all countries follow the same process as that discussed by Marshall, meaning that civil rights in those cases did not lead in an orderly fashion to political and then social rights.¹²

Margaret Somers shares Mann's concern for particularity but suggests a more radical way of rethinking citizenship. Somers suggests two key changes to the way scholars approach citizenship. First, she asserts that citizenship is not a status bestowed upon individuals as described by Marshall. Rather, citizenship is an institutionalized process or a set of relational *practices*. Second, she calls for moving away from analyses that focus on the state and capitalism and supports research on citizenship and democracy that focuses on relationships among public spheres, community associational life, and patterns of political culture.¹³ Specifically, Somers argues that citizenship rights arise from contexts that support popular public spheres, in which members of civil society must participate.¹⁴ Thus, it is essential to place "nonstate forms of political participation and discourse (public spheres)" at the center of analysis to understand the process of

¹¹ Michael Mann, "Ruling Class Strategies and Citizenship," *Sociology* 21 (August 1987): 340.

¹² It is important to note that Marshall himself notes that there is a degree of overlap between social and political rights. Nonetheless, his essay is based on the notion that an evolution has taken place in the United Kingdom where civil rights lead to political rights and, lastly, social rights. Marshall, *Citizenship*, 71-84.

¹³ Margaret Somers, "Citizenship and the Place of the Public Sphere: Law, Community, and Political Culture in the Transition to Democracy," *American Sociological Review* 58.5 (1993): 587.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 589.

citizenship and the formation of political identity.¹⁵ Somers' argument helps elucidate how Brazilian women's film, video, and literature functioned as modes of nonstate political participation in the process of rethinking citizenship in Brazil during the 1970s and 1980s.

Despite the reformulations posed by Mann and Somers, Marshall made a significant move to suggest that there is a social aspect to citizenship. Thus, it is possible to see citizenship, as a multifaceted concept involved in a number of concomitant cultural and political processes. Indeed, social movements in Brazil took the concept of citizenship as their central rallying cry. As Dagnino points out, calls for a renewed concept of citizenship in Latin America was a "fundamental instrument used by social movements in the struggle for democratization."¹⁶

With renewed concepts of citizenship, come renewed concepts of the individual, the relationships among individuals, and the relationship between individuals and the collectives to which they belong or to which they wish to become incorporated as full, participating members. Nira Yuval Davis warns that citizenship cannot include all dimensions of social life but studying citizenship does cast a light on "some of the major issues which are involved in the complex relationships between individuals, collectives, and the state, and the ways gender relations (as well as other social divisions) affect and are affected by them."¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Evelina Dagnino, "Culture, Citizenship and Democracy: Changing Discourses and Practices of the Latin American Left," in Culture of Politics, Politics of Culture: Re-Visioning Latin American Social Movements, eds. Sonia Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 48.

¹⁷ Nira Yuval-Davis, "Women, Citizenship and Difference," Feminist Review 57 (1997): 6.

More recently, scholars have called for moving beyond Marshall's tripartite, evolutionary vision of citizenship consisting of civil, political and social aspects. These scholars call for expanding current conceptual boundaries to consider sexual and cultural dimensions of citizenship. In this area, we need to consider in what ways and to what degree sexuality influences citizenship. Where do we locate sexuality in the discussion of citizenship? Is sexuality a separate dimension of citizenship? A cultural dimension? Or does sexuality intersect with established social, civil and political dimensions? To what degree is citizenship still a question of political rights and how do we locate governmental responsibility within our definition of citizenship?¹⁸ There are advantages to considering culture as an aspect of citizenship. Nick Stevenson argues that discussing cultural citizenship offers an opportunity to consider the impact of changes in economics and politics on the way citizenship is experienced.¹⁹

Feminist critics have offered a number of insightful critiques of the notion of citizenship. The focus has been primarily on three areas: the question of universality and rights, the assumed public-private divide, and the body. Mary G. Dietz asserts that one of the problems with a liberal theory of citizenship is that it threatens to turn "historically distinctive women into ahistorical, universalized entities."²⁰ The question of universality relates to notions of equality. Iris Marion Young critiques the Enlightenment ideal of the civic public and its idea of equal citizenship because to attain unity "it excludes bodily

¹⁸ These are a few of the questions posed by Verónica Schild in her essay "New Subjects of Rights? Women's Movements and the Construction of Citizenship in the 'New Democracies'" in Cultures of Politics / Politics of Cultures: Re-visioning Latin American Social Movements, eds. Evelina Dagnino, Sonia E. Alvarez and Arturo Escobar (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 93-117.

¹⁹ Nick Stevenson, ed. Culture and Citizenship (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2001), 2.

²⁰ Mary G. Dietz, "Context is All: Feminism and Theories of Citizenship," in Feminism and Politics, ed. Anne Phillips (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 378-400; see also Iris Marion Young, "Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship," in Feminism and Politics, ed. Anne Phillips (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 401-429.

and affective particularity, as well as the concrete histories of individuals that make groups unable to understand one another.” Young calls for an inclusive conception of the public where recognition and appreciation of differences rather than the building of consensus becomes the final goal in a confrontation with power.²¹

An assumed public-private divide is a second area of inquiry for feminist theorists concerned with citizenship. Despite the different modes of artistic expression, an investigation of the public-private dichotomy is one of the most consistent features of the works of literature, film, and video discussed in this project. Susan Moller Okin situates the concepts of public and private spheres as being central to Western political thought. Okin asserts that at the root of the problematic distinction between public and private spheres is that they are separate and distinct so much so that it is believed that “the public or the political can be discussed in isolation from the private or the personal.”²²

Joan B. Landes observes that the private sphere was conceptualized in early feminist work as a site of inequality and discontent. Landes asserts that feminism offered women “a public language for their private despair.”²³ It is precisely in breaking down the silences around personal life that feminists contributed to a more democratic public sphere. However, introducing the “private” into the public sphere has been a difficult proposition. In the English-speaking world, debates on the public sphere have been reinvigorated by Jürgen Habermas after the translation of his work The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere in 1989. In this text, Habermas proposes a notion of

²¹ Iris Marion Young, “Impartiality and the Civic Public: Some Implications of Feminist Critiques of Moral and Political Theory,” Feminism as Critique: On the Politics of Gender, eds. Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 76.

²² Susan Moller Okin, “Gender, the Public, and the Private,” in Feminism and Politics, ed. Anne Phillips (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 116.

²³ Joan B. Landes, Feminism, the Public and the Private (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1.

the public sphere that opposes the absolutist state and is created whenever people come together to deliberate. Historically speaking, only male property owners could participate in these deliberations and limits were placed on what could be contributed to discussions. In short, public discourse was to be disinterested discourse. In her work, Landes argues that as a result of these entrance and content requirements, “a whole range of concerns came to be labeled as private and treated as improper subjects for public debate.”²⁴

Disinterested discourse was clearly not on the agenda of the women’s movements in Brazil in the 1970s and 1980s. What was at stake was to bring forth issues from the private sphere into public discourse. The radical restructuring of Brazil’s economy starting in 1964 profoundly altered the social, economic and political roles of women in Brazil. Sonia E. Alvarez notes that these rapid changes in women’s roles “created new material bases for the articulation of gender-based political claims.”²⁵ Subsequently, intense debates arose around the definitions of gendered roles in society and female sexuality.

For women, their participation in political processes – or lack thereof – has been largely predicated on the status of their bodies. Thus, the body, definitions of gender and female sexuality have taken on particular significance in the discussion of citizenship and political participation. Indeed, the body was at the juncture of debates on gender, sexuality and politics in Brazil in the 1970s and 1980s. During the early years of the second-wave women’s movement in Brazil, focus was placed on gender-related issues. Women questioned their gender-defined roles as women, mothers, wives, girlfriends, and

²⁴ Joan B. Landes, “The Public and the Private Sphere: A Feminist Reconsideration,” in Feminists Read Habermas: Gendering the Subject of Discourse, ed. Johanna Meehan (New York: Routledge, 1995), 97-98.

²⁵ Sonia E. Alvarez, Engendering Democracy in Brazil: Women’s Movements in Transition Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 8.

daughters. By the mid 1970s, women's mobilization branched from gender-related issues to include gender-specific issues such as women in the workforce, women's reproductive health, and female sexuality.

Talking about the body poses certain methodological and philosophical questions. There are two predominant approaches to the body. A materialist approach that focuses on concrete lived realities often comes up against a discursive approach that focuses on the construction of realities. The most productive concept of the body seeks to bridge both approaches. Elizabeth Grosz takes up the question of the body and argues that the body is a "thing" that is not reducible to being merely a thing nor does it rise above the status of thing.²⁶ Grosz further asserts that human bodies are ontologically incomplete, open to social completion, ordering and organization.²⁷ This is to say that the body is not a thing, a specific issue or a constant variable that can be readily compared over time and place. Rather, when we talk about the body we address a nexus of social and political processes.

What does this mean for the cultural critic who proposes to do research on "the body?" The works addressed here in this project take the body as a point of departure to address the larger programmatic questions concerning citizenship. The body appears in these works variously as a site of experience and intervention. Consequently, these works require the acknowledgment of the concrete specificities of the body while underscoring the processes of social and political inscription that intellectually produce and reproduce bodies.

²⁶ Elizabeth Grosz, Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), xi.

²⁷ Ibid.

Why literature, film and video?

Literature, film and video differ greatly in terms of production, distribution and reception (or exhibition). Works of literature are largely individual endeavors, while film and video production generally entail collective work. In economic terms, far less is required as an initial investment to produce a work of literature. At its most essential, literature requires a writing tool and a surface on which to write. In contrast, both film and video require more significant financial investment. Film stock (16 and 35mm) is an expensive material to work with, requiring sophisticated equipment to capture images and the costs of chemical processing at a specialized laboratory. Although less expensive than 16 or 35mm film, video still requires a significant investment in camera equipment and monitors. All three formats require some form of finalizing and distribution. One advantage existing with video is its greater accessibility, as videos tend to circulate in a less formalized manner. While works of literature require publishing houses and bookstores and films require distributors and movie theaters, videos can easily be copied, borrowed and shared informally. The equipment needed to view a video is less expensive, portable to a number of spaces and widely available. Lastly, videos do not generally require the ability to read or pay for a ticket to view them. Both are important issues in terms of class differences and access to cultural works.

Projects that discuss literature and audiovisual works are not unusual. What is perhaps different in this case is the intention behind doing so. Given the varying degrees of access to these modes of cultural production, this juxtaposition addresses the range of women's cultural production – including lesser known works. Thus, this project constructs a quilt of women's voices that contributed to, but did not necessarily agree on, the path towards

the redefinition of citizenship in Brazil. In turn, practical gender issues (urban services, communal kitchens, and health programs) can be related to strategic gender issues (abortion, sexual and reproductive freedom, and domestic violence) expressed in women's alternative film and video. Joining a discussion of these works with the reconceptions of gender and female sexuality found most prominently in works of feature-length filmmaking and literature elucidates how the body was conceived in both material and discursive modes. In terms of economic class and regional differences, these different modes of women's cultural production arise from different regions of Brazil and address concerns experienced by publics from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Including these different modes of cultural production allows us to see how women's voices negotiated with state policies and social beliefs. Women's cultural production, like all cultural production in Brazil during the 1970s and 1980s, faced the ever-shifting maneuvers of the state – including incentive programs and censorship. Lastly, discussing works of literature, then feature-length films, followed by independent, alternative video follows the modes of cultural production that became available to women as well as offers a way to investigate historical continuities and differences among women's voices during the transition period from the depths of the military regime to the ratification of a new democratic constitution.

In Chapter 2, I focus on a selection of short stories by Clarice Lispector from the collection A Via Crucis do Corpo (1974) and a selection of short stories by Sonia Coutinho from her collection Nascimento de uma Mulher (1971). Both writers focus on the body and demonstrate a commitment to the social, which has not been fully developed in critical discussions of their work. Indeed, their texts speak to the salient

issues arising during the early stages of the emerging, second-wave women's movement(s) in Brazil.

It is important to consider literary works before two key dates: 1974 and 1975. In terms of Brazilian politics, 1974 marks the year that General Ernesto Geisel instituted a process of distensão, defined as a gradual, measured return to democratic rule. 1975 marks the declaration of Decade of the Woman by the United Nations. These two years thus inaugurate important transitions in Brazilian and international politics. Moreover, Brazilian cultural production shifted in the mid 1970s. As will be discussed, post-1974 literature emerged within a different market where there was a "boom" in literary production, publishing houses were more dedicated to national writers and the government subsidized publishing.

Relating to a trend in Brazilian women's literature of the 1970s, the works I discuss by both authors draw on the body. I am particularly interested in how the works by both authors speak to fear and violence, their critiques of traditional, heteronormative marriage, and the demobilizing and depoliticizing of society. I relate these issues to the larger question of citizenship in Brazil and the ways in which these works sought to redefine citizenship in terms of sex, gender, class and race during the 1970s. In addition, this chapter serves as an important point of departure for considering the questions, challenges, and redefinitions regarding citizenship posed not only by women writers but also by women in other areas of cultural production, namely film and video years later. Ultimately, the continuities and disjunctions of feminist discourse during this period from the depths of the dictatorship to the process of redemocratization will become apparent. In the case of the short stories by Lispector and Coutinho, I am specifically interested in

how women characters are positioned in social interactions, how their bodies and sexuality are addressed, and I consider how they were redefining sexual and cultural citizenship during this period. In other words: In what ways did these women writers make the body a site of early, democratic political struggle?

Chapter 3 provides a background history to women's film production in Brazil. The time period for this study extends from 1969, when the State founded the film agency Embrafilme, to 1989, shortly before the agency was closed by the elected president Fernando Collor de Mello. The first main area of inquiry concerns the role of the State in filmmaking: How and to what degree were new women filmmakers able to negotiate with the State and Embrafilme during the 1970s and 1980s? What access points were available to them and to what degree were they able to take advantage of them? Second, this chapter considers the changing social and political landscape. How did these women filmmakers position themselves in the context of a society undergoing significant political and social change?

Given the financial (and sometimes political) difficulties of developing a career in the Brazilian film industry, this chapter does not employ a chronological approach to the history of women's filmmaking. Instead, a thematic approach, taking into consideration the different historical moments, proves far more productive by allowing for a greater appreciation of the strategies these women employed to enter the field and the responses they had to the film industry, the government, and their changing social and political landscape. It also allows for more comparative perspectives among time periods and among women filmmakers. In addition to documents from the time period and published historiographies, this chapter draws on extensive interviews and oral histories conducted

in Brazil with the filmmakers. As Paul Thompson notes, one of the many advantages of oral histories is that they illuminate “official” history by providing key insights into social, political, and economic processes as they are understood and experienced by a range of individuals.²⁸ While historiographies on Brazilian cinema have been published, no study to date has adequately addressed the role of women in the Brazilian film industry during the last decades of the 20th century. Thus, this chapter fills a void in the historiography of Brazilian cinema.

Having outlined the historical background to women’s feature-length film production in Brazil, Chapter 4 focuses on the first three films by two contemporary, groundbreaking feature-length fiction filmmakers: Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares²⁹ and Tizuka Yamasaki. The films by Ana Carolina discussed here include her trilogy on the female condition: Mar de Rosas (Sea of Flowers, 1977), Das Tripas Coração (Heart and Guts, 1982), and Sonho de Valsa (Dream Waltz, 1986). The first three films by Tizuka Yamasaki include Gaijin: Os Caminhos da Liberdade (Gaijin: Paths to Freedom, 1980), Parahyba: Mulher Macho (Parahyba: Manly Woman, 1983), and Patriamada (Sing, the Beloved Country, 1984).

While male filmmakers evidenced a common concern for alienation in films from the 1960s and 1970s, both Ana Carolina and Tizuka Yamasaki took the question of social and political alienation in different directions starting in the second half of the 1970s. Their approach distinguishes women filmmakers from their male predecessors in that their films focus on female characters who experience alienation but, unlike those previous films, the protagonists do not suffer because of a social system that has been

²⁸ Paul Thompson, The Voice of the Past (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1-24.

²⁹ Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares goes by the professional name of Ana Carolina. I will use both names to refer to her.

disrupted or gone awry. Instead, these films locate women's exclusion in how society itself has developed and functions. Both filmmakers seek an embodied female subject of civil society as they critique the demands of a masculine imagination.

In terms of aesthetics, the two directors are markedly distinct. My discussion of Ana Carolina's work addresses the echoes of Brecht and the historical Surrealists found in her films. In contrast, Tizuka Yamasaki's films develop a melodramatic approach. Despite aesthetic differences, both filmmakers reflect a common desire to (re)insert women into a redefined civil society. What is more, for both women, filmmaking has been their mode of social and political activism through which they have exposed their concerns regarding women and Brazil, Brazilian cultural identity (brasilidade), and citizenship.

Chapter 5 discusses the social and political shifts that were taking place from the declaration of Amnesty in 1979 to the drafting of the new Constitution in 1988. During this period, scores of Brazilians joined in social movements to push for political change in order to reclaim lost democratic rights and make claims on new rights, especially in the areas of land reform and access to healthcare.

Significant shifts in the cultural industries are among the numerous social and political changes that took place in the 1980s. The audiovisual landscape at this time saw increasing privatization and decreased freedoms in mainstream media. Television became widespread with TV Globo ascending to an unrivaled position of audiovisual (and political) authority in Brazil. In the process of becoming one of the largest television networks in the world, TV Globo played a key role in the transition to democracy. Against the concentration of power in capitalist, mainstream media, advances in audiovisual technology ushered in a significant body of alternative and independent

production. After years of political repression, the freedom to voice one's thoughts and make claims on the state took on vital importance. Thus, this chapter outlines the historical context of independent, grassroots and alternative media in the fight for democracy.

In Chapter 6, I turn my attention specifically to women's independent and alternative film and video production from 1983 to 1988. This chapter has two central goals. The first is to chart a historiography of a select group of Brazilian women's independent, alternative film and video production during the 1980s. The second is to discuss women's independent, alternative film and video as it contributed to the politicizing of gender, race, class, and sexuality at a new political and social crossroads during the period of redemocratization. These works illustrate continued efforts to intervene in political and social structures. Specifically, these independent and alternative films and videos show poor and disenfranchised members of society taking an active role in their communities, they celebrate Brazil's ethnic and racial diversity, and they challenge beliefs regarding women's sexuality and demand improved access to health care.

Thus, my discussion here draws attention to alternative media practices employed by individual women working in 16 and 35 mm film, analogue video, women's video collectives, and audiovisual works produced by women's non-governmental organizations. In the metropolitan region of Rio de Janeiro, I discuss works by film and video maker Eunice Gutman, a long-time, self-defined feminist whose work has evolved from 35mm to video over the decades. In the metropolitan region of São Paulo, I include work by the Lilith Video Collective, a group of three women who, like Eunice, dedicated themselves to bringing greater awareness to women's issues. The case of the Lilith Video

Collective illustrates a unique collaboration between the state, broadcast television and independent women media producers.

Owing largely to lower production and distribution costs, video allowed for the proliferation of audiovisual production outside the South and Southeast. In the Northeastern state of Pernambuco, the feminist non-governmental organization SOS-Corpo drew on the communicative possibilities afforded by video to contribute to the developing feminist discourse in the metropolitan region of Recife, the state capital and one of Brazil's largest cities. In the case of SOS-Corpo, my discussion considers women's audiovisual production within an internationally funded women's group and how video became a vital avenue to address the most pressing concerns for feminist activism in the region. By opening the discussion to women's alternative and independent audiovisual production, my discussion moves out of the Rio-São Paulo axis to include women media producers outside the traditional mainstream channels of production, distribution and exhibition.

I close in Chapter 7 with a reflection on the continuities and disjunctions of women's discourse during this period from the depths of the dictatorship to redemocratization. What becomes clear is that while important social and political evolutions have taken place during the last decades of the twentieth century, individuals continue to fight to expand the boundaries of belonging in Brazil.

Chapter 2

The Body and Citizenship in Clarice Lispector's A Via Crucis do Corpo (1974) and Sonia Coutinho's Nascimento de uma Mulher (1971)

The 1970s in Brazil have been referred to as a “vazio cultural” (cultural emptiness) and the “anos de sufoco” (years of suffocation) by those individuals who lived through the period and sought to practice their artistic craft. Although limited by the authoritarian regime, cultural work became a key mode of political participation and activism. Indeed, literature was on the cultural frontlines alongside a quickly burgeoning mass media.

This chapter focuses on a selection of short stories by Clarice Lispector from the collection A Via Crucis do Corpo (1974) and by Sonia Coutinho from her anthology Nascimento de uma Mulher (1971). Lispector, who is, perhaps, one of the best-known Brazilian authors, has consistently addressed questions of female subjectivity and sexuality in her writing. Likewise, Sonia Coutinho is known for her woman-centered texts that address the intersection of race, class, gender, region of origin and sexuality. In their anthologies published in the early 1970s, both writers focus on the body and demonstrate a commitment to the social, which has not been fully developed in critical discussions of their work. I assert that these short stories establish a discussion of the salient issues involving citizenship which were arising during the early stages of the

emerging, second-wave women's movement(s) in Brazil. What is more, I have chosen to discuss Lispector and Coutinho's short stories because they reveal multiple political valences. In one sense, their stories take on issues of violence, fear and the demobilization of civil society in the aftermath of the AI-5 and before General Geisel's call to return slowly towards a democratic political system in Brazil. In another sense, both writers take up the question of the female body prior to the significant development of women's movements in Brazil after 1975. Both Lispector and Coutinho focus on the body as a target of state control and also offer their critiques of heteronormativity and traditionally defined female sexuality. In this, their texts speak to what Sonia Kruks has called the "wellsprings of suffering" from which social movements such as feminism often emerge.¹

As indicated, I am particularly interested in how the works by both authors speak to larger questions of citizenship in Brazil and the ways in which these works sought to redefine citizenship in terms of sex, gender, class and race during the 1970s. In addition, this chapter serves as an important point of departure for considering the questions, challenges and redefinitions regarding citizenship posed not only by women writers but also by women in other areas of cultural production, namely film and video years later. Ultimately, the continuities and disjunctions of feminist discourse during this period from the depths of the dictatorship to the process of redemocratization will become apparent.

In my discussion of both author's works, I specifically look at how women are positioned in social interactions, how their bodies and sexuality are addressed, and consider how they were redefining sexual and cultural citizenship during this period. In

¹ Sonia Kruks, Retrieving Experience: Subjectivity and Recognition in Feminist Politics (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 146.

other words: In what ways did these women writers make the body a site of political struggle? In what ways do these works contribute to a reinvention of citizenship in Brazil?

Brazilian Politics and Society, 1964 to 1975

The “revolution” that began in March of 1964 dedicated itself immediately to economic development and national security. Notably, the regime’s notion of development included psychosocial and cultural dimensions, which in turn included ideas of an essential Brazilian national character.² Alongside its efforts to direct the economic sphere, the state empowered itself to stimulate cultural production while keeping cultural producers within state control. Alexandre Barbalho asserts that the regime’s presence in the cultural sector was motivated by its ideology of national security, economic concerns, and a preoccupation with neutralizing critical viewpoints while promoting an intellectual milieu conducive to the regime.³

As an extension of its control, the military founded a number of institutions, agencies and cultural foundations shortly after the 1964 coup d’etat. These include the INC [Instituto Nacional de Cinema, (National Film Institute), 1966], Embratel [Empresa Brasileira de Telecomunicações, (Brazilian Telecommunications Company), 1965], Embratur [Empresa Brasileira de Turismo, (Brazilian Tourism Company), 1966], and the Ministério de Telecomunicações [Ministry of Telecommunications, (The Ministry of

² Regarding the national political doctrine set forth by the military after assuming control of the Brazilian government, see the telling work of José Alfredo Amaral Gurgel, Segurança e Democracia: Uma reflexão política (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1975). See also the government’s reflections on its policies in the Escola Superior de Guerra’s Fundamentos da Doutrina (Rio de Janeiro: ESG, 1981).

³ Alexandre Barbalho, “O Estado pós-64: Invenção Planejada na Cultura,” Política e Trabalho 15 (1999): 63-78.

Telecommunications), 1967].⁴ Embratel played a vital role in the development of the television industry, which in the 1980s, became one of the reasons for the decline in the Brazilian film industry. In 1966 the state established the Conselho Federal de Cultura (CFC, Federal Council on Culture) and charged it with the formulation of cultural policy. A number of these entities served as a vital support for areas of cultural production with declining publics such as theater and those that were capital-intensive, such as filmmaking. However, Randal Johnson notes that, in the end, the state established clientelistic relationships with civil society and co-optation became the state's strategy to manipulate and control cultural producers.⁵

The early years of the military regime are not noted for extreme forms of cultural repression. The state was concerned with mass media as a way to reach the masses and promote its agenda. The regime's strategies in the area of telecommunications resulted in the rapid expansion of the television network, paving the way for TV Globo. Consequently, the popular classes turned into avid consumers of a utopic notion of a "Brasil Grande."⁶ At this time, the notion of the spectacle – transmitted readily to televisions throughout the nation – served as the regime's key (influential) method of control.⁷ Cultural producers were allowed to express themselves without a great degree of

⁴ Note that the Instituto Nacional do Livro, (INL, National Book Institute) was founded during the regime of Getúlio Vargas in 1937. For a discussion of television and the role of the military state, see Laurindo Leal, *Atrás das Câmeras: Relações de Cultura, Estado e Televisão* (São Paulo: Summus Editorial, 1988); Cesar Guimarães and Roberto Amaral, "Brazilian Television: A Rapid Conversion to a New Order," in *Media and Politics in Latin America: The Struggle for Democracy* ed. Elizabeth Fox (Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE Publications, 1988), 128-137; and Sergio Mattos, *The Impact of the 1964 Revolution on Brazilian Television* (San Antonio: V. Klingensmith Independent Publishers, 1982).

⁵ Randal Johnson, "Regarding the Philanthropic Ogre: Cultural Policy in Brazil, 1930-45 / 1964-90," in *Constructing Culture and Power in Latin America*, ed. Daniel H. Levine (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 334-348.

⁶ Flora Sussekind, *Literatura e Vida Literária: Polêmicas, Diários & Retratos* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editora, 1985), 12-14.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 10-15.

government intervention but their words spoke to a great emptiness.⁸ The Tropicalist movement, which found its strongest expression in music, countered the regime's push for essentialized notions of brasilidade and sought to make the spectacle transparent in their music.⁹ Meanwhile, a group of young film directors associated with the Cinema Novo group cultivated an allegorical mode of representation. These works found inspiration in the national question and challenged historical teleology. Among the key subthemes, these film directors investigated the failures of the left and a sense of disillusionment with the political left.¹⁰

Maintaining tight control on society and dictating cultural and political ideology formed the central tenets of the military regime's "National Security Doctrine." In 1967 and 1968, student and labor unions vociferously protested the government's austerity programs and loss of civil liberties. The military regime responded with a harsh crackdown and declared the Fifth Institutional Act (Ato Institucional Número 5, AI-5) in late 1968. A coup within a coup, the AI-5 called for the censorship of print and audiovisual media, resulted in the torture of political dissidents, and the voluntary and involuntary exile of hundreds of Brazilian citizens. In 1970, the military established the DOI-Codi, o Departamento de Operações Internas – Centro de Operações de Defesa Interna (the Department of Internal Operations – Operation Center for Internal Defense), an organization which illegally held and tortured political dissidents. It is the mandate of

⁸ Ibid., 14.

⁹ Christopher Dunn, Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

¹⁰ Regarding Cinema Novo and Brazilian Cinema in general during this period, see Ismail Xavier, Allegories of Underdevelopment: Aesthetics and Politics in Modern Brazilian Cinema (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) and Randal Johnson and Robert Stam, "The Shape of Brazilian Film History," in Brazilian Cinema, eds. Randal Johnson and Robert Stam, Expanded Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 15-51.

General Médici (1969 to 1974) that is known for being the most violent and repressive period of the military dictatorship.

The military state, in the process to legitimize its hegemony, took on the dual role of stimulating and censoring cultural production. This effectively forced cultural producers in Brazil to adapt to a constantly shifting sociopolitical landscape. As will be discussed below, several significant trends in literary production emerged during the post AI-5 and pre-amnesty period or, from 1968 to approximately 1979. In short, this period saw significant changes in the role of the author and literary practice as well as increased publication of the short story. In retrospect, the period was anything but barren as writers produced a rich body of work.

Literary production during this period was influenced by a complex amalgam of social, political and economic factors. Since the second half of the twentieth century, Brazilian novelists evidenced a high degree of gender consciousness and offered alternative visions of gender, narrative voice and cultural identity.¹¹ Women writers were central to the development of literature in Brazil and earned critical recognition for their works. Judith A. Payne and Earl E. Fitz attribute both of these characteristics of Brazilian literature to a long-standing awareness and acceptance of the ambiguities, shifting relationships between language and reality, and an embracing of stylistic innovations that can be seen as converging in and developing from Machado de Assis (1839-1906).¹²

It is important to consider women's artistic works produced before and following two key dates: 1974 and 1975. In terms of Brazilian politics, 1974 marks the year that

¹¹ Judith A. Payne and Earl E. Fitz note that the degree of gender consciousness in the Brazilian novel distinguishes itself from the Spanish American novel during the same period. See their "Ambiguity, Gender Borders, and Literary Traditions," in *Ambiguity and Gender in the New Novel of Brazil and Spanish America* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993): 1-24.

¹² *Ibid.*, 3-5.

General Ernesto Geisel instituted a process of distensão, defined as a gradual, measured return to democratic rule.¹³ In terms of international politics, 1975 marks the declaration of Decade of the Woman by the United Nations in 1975. These two years inaugurate important transitions in international and Brazilian politics, such that it is crucial to consider what was being said as well as how it was being said before and after these points in time. Brazilian cultural production shifted in the mid 1970s. Cultural products were increasingly commercialized and artists found themselves positioned between government incentive programs and official censors. As will be discussed further below, post-1974 literature emerged within a different market. Government incentives such as contests and prizes for writers fostered a “boom” in literature after 1975 and helped create an infrastructure for literary production, including literary supplements in newspapers and literary magazines.¹⁴

The “boom” in literary production can be seen specifically in the success of the short story format, which can be traced back to military-sponsored contests and prizes for short story writers.¹⁵ The rise in short story production can also be attributed to the form itself. The short story has been seen as key during periods of transition because of its immediacy and ability to focus in on a particular issue.¹⁶ Several Brazilian women writers published anthologies of short stories in the 1970s before developing the novel in the later 1970s.¹⁷

¹³ Distensão in Portuguese refers to the relaxing of political tensions between the government and the people and roughly extends from 1974 to 1979. A period of distensão was the first step before the period known as Abertura, the gradual opening of the country after the declaration of Amnesty in 1979.

¹⁴ Tânia Pellegrini, Gavetas Vazias: Ficção e Política nos anos 70 (São Carlos, SP: EDUFSCar, Mercado de Letras, 1996), 16, 123-128.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁶ Antônio Candido, Veja 15 October 1975; quoted in Tânia Pellegrini, Gavetas vazias, 16-17.

¹⁷ Nelly Novaes Coelho, A Literatura Feminina no Brasil Contemporâneo (São Paulo: Siciliano, 1993), 22.

Before considering the literary works of both authors, it is beneficial to review the salient aspects of the women's movement(s) in Brazil from 1960 to 1979. Likewise, it is important to situate both authors' works in the context of Brazilian women's literary production during this period.

The Women's Movement(s) in Brazil, 1960 to 1979

The military dictatorship, which took power in April of 1964, established the conditions for the development of the most diverse, radical and successful women's movement in Latin America. This paradoxical situation can best be understood by looking at two key steps taken by the dictatorship. In its efforts to justify its existence, the conservative "revolution" instituted by the military regime promoted and fostered a traditional, patriarchal gender ideology of the family and women's gendered roles in society. This ideological pressure called many middle and upper-middle-class women into political action to counter the government's repressive agenda and fight for increased social, civil, and political rights. A second maneuver of the military regime was to install a neoliberal order focused on industrial development and national security to ward off a leftist threat to Brazil's emerging capitalist economy. Many poor and working-class women participated in street marches and other demonstrations to protest the lack of social services and the rising cost of living. In short, the repressive political and social steps taken by the military regime in Brazil resulted in the mobilization of thousands of women from diverse backgrounds across Brazil to fight against the policies put forth by the authoritarian regime.

The question of personal experience largely defined the mode of the fight that women waged. Those women who fought against the conservative ideological position taken by the government have been grouped into what is loosely defined as the “feminist” line of the Brazilian women’s movement. The term feminist here refers generally to the goal to reevaluate and change society’s understanding of gender and female sexuality. Feminist perspectives focus on issues specific to women’s condition such as reproductive rights, equality in the workplace and political enfranchisement.¹⁸ It would be a misconception, however, to believe that a feminist perspective first emerged in the 1960s and early 1970s. Rather, women in Brazil had criticized and fought for change regarding women’s political roles arguably since the first European colonizers arrived.¹⁹

For those who upheld more traditional views of women, their roles as mothers and caretakers served as central issues around which to mobilize. This “feminine” viewpoint of the women’s movement focused more on practical needs and the struggles women faced when specific policies instituted by the military government placed additional pressures on women and prevented them from being able to take care of their families. The “feminine” mode of the women’s movements in Brazil reflects a focus on gender-related issues and concerns such as the cost of living and the provision of basic services to their communities.²⁰

Behind the division of feminine and feminist lines of the women’s movement in Latin America rests the question of class. This division becomes a somewhat arbitrary distinction given that gender and class inequality often intersect with other modes of

¹⁸ Alvarez, *Engendering Democracy*, 25.

¹⁹ For example, Lúcia Murat’s film *Brava Gente Brasileira* (2000) reflects on native women’s resistance to European colonizers in the 16th century.

²⁰ Alvarez, *Engendering Democracy*, 25.

political and social oppression such as race, sexuality, religion and place of origin. Yet, this categorization helps to understand how and why women from different backgrounds fought for significant social and political change but does not suggest that “feminine” concerns were not also “feminist” and vice versa.

Upon assuming power, the military pursued political and economic stabilization, introduced harsh austerity measures, quashed the democratic process, and silenced oppositional social movements. The period from 1967 to 1973, referred to as the “Economic Miracle,” saw significant improvements in the Brazilian economy. However, the State’s plan for rapid industrialization dramatically shifted the economic landscape in Brazil and established sharp distinctions between “the haves” and “the have-nots.” Multinational corporations invested capital in Brazil and the State siphoned funds away from healthcare, education and other social services. The poorest sectors of the population saw their real wages shrink and labor unions were violently silenced while income became increasingly concentrated in the hands of the few. State economic policy during this period meant the rich got richer and the poor got next to nothing. Despite political backlash, many sectors of civil society began to mobilize to demand changes, thus giving rise to the waves of popular social movements in Brazil throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Subsequent to dramatic economic restructuring, Brazil’s demographics shifted. Agricultural practices became capital-intensive, the State appropriated rural peasant lands and manufacturers concentrated jobs in urban centers of the Southeast. Poor residents of rural areas migrated to the urban peripheries and settled in areas where they lacked safe housing, running water, sewage, electricity, healthcare facilities, schools, public

transportation and other social services. In her work on the women's movements in Brazil during the 1970s and 1980s, Sonia Alvarez asserts that State policies significantly altered the ways in which women were inserted into the social, political and economic order. Women who had previously identified themselves as homemakers, wives and mothers were forced into the workplace to provide additional incomes for their families. Their work in the household was not eliminated, thus creating the burden of the "double day."²¹ In effect, the quality of life for thousands of Brazilian women dropped dramatically during the military regime rather than improving as had been promised.

Facing State-sponsored violence and dramatic economic crises, women joined grassroots organizations that sought to provide their communities with the resources and services the government had failed to provide. These women mobilized around their ability to manage their households and take care of their families. In other words, these women mobilized around their ability to perform their traditionally ascribed feminine gender roles in society and politicized the notion of motherhood. These feminine groups formed part of a massive wave of urban popular movements in Latin America during the 1970s that challenged the boundaries of the political.²²

Unlike the case with feminine groups, the rise of feminist groups cannot be attributed by and large to economic policies instituted by the military regime. Feminist groups responded to practical concerns affecting women in the workplace as well as ideological positions regarding women. Alvarez notes that Brazilian feminists, similar to other liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s, focused primarily on expanding life

²¹ Alvarez, *Engendering Democracy*, 83-109.

²² *Ibid.*, 38, 55.

options and changing cultural stereotypes and modes of discrimination against women.²³ During the 1960s, women primarily from middle and upper-middle class backgrounds questioned their gender-defined roles as wives and mothers, the prevailing understanding of female sexuality, and women's legal and political status as citizens of Brazil.

What was clearly at stake during the women's movements in Brazil at this time was the female body and the social and political processes in which bodies participated. As a target for patriarchal political policy and often an upholder of cultural and national identities, the body played a crucial role in the negotiations between the sexual and the political in Brazil during the 1970s and 1980s. However, the body is more than an inscriptive surface. In this, the body took on both material as well as discursive valences.²⁴ The historian Kathleen Canning has noted the importance of placing the body at the center of analysis in that it leads to important insights in the study of historical periods and the history of states and social policy.²⁵ Canning notes further that, when understood as a signifier, metaphor or allegory, the body offers new understandings of nation and social formation and when the body is seen as a site of intervention, focus on the body has expanded understandings of the processes of social discipline and the reach of the state.²⁶ In short, the body has served as the basis for the construction of civil society and the foundation on which contemporary citizenship rests.

On the Cultural Frontlines: Brazilian Literature in the 1970s

²³ Ibid., 54.

²⁴ See the well-known discussion on the discursive creation of materiality and the performativity of the body in Judith Butler's *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993) and *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

²⁵ Kathleen Canning, *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class & Citizenship* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

²⁶ Ibid., 168-171.

Any discussion of literature from the 1970s must take into account the role of the state in promoting and censoring cultural production as well as the ways in which artists negotiated a shifting political and cultural landscape. As indicated above, the military regime placed national security and cultural development on the same plane. Unlike the first four years of the dictatorship, the period from 1968 to around 1974 does not witness the founding of institutions and organizations dedicated to the cultural sector. (A notable exception is the founding of Embrafilme (Empresa Brasileira de Filmes, The Brazilian Film Agency) in 1969). In comparison to the period that follows, this post-AI-5 period is characterized by the formulation of a cultural policy which was then redefined and diversified in the second half of the 1970s.²⁷ In 1973, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) published the “Diretrizes para uma Política Nacional de Cultura,” which was largely absorbed into the 1975 document “Política Nacional de Cultura” (PNC). The “Diretrizes” and the PNC refer to the Brazilian personality and the need to support Brazilian expressions of Brazilian lived experiences.

The state sought to create conditions favorable to its existence. Gabriel Cohn notes that the state was spurred to develop a coherent cultural policy in order to neutralize its adversaries and promote cultural production that was beneficial to consolidating the regime.²⁸ To defend and justify its involvement in cultural production, which elite and liberal groups opposed, the state focused on the common citizen and suggested the need for democratic access to culture to develop the psychosocial dimensions of the people.

²⁷ For a full discussion of state-sponsored policy in the cultural sector, including a focus on the “Programa de Ação Cultural” (Action Program for Culture) for the 1973–1974 period and the “Diretrizes para uma Política Nacional de Cultura” (1973), see Gabriel Cohn, “A Concepção Oficial da Política Cultural nos Anos 70,” in *Estado e Cultura no Brasil*, ed. Sérgio Miceli (São Paulo: DIFEL, 1984), 85-96

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 87–92.

Consequently, the PNC, which picks up on many of the points laid out by the Diretrizes, is imbued with essentialist and instrumentalist conceptions of culture.²⁹

Unlike the first years of the dictatorship, censorship post AI-5 was a definite presence but it was felt differently depending on the mode of expression. Those modes of expression that did not have mass appeal, such as literature, developed relatively undeterred. Censorship of an artist's work was not an isolated instance that was easily overcome. It is important to consider the larger and more profound effects of silencing an individual in the practice of his/her craft. Instead of literature, mass media were the target of state censorship with extreme economic consequences for some. Cinema Novo director Leon Hirszman's São Bernardo (1971-72), an adaptation of Graciliano Ramos' 1934 novel, was held up by the censors for seven months, leading to the insolvency of Hirszman's production company.³⁰ The egregious case of censorship against Tereza Trautman reveals the hypocrisy of the government. While male-directed pornochanchadas were projected with relatively few government interventions, Trautman's 1973 film, Os Homens que Eu Tive, which reflects on the doubts a young woman has about the ways in which sexual morality is applied unevenly to men and women, was accused by government censors of denigrating the Brazilian woman. Government censors prevented its release for ten years. After this experience with censorship, Trautman asserts that it was far more difficult for her to obtain production financing.³¹

What was particularly effective in the exercise of censorship in Brazil during the 1970s was its different modalities. At the same time the military government censored

²⁹ Ibid., 92.

³⁰ Randal Johnson, The Film Industry in Brazil (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), 156.

³¹ Tereza Trautman, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 29 November 2001.

works it considered objectionable, creative writers censored themselves. This mode of self-censorship is perhaps the more debilitating and repressive as there is no clear target to blame. Self-censorship can be partly attributed to the arbitrary, inconsistent and, thereby, effective exercise of censorship by the military government. The practice of censorship relied heavily on submitted complaints. Few government officials actively patrolled the culture industries in a search for offensive material. More frequently, reports from independent sources who objected to a work set the censorship process in motion.³²

Not knowing what was and was not allowed to be produced limited some writers from freely practicing their craft. Although there were a few clear tendencies in the state's exercise of censorship, Baden notes that during the 1970s the military government's censors focused on materials treating sexuality in a way that was considered to be obscene.³³ One of the more egregious cases of censorship against a Brazilian writer took place in 1976, in the midst of Geisel's distensão. This case involved the acclaimed writer Rubem Fonseca and his collection of short stories Feliz Ano Nôvo. The main claims against Fonseca regarded his representation of sexuality.³⁴ Again, this may seem ironic given that pornochanchadas proliferated at this time and kept the film industry afloat in the 1970s and 1980s while erotic literature was generally forbidden. Two other important cases of censorship during distensão include the detention of Renato Tapajós for a month in 1977 after the publication of Em câmera lenta and the censorship in 1978 of A rebelião dos mortos by Luiz Fernando Emediato.³⁵ Despite the apparent ambivalence in the

³² Nancy Baden, The Muffled Cries: The Writer and Literature in Authoritarian Brazil, 1964-1985 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999), 91-92.

³³ *Ibid.*, 91-92.

³⁴ For an in-depth study of Fonseca's case, see Deonísio da Silva, Nos Bastidores da Censura: sexualidade, literatura e repressão pós-64 (São Paulo: Estação Liberdade, 1989).

³⁵ See Sussekind, Literatura e Vida Literária, 26.

government's exercise of censorship, the message was clear to cultural producers. The stakes were potentially very high if you chose to represent the body and sexuality in a way that challenged traditional, patriarchal, heteronormative values.

Nevertheless, some disagreement exists among cultural critics regarding the importance of censorship to explain the development and characteristics of literary production during this period. Unlike forms of mass media such as the printed press, television and film, literature was able to escape the reins of the military regime and became an important channel for expressing dissent.³⁶ Others note the variety of styles developed during this period as a sign that censorship was not such a monolithic force. Rather, censorship was one of several factors involved.

Another modality to censorship is the way in which it does not impede expression but rather promotes a particular point of view. Flora Sussekind explores the role the State played in motivating key trends in literary representation of the 1970s. Sussekind observes three phases of State action: the development of an aesthetic of the spectacle (1964-1968), a strategy of repression (1968-1975) and a policy of incentives and co-optations (1975-1979). The years from 1975 to 1979 can be described as the normalization of national culture by way of economic incentives. During this third period, Sussekind observes that the regime specifically gave incentives to those works that portray (retratam) a Brasil which, she asserts, tended to erase real fractures and divisions while acritical identities and nationalisms emerged.³⁷

Nancy Baden elaborates on the economics of the military incentive program. She describes the relationship between writers and the state as something akin to a carrot and

³⁶ Baden, *The Muffled Cries*, xvi, 115-118.

³⁷ Sussekind, *Literatura e Vida Literária*, 27.

a stick.³⁸ The repressive role by the military state has been mentioned. In its supportive role, the government expanded a co-edition program in the early 1970s whereby the costs of production were shared between private publishing companies and the National Book Institute (Instituto Nacional do Livro, INL).³⁹ As with other cultural industries in an economically disadvantaged context, taking subsidies can often be a matter of survival. Creative writers struggled during this period to remain viable in the face of the influx of translated literature from North American publishing companies.⁴⁰ This meant that not only did writers have to compete against increasing television viewership but, as has been the longstanding case with film and media, writers also had to compete with foreign imports.

Throughout the 1970s, a number of significant trends emerged. The “boom” in literature after 1975 and the rise in publication of short stories have been mentioned. Also significant are the thematic directions literature took at this time. Faced with a constantly shifting military regime, literary critics have argued that Brazilian writers in the post-1964 period went into an “inner exile”⁴¹ and developed an “absurdist” and “anti-mythic” vision of society.⁴² This characteristic of Brazilian writing stems from writers’ need to disguise their critiques as well as reflect on the inability to make sense of times in which they were living. Some reframe the inward turn to literature of this time as a way to politicize the personal. In a context of political impotence, a “literatura do eu” emerges where personal memory and lived experience held greater prestige over the

³⁸ Baden, *The Muffled Cries*, 89-97.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 94-95.

⁴⁰ Baden notes that translated versions of bestsellers like *Roots* flooded bookstores and decreased the market percentage for Brazilian works who fought for an already small portion of literate, reading public. *Ibid.*, 119.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 51-85.

⁴² Robert DiAntonio, *Brazilian Fiction: Aspects and Evolution of the Contemporary Narrative* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1989), 6.

rational “romance de tese” (“message novel”).⁴³ Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda and Marcos Augusto Gonçalves note that a dissatisfaction with the political system led to the creation of a particular cultural moment in which the particular experience of fragmentation and a lack of perspectives led to a privileging of action and feelings over reason with a distrust of intellectual and theoretical discourses. Out of this, they note that the body became a common political site.⁴⁴

Several critics have noted a journalistic impulse in literature from the period.⁴⁵ The romance-reportagem (novel-report) was a form of fiction that sought to assert itself as the truth.⁴⁶ Situated in a context of political repression and censorship, it may be curious to observe that writers turned to neonaturalism. A concern for history and a desire for narrating a history against the tides of official versions help explain the return and development of neonaturalism.⁴⁷ H. B. de Hollanda and M. A. Gonçalves note that this concern translates into a particular mode of realist representation “que se quer realista, verossímil, mas que ao mesmo tempo deseja aludir a algo fora dele, no caso, a realidade social do país.”⁴⁸

Tânia Pellegrini reframes this argument and emphasizes the need to consider the function of literature during this historical juncture. Specifically, Pellegrini argues that literature, with its various styles and aesthetic innovations was fundamentally dedicated

⁴³ Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda and Marcos Augusto Gonçalves, “A Ficção da Realidade Brasileira,” in Anos 70: Ainda sob a tempestade, ed. Adauto Novaes (Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano: Editora Senac Rio, 2005), 104. See also Sussekind, Literatura e Vida Literária, 42-57.

⁴⁴ Hollanda and Gonçalves, “A Ficção da Realidade Brasileira,” 100.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 119.; Flora Sussekind also makes this observation in her Literatura e Vida Literária as well as in her Tal Brasil, Qual Romance? Uma ideologia e sua história: o naturalismo (Rio de Janeiro: Achiamé, 1984).

⁴⁶ The first to make this observation is the São Paulo critic Davi Arrigucci Jr. in his essay “Jornal, realismo, alegoria,” in Achados e perdidos (São Paulo: Polis, 1979).

⁴⁷ Hollanda and Gonçalves, “A Ficção da Realidade Brasileira,” 103.

⁴⁸ “that is preferred to be realist, verisimilar, but at the same time wishes to allude to something beyond itself, in this case, to the social reality of the country,” *Ibid.*

to an act of resistance.⁴⁹ Pellegrini concedes that the period evidences a strong tendency towards a realist mode of representation which is fundamentally allegorical.⁵⁰ She asserts that the mode of realism drew from many different styles and techniques but often referenced a real-life, historical event. This creates a tenuous border between the real and the unreal or what Pellegrini refers to as an “almost-identity” (quase identidade).

Pellegrini asserts that the allegorical tendency of 1970s literature calls for an important observation:

só através do caos aparente, da fragmentação, da acumulação de elementos, da fusão de gêneros, a literatura conseguiu apresentar uma imagem da totalidade do mundo referencial completamente caótico e estilhaçado. Dessa maneira, a significação alegórica tem um sentido positivo, pois penetrou na forma dessa literatura, determinando sua estrutura, por estar em perfeita sintonia com o momento histórico.⁵¹

While it is important to note the blendings, fusions, and fragmentations that take place during this time, it is far more critical to see this as symptomatic of a discourse in crisis or an act of transgression against tradition. With respect to women’s writing, the impulse to draw on neorealism and allegory registers a lack of faith in objective representations. Nelly Novaes Coelho describes writing after the cultural revolution of the 1960s as no longer objective with the intent to represent or denounce a particular reality. Rather, writing in the 1970s and 1980s focuses on founding or installing a new reality that recognizes the feminine condition and, at the same time, this rediscovered

⁴⁹ Pellegrini, Gavetas Vazias, 24-26.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 27-28.

⁵¹ “Only by way of apparent chaos, fragmentation, the accumulation of elements, the fusion of genres, literature managed to present an image of the totality of the referential world completely chaotic and broken up. In this way, allegorical signification has a positive sense as it penetrated in the form of this literature, determining its structure, by being in perfect harmony with the historical moment,” Ibid., 27.

reality is one that arises, “*ab imo* (de origens esquecidas)” [*ab imo* (of forgotten origins)].⁵²

The point to be drawn from the observations made by these scholars is that we need to understand that literary works of this time were fundamentally concerned with a continuum between personal experience and larger society. Similarly, women writers frequently focused on the body as a site of resistance to social and political repression to question how individuals fit into the larger world of social, political, and cultural life. The experiences of the body became a new point of departure for establishing a new social order.

During the 1970s, women writers drew on the body to pose larger questions about women’s cultural and political subjectivity. Women’s works took aim at the beliefs underlying women’s roles in society, female subjectivity, identity, female sexuality and desire and women’s bodies. For Brazilian women, the female body was a particular site of political struggle. At the same time the body served as a site for resistance to the authoritarian military regime, the female body was undergoing a process of resignification fighting for cultural, social and legal changes as part of the rise in women’s movements across Brazil. Central to women’s literary works is a discourse that counters patriarchal and masculinist ideology. Indeed, Cristina Ferreira-Pinto sees women’s literary production as emerging against that of male-produced literary and cultural works.⁵³ She places women in the cultural avant-garde from the 1960s onward, claiming that female poets, playwrights, fiction writers produced “the most important

⁵² Nelly Novaes Coelho, “Prefacio: O Desafio ao Canône: consciência histórica *versus* discurso-em-crise,” in Desafiando o Cânone: Aspectos da Literatura de autoria feminina na prosa e na poesia (anos 70/80), ed. Helena Parente Cunha (Rio de Janeiro: Tempo Brasileiro, 1999), 11.

⁵³ Cristina Ferreira-Pinto, O Bildungsroman Feminino: Quatro Exemplos Brasileiros (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1990), 2.

counterideological discourse in Brazilian literature, as they have strived to create an authentic language and fresh images suitable for the expression of new voices and a changing reality.”⁵⁴

The Short Stories of Clarice Lispector and Sonia Coutinho

The short stories treated here by Coutinho and Lispector show the marks of allegory, fragmentation, the accumulation of elements, and make reference to a chaotic, splintered world where traditional logic and norms no longer effectively adhere to experience. One of Brazil’s best-known writers, Clarice Lispector cultivated the short story format, editing her collection O Via Crucis do Corpo in 1974. Considered an aberration in the context of her other works, the collection addresses the key issues under consideration in the first stages of the developing women’s movement. Similarly, in 1971 the Bahia-born writer and journalist Sonia Coutinho published Nascimento de uma Mulher, in which she reflects a growing feminine and feminist consciousness. Both writers reveal a concern for the position of women in society and connect individual experience to that of all of humanity. Both writers employ a straightforward style in their stories, in which (mostly) female characters face society’s norms on gender and sexuality against a backdrop of sociopolitical tensions resulting from and exacerbated by the military regime’s policies. Overall, the stories by Lispector and Coutinho in these two anthologies strike a balance between fiction and reality while revealing that free expression of female sexuality and development of a liberated identity is greatly inhibited.

Considered one of the premiere fiction writers from Brazil of the 20th century, scholars have built a considerable body of knowledge concerning Clarice Lispector as a

⁵⁴ Ibid., 3.

woman and as a writer. Earl E. Fitz asserts that her work focuses on the human condition in a style that he notes as possessing great spontaneity, rich imagery and unusual syntax.⁵⁵ Lispector frequently develops the theme of individual self-discovery in the face of sexual, social and psychological domination.⁵⁶ Literary critics have investigated the existential and mystical nature of her work.⁵⁷ Critical attention has been given to the structure of Lispector's writing, including elements such as point of view, the limits of expression, and the narrative process.⁵⁸ Her Jewish heritage and its reflection in her work have also been investigated.⁵⁹ With the attention of French feminist theorists such as Hélène Cixous, several studies have considered the role of the body and sexuality in Lispector's work.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Earl E. Fitz, *Clarice Lispector* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985), 7-19.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ See for example Elizabeth Robin Zenkner Brose, "O existencialismo em *A Hora da Estrela*," *Letras de Hoje* 34.4 (1999): 77-90; Richard A. Mazzara and Lorri A. Parris, "The Practical Mysticism of Clarice Lispector's *Uma Aprendizagem ou O Livro dos Prazeres*," *Hispania* 68.4 (1985): 709-715; Kenneth Krabbenhoft, "From Mysticism to Sacrament in *A Paixão Segundo G.H.*," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 35 (1995): 51-60; Barbara Mathie, "Feminism, Language or Existentialism: The Search for Self in the Works of Clarice Lispector," in *Subjectivity and Literature from the Romantics to the Present Day*, ed. Philip Shaw and Peter Stockwell (London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1991), 121-134.

⁵⁸ See for example Earl E. Fitz, "Point of View in Clarice Lispector's *A Hora da Estrela*," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 19.2 (1982): 195-208; Maria José Somerlate Barbosa, "*A Hora da Estrela* and the Tangible Reality of Fiction," *Romance Languages Annual* 1 (1990): 379-383; Kara McBride, "*No Caso a Outra*: A Look at the Role of the Male Narrator in Clarice Lispector's *A Hora da Estrela*," *Romance Languages Annual* 9 (1998): 609-612; Márgara Russotto, "La narradora: imágenes de la transgresión en Clarice Lispector," *Remate de Males* 9 (1989): 85-93; Cristina Ferreira-Pinto, "A luta pela auto-expressão em Clarice Lispector: o caso de *A Hora da Estrela*," *Mester* 16.2 (1987): 18-24; Deborah J. Archer, "Receiving the Other: The Feminine Economy of Clarice Lispector's *The Hour of the Star*," in *Anxious Power: Reading, Writing, and Ambivalence in Narrative by Women*, eds. Carol J. Singley and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 253-263; Maria José Somerlate Barbosa, "*A Hora da Estrela*: A Reinforced Affirmative Reply," *Romance Notes* 29.3 (1989): 233-239; Angela Maria Oliva Girardi, "A Hora da Estrela: (In)competência da linguagem," in *Tudo no Feminino: a presença da mulher na narrativa brasileira contemporânea*, ed. Elódia Carvalho de Formiga Xavier (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1991), 133-149; Ellen H. Douglass, "Myth and Gender in Clarice Lispector: Quest as a Feminist Statement in 'A imitação da rosa'," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 25 (1988): 15-31; Anna Klobucka, "Quest and Romance in Lispector's *Uma Aprendizagem ou O Livro dos Prazeres*," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 36 (1999): 123-130; Regina Dalcastagné, "Contas a Prestar: O Intelectual e a Massa em *A Hora da Estrela* de Clarice Lispector," *Revista de Crítica Literária Latinoamericana* 26.5 (2000): 83-98.

⁵⁹ See for example Naomi Lindstrom, "The Pattern of Allusions in Clarice Lispector," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 36 (1999): 111-121.

⁶⁰ Elissa Rashkin, "Swearing the Body: Female Violence and Revolt in 'O Corpo' and *Mar de Rosas*" *Torre de Papel* 4.1 (1994): 27-41; Carolina Latorre, "El cuerpo como espacio de aprendizaje: transcendencia de lo

Overall, Lispector's work is praised for its highly philosophical qualities but criticized for paying little attention to social, political and cultural issues. If there were a lack of consideration of the social and political in Lispector's writing, it is not because the concern is absent in Lispector's writing. Rather, as Irene Marques observes with regard to Clarice Lispector's work, what needs to be (re)considered is what gets defined as constituting a politically-oriented novel.⁶¹ Without a doubt, these analyses provide valuable contributions to appreciating her unique style and view of the world. But emphasis now needs to be placed on how her "philosophical musings" in fact reflect on concrete existence or on social, political and cultural issues. Indeed, several publications indicate an interest in revisiting Lispector's work with a social and political lens.⁶²

It is a critical oversight to not ground Lispector's unique literary style and philosophical vision in a consideration of social, cultural and political processes. As a writer who dedicated much of her artistic talents to discussing the feminine condition, it is a mistake to not unite her voice with that of other women fighting for change in Brazil during the 1970s and 1980s. In short, my goal is to build on what has been said about

corporal en 'Colheita' de Nélide Piñón y *Uma Aprendizagem ou o Livro dos Prazeres* de Clarice Lispector," *Romance Languages Annual* 9 (1998): 555-560; Ingrid R. Muller, "The Problematics of the Body in Clarice Lispector's *Family Ties*," *Chasqui* 20.1 (1991): 34-42; Earl E. Fitz, "Eroticizing the Sign: Sexuality and Being in the Narrative World of Clarice Lispector," *Romance Languages Annual* 9 (1998): 478-485; Anu Aneja, "The Mystic Aspect of *L'Écriture féminine*: Hélène Cixous' *Vivre l'Orange*," *Qui Parle* 3.1 (1989): 189-201; Diane E. Marting, "Clarice Lispector and the Promise of Freedom," in *The Sexual Woman in Latin American Literature: Dangerous Desires* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 147-204; Ana Luiza Andrade, "Entre o Ruão e a Donzela: A Mulher, do Sexo à Linguagem," *Travessia* 22 (1991): 143-160).

⁶¹ Irene Marques, "Four Writers Being Political on Their Own Terms: Feminist, Class and Cultural Identity Discourses across Continents (Mia Couto, José Saramago, Clarice Lispector, J. M. Coetzee)," (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2006), 162.

⁶² For a discussion of the social, political and/or cultural in Lispector's work, see Débora Ferreira, "O Imaginário Nacionalístico na Obra de Clarice Lispector," *Romance Languages Annual* 9 (1998): 472-473; Solange Ribeiro de Oliveira, "The Social Aspects of Clarice Lispector's Novels: An Ideological Reading of *A Paixão Segundo G.H.*," in *La Chispa '87: Selected Proceedings* (New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1987), 211-220; Annabel Martin, "The Hour of the Star: Poverty, Feminism and Realist Narrative," *Selecta* 12 (1991): 37-40.

Clarice Lispector and Sonia Coutinho's work but see it through a different lens, one which emphasizes the key questions regarding citizenship. Changing the lens through which their work can be seen allows us to relate their work to larger social and political processes taking place.

Like Lispector's A Via Crucis do Corpo, Sonia Coutinho's collection of short stories, Nascimento de uma Mulher has also been largely neglected by literary critics. This is unfortunate given that Coutinho's writing has consistently advocated for a change in women's position in society, including the interpersonal relationships found within heteronormative, romantic relationships, family dynamics and relationships between individuals and larger communities. Coutinho's writing, like Lispector's, speaks to the sociopolitical moment of the early 1970s and captures the key debates taking place simultaneously in the developing women's movements in Brazil.

Considered garbage (or, "lixo") when it was first published, little attention was subsequently paid to Lispector's 1974 collection of short stories A Via Crucis do Corpo.⁶³ Scholars noted that this collection of texts was markedly different from her previous works, observing a move away from a more philosophical approach to writing to increased attention on questions of social import.⁶⁴ Perhaps this expectation for Lispector to continue to write with the same style and focus she started with in the 1940s led to the dismissal of this work in the 1970s. Fortunately, this oversight has started to

⁶³ In the preface to A Via Crucis do Corpo, Lispector makes references to the negative reception of drafts of her short stories and the determination by an unnamed person that the work was garbage, or "lixo," Clarice Lispector, A Via Crucis do Corpo (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1998), 12.

⁶⁴ Fitz, Clarice Lispector, 92.

change. A number of texts have been published recently that take up A Via Crucis do Corpo and/or the sociopolitical nature of Lispector's writing in other published texts.⁶⁵

Sonia Coutinho was born in Itabuna, Bahia in 1939 and raised in the capital of the state of Bahia, Salvador. Since the late 1960s, she has lived in Rio de Janeiro. In addition to writing creative fiction, she has worked as a journalist and a translator. Her first collection of short stories Reunião was published in 1961 by the University of Bahia. However, her writing career did not take off until the publication of a collection of short stories Do herói inútil in 1966. She has gone on to publish additional collections of short stories, including Nascimento de uma Mulher (1970), Uma certa Felicidade (1976), Os Venenos de Lucrecia (1978), O último verão de Copacabana (1985), Atire em Sofia (1989) and Mil olhos de uma rosa (2001), and Ovelha negra e amiga loura (2006). In 1979 she was awarded the Prêmio Jabuti for Os venenos de Lucrecia. In 1980, she published her first novel O Jogo de Ifá. In 1989, Coutinho turned to detective fiction, authoring the novels Atire em Sofia (1989), O Caso Alice (1991), and Os Seios de Pandora: A Aventura de Dora Diamante (1998). Coutinho's interest in the women's detective novel led her to obtain a Master's degree in Communication. Her thesis was published in 1994 as a book, entitled Rainhas do Crime: A Ótica Feminina no Romance Policial Feminina. In her personal life, Coutinho has been an outspoken proponent for women's rights. In her fictional works, Coutinho has consistently focused on women's

⁶⁵ A number of recent doctoral dissertations have taken up the sociopolitical in Lispector's work. See for example, Lícia Manzo, Clarice Lispector e a encenação da escritura em A via crucis do corpo (São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2006); Sonia Roncador, "A poetics of impoverishment: Clarice Lispector's narratives of the 1970s" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1999); Inela Selimovic, "Lost and found in the city: women and urban spaces in the fiction by Clarice Lispector, Elena Garro, Diamela Eltit and Luisa Valenzuela" (Ph.D. diss., U of Kentucky, 2006); and Irene Marques, "Four writers being political on their own terms: feminist, class and cultural identity discourses across continents (Mia Couto, José Saramago, Clarice Lispector and J.M. Coetzee)" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2005).

roles in society, developing complex female protagonists who challenge patriarchal gender roles and traditionally defined female sexuality.

The approach of Coutinho and Lispector vary greatly in terms of narrative voice and character development. Lispector opens the 1974 collection of short stories with a statement to her readers. Part exculpatory, Lispector explains that her editor called her and asked her to write three of the stories, which he told her, really happened. Although she claims she does not know how to write stories on request, she acknowledges that she had the facts before her but only needed some imagination. This laying bare the background to her writing combines with first-person, semi-autobiographical narratives in the collection to approximate the fictional representations to journalistic reports. The collection totals thirteen stories but, as Lispector confesses, she chose not to include a fourteenth story as she would disrespect the trust she has with a man who revealed his personal life – so as to not shed blood, the man left his wife, who had corrupted their 16-year old daughter.⁶⁶ She adds that the man also has an 18-year old son of whom he does not even want to hear from in the name of his own mother. With this additional background information, Lispector positions her work squarely in the context of failing gendered relationships. The fact that she does not include the man's story diagnoses a social problem to maintain secrecy and not address the link between the sexual, the social and the political. In other words, if social problems are not revealed, then no questions will be asked regarding how those social problems arose in the first place.

At the outset, Lispector reveals herself as a writer, exposes the process of writing and publication, and establishes herself as an intermediary between social events and the

⁶⁶ Nelson H. Vieira notes that the number of stories resembles the number of stations of the cross in Catholicism. See his essay, "The Stations of the Body: Clarice Lispector's *Abertura* and Renewal," *Studies in Short Fiction* 25.1 (Winter 1998): 55-69.

transmission of those events. Moreover, Lispector positions herself as author of the stories but also, because she was asked to write them, she is a subject of them. Thus, she conflates herself with the works and positions herself as part author, part historian (or anthropologist), and part object of discourse and engages others to become part of this discourse. I add that this use of first-person voice in the form of the author makes her a participant. By extension, the reader is also a participant in what s/he reads, lending a greater sense of immediacy and tangibility to the issues discussed.

Whereas Lispector employs the first-person as herself, the writer, making herself have a participatory role in the collection of short stories, Coutinho employs first person narratives and maintains a more traditional distance as author from her written works. Coutinho develops a first-person point-of-view in her characters who reflect on what they see or share with the reader what they are thinking or feeling. Given that some of the stories were originally written in the late 1960s, the use of first-person point of view for female characters represents an important move from being the all too often object of representation to the subject who defines, interprets and critiques traditional, patriarchal gender norms and other stultifying social expectations.

Another important difference between Lispector and Coutinho's work involves the presence of both male and female characters. There are few male characters in Lispector's narratives that go beyond playing a secondary role. However, in Coutinho's work – and it is interesting that in a collection of short stories entitled Nascimento de uma Mulher – there are several stories focusing on male characters and their confrontations with social norms. Indeed, several male characters are depicted as suffering as much as women in particular ways based on their socially ascribed roles as men. This indicates a

view on the part of Coutinho that for women to be “born,” broad-sweeping social, economic and political changes must occur that include both men and women.

Despite differences in style and the attention their work has (or has not) received, both Lispector and Coutinho share a concern for citizenship and the ways in which women are incorporated into Brazilian society. Although the historical moment did not allow for making free, direct, vocal claims on the state, their works resonate with the key debates surrounding citizenship. These issues include a critique of full participation in public life, violence against women, the patriarchal, nation-state boundedness of citizenship, the universal versus the particular citizen-subject and a critical assessment of the presumed division between public and private spheres of life. Through their writing, both writers reveal a concern for social justice that women in numerous social organizations were simultaneously demanding.

Combating Violence and Fear

A salient issue for the authoritarian military regime was a concern for national security. Prior to the military coup d’etat in April of 1964, conservative forces promoted an ideology premised on the protection of the Brazilian family and bourgeois values from an impending communist threat. The “revolution,” as the military coup became known, was preceded by marches of “The Family, with God, for Liberty” which called for an end to the democratically elected government of João Goulart. The leaders of the 1964 military coup d’etat upheld traditional notions of women’s social roles and symbolism of the family to support their regime.⁶⁷ This patriarchal gesture is certainly not unique to the

⁶⁷ The Instituto de Pesquisas Econômicas e Sociais, IPES, (The Institute for Social and Economic Research), with the assistance of the Catholic Church and the Campanha da Mulher em Defesa da

Brazilian context, as authoritarian regimes have been noted for taking control of women as a way to construct and consolidate power.⁶⁸

Though feared by the right, leftist forces did not constitute a threat to Brazilian women or their families. In reality, the State itself promoted and cultivated a long-standing, repressive patriarchal culture that did little to protect women or improve their political or social status. The patriarchal, conservative ideology of the military regime not only eliminated significant participation of civil society in the nation's political process but also exacerbated and sharpened the division between a(n effectively) male-dominated public sphere and a female private sphere. What is more, the military regime, ostensibly concerned with the moral fiber of Brazilian society, did little to enforce judicial punishment of those who committed acts of violence against women.

In the short story "A língua do p," Lispector focuses on the prevailing culture of violence, silence and the representation of women's sexuality in the public sphere. In the process, she investigates what it is that truly menaces Brazilian women. Here, the narrative focuses on a young teacher of English named Maria Aparecida, or Cidinha for short, who lives in Minas Gerais and is on a train to Rio de Janeiro. Cidinha is introduced as a woman who is neither rich nor poor but dresses with care, uses nice bags and, thus, seems better off economically than she is. At the first stop on her trip to Rio, two men

Democracia, CAMDE (The Women's Campaign in Defense of Democracy) mobilized middle-class women to form a pressure group to overthrow democratically elected president João Goulart. These women unwittingly helped justify and contributed to installing a repressive, violent military regime. See also the discussion of women and their role in the movement against the government of João Goulart in Solange de Deus Simões, *Deus, Pátria e Família: As Mulheres no Golpe de 1964* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1985). Shortly after the coup d'état, Brazilian filmmaker Helena Solberg sought to register the ideology of middle class women in her short *A Entrevista* (*The Interview*, black and white, 16mm, 1968).

⁶⁸ Joan Scott makes this observation in her groundbreaking article on gender and historical analysis. She notes, however, that this connection is often made but, at the time of her writing, had been rarely investigated. See her "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91.5 (1986): 1053-1075.

board the train. They look at her and she looks at them before diverting her eyes to gaze out the train window. She feels nervous and, with their presence, there is a sudden bad vibe in the train car. Both men then sit behind her and begin to talk in “a língua do p” (the P language):

- Vopocêpê reperaparoupou napa mopoçapa boponipitapa?
- Jápá vipi tupudopo. Épé linpindapa. Espestápá nopo papo.⁶⁹

- [Did you see the pretty girl?
- Yes, I did. She’s attractive. She’s in the bag.]

Understanding what the men are saying, Cidinha becomes quite nervous, especially when she overhears them talk about sexually attacking her and killing her with a dagger when they reach the next tunnel. Frantic, she decides to fake being a prostitute. She figures this will prevent the men from attacking her because “não gostam de vagabunda” (they won’t like a tramp).⁷⁰ She raises her skirt, makes sexual gestures with her hands, unbuttons her blouse, and wildly puts on lipstick.

Her plan works and the men laugh at her instead of attack her. But, she is also reported to the authorities. At the next train station, she is taken into custody by a soldier and detained for three days. As she descends the train, she passes a young woman who looks at her with disdain. Released and having reached Copacabana, Cidinha buys a newspaper in which the front title proclaims that a young woman was sexually attacked and killed on a train, the same woman whom she had seen days earlier boarding the train from which

⁶⁹ Clarice Lispector, *A Via Crucis do Corpo*, 68.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 69.

she was arrested. She tosses the newspaper down and thinks: “Épé. Opo despestipinopo épé impimplaplacápávelpel” (That’s it. Destiny is unyielding).⁷¹

Here, the body serves as a point of departure to expose and challenge the systematic modes of violence committed against women. The narrative references the economic shifts that affected women’s position in society. Once in power, the military regime promoted a neoliberal economic order that forced women to seek employment outside the home to help their families economically, giving rise to what was later called the “double day” – working full time outside and inside the home. In the case of Cidinha, she is a young woman from Minas Gerais, traveling to a major urban center, Rio de Janeiro. In this she follows the economic migration patterns of many young women in Brazil at this time who looked for work in either Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo, the two major economic hubs of Brazil. An exception here is that Cidinha is an ostensibly educated woman, likely from a middle-class family – which explains her role as a professional (teacher) and her language abilities. The purpose for Cidinha’s travel is to teach English, a language necessary for an increasing globalized marketplace.

This movement is not in itself a clear example of systemic violence. What it does reference, however, is the hypocritical stance taken by the military state. This is not the defense of the family, God and liberty that the regime promoted prior to the coup d’etat. What Cidinha’s movement does suggest is that the shifts in economic and political policy placed women in an entirely different social position – one that had the potential for placing women in precarious social positions ranging from lack of adequate childcare for working women to obligatory sterilizations.

⁷¹ Ibid., 70.

In the narrative by Lispector, the female protagonist on her way to work is exposed to criminal, physical attack. Cidinha's body, a target of violence, is also a tool for her liberation. If knowledge is a source of power, knowledge of one's body can serve as a tool for self-emancipation. In the case of Cidinha she knew how to move sexually despite being a virgin and the claim that she lacked awareness of her body: "Ela mal se conhecia. Aliás nunca se conhecera por dentro" (She hardly knew herself. Besides, she had never known herself inside).⁷² Although she did not know how to call on her body to defend herself, she did so successfully. She raises her skirt and begins to make sexual gestures, which the narrator explains she didn't even know she knew how to do. The irony is that she was caught in an impossible situation that freed her from one threat but led to her arrest. The inability for Cidinha to travel from Minas Gerais on a train without being harassed, threatened or jailed speaks to her inability to freely participate in the public realm. In her discussion of women and urban design, Marion Roberts explains that constraints on spatial mobility are constraints on civic engagement.⁷³ As a matter of social justice, she asserts that "all women should be able to exercise citizenship within the public realm with ease and dignity."⁷⁴ Cidinha arrived at her final destination but not without having her life threatened and spending time in jail.

In addition to the threat of external, physical violence, the story "A língua do p" addresses the invisible, systemic nature of violence against women. By the late 1970s, discrimination – but not violence against – women was an international issue. In 1979 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All

⁷² Lispector, *A Via Crucis do Corpo*, 68.

⁷³ Marion Roberts, "A place for citizenship? Women, urban design and neighbourhood planning," in *In the Hands of Women: Paradigms of Citizenship*, eds. Susan Buckingham and Geraldine Lievesley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 95-126.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Convention defines discrimination against women as:

any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.⁷⁵

However, Geraldine Lievesley offers a critique of the CEDAW in that it failed to provide a comprehensive account of women's rights and did not address gender-specific violence.⁷⁶ Lievesely explains the reasoning behind this omission in the Convention: violence against women did not fit into the CEDAW's understanding of equality and the CEDAW recognized a public/private divide.⁷⁷ As Lispector's short story "A língua do p" illustrates, gender-specific violence and discrimination against women are certainly not private issues.

Women's full citizenship often pivots on an assumed public-private divide. Not surprisingly, this division serves as a central trope in the short stories of Sonia Coutinho and Clarice Lispector. Set against the backdrop of an assumed public-private divide, both authors question the boundaries of belonging in terms of gendered roles and sexual identities. In the process, both authors lay bare the influence of patriarchal and/or state power to marginalize women and prevent them from being full, free members of society.

⁷⁵ The United Nations website: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw>. Last accessed 10 May 2008.

⁷⁶ Geraldine Lievesely asserts that there has been a general absence of gender-specific violence in discourses on human rights. See her essay, "Women and the Experience of Citizenship," in *In the Hands of Women: Paradigms of Citizenship*, eds. Susan Buckingham and Geraldine Lievesley (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), 9.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Critiques of Traditional, Heteronormative Marriage

As mentioned above, the moral fabric of society was a hot button issue for the military regime. During the regime, the concept of potestad marital continued to reign as the state upheld male authority in marriage. Husbands and male partners were frequently acquitted in “honor killings” for their wives’ supposed marital infidelities.⁷⁸ It was not until 1980 that the women’s movement organized around violence against women, or so-called “crimes of passion,” indicating the silence surrounding the domestic violence as well the difficulties organizations encountered in pursuing social justice for women prior to the declaration of political amnesty in 1979.⁷⁹ Until the early 1960s, married women were not allowed to work without their husband’s permission and, until as late as 1977, they were not able to obtain a legal divorce. In 1975, a proposal was drafted for a new Civil Code, which included some suggested improvements to reduce the inferior, subaltern status of women. The revisions removed stipulations that a woman’s virginity prior to entering into a marriage could be a factor in determining the validity of the union if the husband so chose to contest it and a “dishonest daughter” could no longer be disinherited by her father. However, the proposal for a new civil code retained language that gave the

⁷⁸ For a complete discussion of “crimes of passion,” in which men kill their female partners, see Mariza Corrêa, Os crimes da paixão (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1981). For a discussion of the “legitimate defense of *honra*” as justification for these violent crimes against women, see Danielle Ardaillon and Guita Grin Derbert, Quando a vítima é mulher. Análise de julgamentos de crimes de estupro, espancamento e homicídios (Brasília: CNDM, 1987) as well as Wânia Pasinato Izumino, Justiça e Violência Contra a Mulher: O Papel do Sistema Judiciário na Solução dos Conflitos de Gênero (São Paulo: Annablume, FAPESP, 1998). For more information on the social importance of women’s virginity, see Sueann Caulfield, In Defense of Honor: Sexual Morality, Modernity, and Nation in Early-Twentieth-Century Brazil (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

⁷⁹ Alvarez, Engendering Democracy, 121.

male partner in a heterosexual union primary authority in deciding questions essential to the couple and any children they may have.⁸⁰

Social inequality in heterosexual marriage is an issue that has continued to be a topic of key interest in the Brazilian women's movements.⁸¹ Since the emergence of the contemporary women's movement, women and women's groups participating in the larger movement for greater rights and freedoms have placed gendered roles in heterosexual union at the center of analysis to reveal socially and legally sanctioned gender-based disparities.

In her anthology Nascimento de uma Mulher, Sonia Coutinho takes up the question of traditional heteronormative marriage from the perspective of women at three different life stages: a woman who is dating a man and had been talking of marriage in "Sábado de encontro," a woman who just married in "Nascimento de uma mulher" and the viewpoint of an older woman who has been married for over thirty years in "Elegiazinha pequeno-burguesa." All three stories are marked by silence as the experiences of these female characters are related to larger social networks. In this, these short stories politicize interpersonal, presumably private romance and relate these relationships to the larger public realm. Here we see an instance in which women's cultural works bring forth issues from the private, domestic realm into the public sphere that Joan B. Landes has described as being historically "ill equipped to consider ... the political dimension of relations in the intimate sphere."⁸²

⁸⁰ Florisa Verucci discusses the relationship between women and their defined civil, constitutional and penal rights (or lack thereof) in her text A Mulher e o Direito (São Paulo: Nobel, 1987), 39-97.

⁸¹ A widely-distributed video entitled Acorda, Raiumudo! Acorda! produced by IBASE VÍDEO and ISER VÍDEO in 1990 is a case in point. An all-star cast including Eliane Giardini, Paulo Betti, Zezé Motta and José Mayer confront machismo in domestic married life and the social limits placed on women.

⁸² Joan B. Landes, "The Public and the Private Sphere," 97.

Sábado de encontro

The story “Sábado de encontro” begins as if it were a typical date scenario at an open-air bar somewhere in Brazil. This would be the case if it were not for the fact that the female protagonist has just confessed to her would-be fiancé that she is not a virgin, thus making her potentially an unsuitable woman for marriage. The story speaks to the double standards affecting women and the social ostracism they experience when they are honest about or acknowledge their sexuality. In a move similar to that of Lispector in “Miss Algrave” discussed below, Coutinho considers how desire, affectivity and the female body are issues to be kept private, hidden from the public sphere. Female heterosexuality must be chaste and only practiced within the institution of marriage. It is imperative to note the social and political role of literature here in these narratives by Coutinho and Lispector. Both writers address issues such as virginity and sexual relations before or outside marriage. Perhaps not surprisingly, these issues were not discussed in the women’s movements until the 1980s once the hard-line dictatorship had ended.⁸³

As if *en media res*, the narrative opens on the image of José ordering two draft beers at an outdoor bar. He taps his fingers and looks at the woman sitting directly in front of him, Marina. Overall, the timeframe of the plot begins and ends with the consumption of their drink. Yet, the brevity and simplicity of the plot belies the complexity of the moment shared. José, whose values and understanding of his life have been challenged by Marina’s confession that she has had one heterosexual encounter prior to meeting him, is described as “desorientado” (disoriented) and his life as a “geometria inevitável” (an

⁸³ Alvarez, *Engendering Democracy*, 128.

unavoidable geometric design) has been upset.⁸⁴ As he sits on the veranda of the bar, José's disorientation seems reasonable enough considering the magnitude of the information he has been given: "toda uma escala de convicções e juízos de valor rapidamente ameaçada de derrocada" (an entire series of convictions and value judgments quickly threatened to topple).⁸⁵ The narrative presents José's inner thoughts, allowing the reader to perceive a certain sense of loss on his part. He had been looking forward to telling his colleagues at work that he had gotten married, he reflects on how he had envisioned married life with Marina and he contemplates how his life had changed once he started seeing her regularly.

Ultimately, this sense of loss takes the shape of patriarchal condescension and hypocrisy. The narrative is largely structured around a series of glances – Marina wondering what José is thinking and José appraising a sobbing, distraught Marina before him:

Observa Marina, perplexo, tentando adivinhar seu corpo, embaixo do vestido, quem diria, olha seu rosto, que beijou pouco e desajeitadamente (as que serviam para *isso* ele visitava aos sábados, Marina era "para casar").

[He observes Marina, perplexed, trying to make out her body from under her dress, who would say, he looks at her face that he kissed only little and unskillfully (the women who were meant for this he visited on Saturdays, Marina was "marriage material").]⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Sonia Coutinho, Nascimento de uma Mulher (Rio de Janeiro: Sette Letras, 1996), 71, 74.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

Momentarily, José contemplates Marina's usefulness and whether or not anybody would ever find out that she was not a virgin when they married. Ultimately, he decides that it was good that he found out *everything* before getting further involved with her.

Having confessed that she had had sex once before, Marina is left to wait for a response from José. A response does not come. She regrets having said anything and, faced with his (apparent) silent indifference, she continues to drink her beer and realizes that she is, “reduzida lamentavelmente a si mesma” (sadly reduced to her self).⁸⁷ The glances by José objectify Marina and transform her into an Other, a body that is objectified. Consequently, Coutinho's story reveals how the marginalized become positioned in their bodies and constituted as objects rather than subjects of social discourse.⁸⁸

But the narrative refuses this closure. A clear attempt is made to limit the narrative stage to a finite space (a bar patio) and a limited time frame (the time it takes to consume an alcoholic beverage). References to both can be found in the text where the characters attempt to give the moment “a importância devida ao instante” (the importance owed to the moment) while tediously tapping their fingers against their glasses. The text itself draws attention to the narrative confines with words such as “momento” (moment) written in all capital letters. Yet, the narrative opens out beyond its own setting through repeated references to the city. While contemplating Marina's confession, a cold breeze passes by José and he looks towards the city.⁸⁹ And, later, while both take a drink of beer

⁸⁷ Ibid., 75.

⁸⁸ Sidonie Smith offers an illuminating discussion of a dual process of marginalizing and objectifying women in her text Subjectivity, identity and the body: women's autobiographical practices in the twentieth century (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

⁸⁹ Coutinho, Nascimento, 72.

in silence, they again look to the city.⁹⁰ The story closes with both characters walking away from the bar, disappearing among people gathered outside on sidewalks and “ignorando o frio vento misterioso que desabrocha leve e alto sobre a cidade acesa de luzes” (ignoring the mysterious cold wind that unfolds gently and high over the city lit by lights).⁹¹ The juxtaposition of spaces here – the bar and the city in the distance – forms a bridge between the microcosm of private romance and the macrocosm of communal, social interactions.

As a common trope in Coutinho’s writing, the city functions as a reference to the status and practice of citizenship, following the etymology of citizen as an inhabitant of a city. Luiza Lobo observes a tendency in Coutinho’s writing that her female characters engage in the external world of the city where they oscillate between a sense of belonging and being set apart, thus leading to a critique of the social construction of life and a sense of alienation from the public realm.⁹² The bridge between the bar and the larger social sphere illustrates how the finite encounter between two people for a brief period of time does not stand alone as an isolated event. Rather, the dynamics of this interpersonal relationship are connected to a larger social network, the city, to call attention to the ways in which larger social structures and abstract beliefs intersect the lives of normal people and make them, in the case of José and Marina, miserable. It is the abstract beliefs that ostensibly uphold what is good, honest and worthy that ruin the lives of both men and women. In this, Coutinho’s narrative eschews the reduction of the female body to a non-historic, non-concrete, un-determined discourse. Rather, the contrast created here

⁹⁰ Ibid., 74.

⁹¹ Ibid., 77.

⁹² Luiza Lobo, “Sonia Coutinho Revisits the City,” in *Latin American Women’s Writing: Feminist Readings in Theory and Crisis*, ed. Anny Brooksbank Jones and Catherine Davies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 163-166.

between the couple's crisis against the backdrop and then disappearance into the city refuses the separation of the female body from larger social interactions and beliefs.

Elegiazinha pequeno-burguesa

A similar gesture to connect the presumably private sphere of a married couple to the larger social context in which they live can be found in the short story "Elegiazinha pequeno-burguesa" (An elegy for the small bourgeoisie). In this case, the female protagonist, through whom the narrative is presented, has been married to her husband for thirty years. As in the narrative "Sábado de encontro," the couple is at a bar in the evening, drinking *pernods*.

The insipid, mundane conversation she has with Tito, her husband, contrasts with an imagined life the woman envisions with a man sitting next to her wearing a black shirt. For her, he only needed to be a little bit intelligent because "tantos 'tipos' podem ser criados a partir de um pouquinho de inteligência" (so many guys can be created starting with a little bit of intelligence).⁹³ Her passing thoughts place her in Paris, Mexico or Spain and she repeats the idea about only needing a little bit of intelligence in an interior monologue; but, in this second instance, the word "tipos" appears in the text without quotation marks. Thus, the sentence lends itself to diverging interpretations. On one hand, the word "tipos" is a popular expression for a guy or a fellow. In this sense, the woman suggests that a man with some intelligence can be interesting or stimulating. This desire contrasts with the stereotypical image of a man who wishes to be with a physically attractive woman regardless of her mental abilities. On the other hand, the statement in which the word "tipos" appears without the quotation marks suggests the idea of a pattern

⁹³ Coutinho, Nascimento, 63.

or a model to be followed. In this sense, the woman's comment reflects on life roles and how one's own thoughts can establish how one lives, rather than following an established social pattern.

Clearly unsatisfied with her marriage, this daydreamt adultery amuses her while her husband sits quietly. A sudden desire comes over her to shout out. Instead, she observes her surroundings, "olha a noite tão universal, sente esse vento frio fazendo a cidade parecer tão vasta e nós até com sorte de estarmos nesse bar" (she looks at the universal night, feels a cold breeze making the city appear so vast and us with the luck of being in this bar).⁹⁴ Her sense of a world that is larger and more complex than the life she is leading becomes clear. Marriage was not what she had expected and her life is unfulfilling. Similar to the gesture made in the narrative "Sábado de encontro" the dynamic of a private relationship is connected to a large social dynamic, the city and the way the world has been designed.

Nascimento de uma mulher

In the third story in which Coutinho addresses the question of male-female relationships in marriage, the female protagonist can only imagine what her future life as a married woman holds for her. This highly self-reflective narrative, which lends its title to the entire collection, "Nascimento de uma Mulher" ("Birth of a Woman"), considers the process of becoming a woman as a result of interpersonal communication.

A narrator introduces the reader to Marieta, whose new husband, Pedrito, is out of the house. As she sits in an easy chair, she taps her fingers on the armrest, indicating the utter tedium of her life as well as the lack of a clear idea as to what to do with herself. The

⁹⁴ Ibid., 64.

narrative voice makes clear how Marieta feels: “ali estava ela, de repente atirada no presente” (there she was, suddenly thrown into the present).⁹⁵ This convergence on the present repeats the narrative focus of the two stories discussed above and, as previously, allows for a consideration of how Marieta’s life connects with forces outside her. Marieta rises from the easy chair and looks around her new home, not knowing what to do. She considers taking a bath with the new salts she has received as a wedding gift and repeats to herself, as if to convince, that she has now really begun her life.

A series of narrative flashbacks illustrate that entry into this new life was not without a certain degree of pain. Between moments of crying and unease, Marieta realizes that she has become “desamparadamente metida num destino de mulher” (helplessly stuck in a woman’s destiny).⁹⁶ This destiny results in her increasing isolation from the outside world. Her husband brings home the daily newspaper but she only reads the front headlines and then, as if it were her duty, makes sure they are tossed in the garbage. It isn’t the confines of her new home that limit her, “(m)as o que a atrapalhava eram justamente seus lampejos” (but what trapped her were her flashes of desire).⁹⁷ Time to herself surrounded in silence affords her an opportunity to contemplate all that she has sacrificed. The spark of individual desires vanishes as she realizes that she is now in “(u)m mundo onde as pessoas faziam o que tinham de fazer” (a world in which people did what they had to do).⁹⁸

Being a dutiful new wife, she decides that she needs to write to her friends in Rio to let them know how wonderfully she is doing in her new home in Salvador. As she writes,

⁹⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 10.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 12.

her words are interspersed with flashbacks and she has difficulty writing what she is really feeling and thinking about her situation. She is fully aware of what effect her letter can have in challenging the beliefs that led her to the life she now has:

(p)orque as palavras inventavam o mundo – e, agora que estava sozinha, era sua grande oportunidade de refazer tudo, com incrível força e certeza, descobriu, um pouco espantada: assim pode uma pessoa construir sua vida sólida como uma pedra.

[(b)ecause words invented the world – and now that she was alone, it was her big opportunity to redo everything, with incredible force and certainty, she discovered, somewhat frightened: thus a person can construct a life solid like a rock.]⁹⁹

Despite recognizing her power to control her own life and knowing the potential to make a significant change in how the “world” was understood by expressing her doubts or concerns about marriage, she chooses not to do so. Without further reservation, she writes to her friends that “o casamento é uma coisa bela e espiritual, agora estou realizando todos os meus sonhos de Ideal e Amor etc.” (married life is a beautiful and spiritual thing, now all my dreams of what is Ideal and Love are coming true). Upon learning some time later that the letter was shared among her friends in Rio she smiles, quietly “com a esperteza modesta de mulher” (with the modest expertise / dishonesty of a woman).¹⁰⁰ The last line suggests a brutal irony. In one sense, the Portuguese word esperteza describes the act of an expert and cleverness. In another sense, esperteza refers to a dishonest act done in order to acquire something.

What are we to make of Marieta’s letter beyond an act of complicity in her own self-oppression? This message to her friends, in fact, connects the private realm of her new

⁹⁹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 16.

home in Salvador with the spaces in which her friends live in Rio de Janeiro who come together to talk about Marieta and, perhaps, seek confirmation that her life as a married woman is as it should be. As such, Marieta's letter contributes to a shared belief about the joys and benefits of matrimony.

This notion of coming together to discuss issues of sociopolitical importance has received a great deal of attention from political theorists. The most influential, contemporary perspective comes from Jürgen Habermas whose large body of work has focused on two key themes: the communicative acts of social agents and the political realm in which they work. Central to Habermas' work is the concept of the public sphere, which he defines as:

a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed. Access to the public sphere is open in principle to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere is constituted in every conversation in which private persons come together to form a public....We speak of a political public sphere...when the public discussions concern objects connected with the practice of the state.¹⁰¹

Although his formulation of the public sphere has shifted over time, in his original description Habermas refers to the role letters have played in the constitution of the public sphere.¹⁰² Thus, the letter from Marieta to her friends in Rio de Janeiro not only bridges two distinct geographic spaces in Brazil but it also creates a Habermasian public

¹⁰¹ Jürgen Habermas, Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics: A Reader, ed. Steven Seidman (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 231, quoted in Noëlle McAfee, Habermas, Kristeva, and Citizenship (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 83.

¹⁰² Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into the Category of Bourgeois Society, trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 49-56.

sphere in which issues of social import (marriage) are discussed among private persons (Marieta and her friends).

But why would Marieta send this inaccurate letter to them? What significance does this act hold? In one sense, the letter serves to illustrate how Marieta is complicit with her own repression. This is an important distinction between the writing of Lispector and Coutinho. Whereas Lispector's writing tends to locate women's oppression in an external force, Coutinho's narratives tend to investigate how women also participate in society's repressive regimes. Complicit or not, the narrative asks to what degree does Marieta have the choice or luxury to reject or fall in line with a predestined, ordered world. In another sense, the letter reveals how beliefs in an institution such as marriage are not based entirely on truthful expression. Marieta effectively contributes knowledge to the public sphere founded on an expert, cunning deception. What is more, while private experiences are exposed in the narrative, these personal reflections are denied entry into public, shared conversation. In other words, here, the personal is forestalled from becoming political.

The Body, Brazilian Literature and Clarice Lispector

Prior to the more contemporary era of women's writing, the body was a key facet in Brazilian Modernism. Oswald de Andrade famously appropriated the notion of cannibalism to rethink the relationship between the body and the world.¹⁰³ In the 1970s and 1980s, Brazilian women writers frequently focused on the body as a site of resistance to social and political repression and as a way to challenge how women were inserted

¹⁰³ Oswald de Andrade, Do Pau-Brasil à Antropofagia às Utopias: Manifestos, Teses de Concursos e Ensaios (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1978).

into society.¹⁰⁴ As discussed above, contemporary Brazilian women's literature is often seen as a discourse that counters patriarchal and masculinist ideology. Nelly Novaes Coelho asserts that erotic and metaphysical questioning predominate in Brazilian women's literature at this time which she sees as being dedicated to transgressing traditional models in search of a new image of female subjectivity.¹⁰⁵ The erotic was one way to challenge reality and knowledge in order to investigate female experience. Coelho asserts that the eu (the I) of women's writing asserted itself as a nós (an us) whereby individual problems were those of all humanity.¹⁰⁶ In the 1970s, Brazilian women's literature held an avant-garde position and pushed the boundaries of how female sexuality was defined and discussed. Indeed, before 1979, feminine sexuality was not openly discussed in the women's movement. Until then, it had been seen as secondary to problems women faced with work, day care and political participation.¹⁰⁷

Literary critics have discussed Clarice Lispector's particular representation of the female body. The collection of short stories Laços de Família (*Family Ties*), first published in 1960, has been noted to discuss how women's oppression stems not from direct patriarchal oppression but rather from the problematic issue of the Cartesian mind/body split found in Western thought.¹⁰⁸ The idea of transcendence from the body as a way to find self-definition has been discussed with respect to the novel Uma aprendizagem ou o livro dos Prazeres (*An Apprenticeship or the Book of Pleasures*,

¹⁰⁴ For example, Marcia Denser's anthologies of short stories Muito Prazer (1982) and O Prazer É Todo Meu (1984) celebrate the female erotic as a way to challenge women's place in society and traditionally-defined heteronormative female subjectivity.

¹⁰⁵ Nelly Novaes Coelho, A Literatura Feminina no Brasil Contemporâneo, 16, 22-25.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁰⁷ Alvarez, Engendering Democracy in Brazil, 114.

¹⁰⁸ Ingrid R. Muller, "The Problematics of the Body in Clarice Lispector's *Family Ties*," Chasqui 20.1 (May 1991): 34-42.

1969).¹⁰⁹ And, as an extension of the body, the question of consumption has been noted in A Hora da Estrela (*The Hour of the Star*, 1977) as well as A Paixão segundo G.H. (*The Passion According to G.H.*, 1964).¹¹⁰ Notably, Hélène Cixous discovered the epitome of *l'écriture féminine* in the Brazilian writer's work.¹¹¹

Given a general interest in questions of identity, subjectivity and the physical in Lispector's work it is curious that her collection of short stories, A Via Crucis do Corpo (*The Stations of the Body*) has received little attention regarding the physical. Earl E. Fitz observes certain continuities and shifts found in this anthology. First he notes that, although Lispector has consistently discussed a tension between objects in the world and how individuals perceive them, lending a highly phenomenological quality to her work, here Fitz urges the reader to think more profoundly about the "truths" that are illuminated by the narrator's discourse.¹¹² Whereas sexuality has generally been closely associated with individual identity in Lispector's writing, Fitz further asserts that this collection is sexual in ways that were not evident in earlier works. Specifically, the texts present the sexual in a starkly simple fashion that lacks the lyricism for which Lispector had been known.¹¹³ In a slightly more sociopolitical reading of Lispector's work, Elissa Rashkin asserts that Lispector's preoccupation with the body in the short story "O Corpo" exemplifies Bakhtin's concept of a "grotesque realism" in which "hierarchy and

¹⁰⁹ Carolina Latorre, "El cuerpo como espacio de aprendizaje: Transcendencia de lo corporal en "Colheita" de Nérida Piñón y *Uma Aprendizagem ou o Livro dos Prazeres* de Clarice Lispector," Romance Languages Annual IX (1998): 555-560.

¹¹⁰ See for example Thomas P. Waldemer, "Life Eating Life: Food, Drink, and Catharsis in *A Hora da Estrela*," Romance Notes 36.1 (Fall 1995): 63-68.

¹¹¹ See for example the essay by Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen Signs 1:4 (1976): 875-893 as well as Hélène Cixous, Clarice Lispector, and Verena Andermatt Conley, Reading with Clarice, Theory and history of Literature, Vol. 73 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).

¹¹² Earl E. Fitz, "A Writer in Transition: Clarice Lispector and *A Via Crucis do Corpo*," Latin American Literary Review 16.32 (July-Dec. 1988): 42.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 41.

repression are temporarily suspended.”¹¹⁴ What is more, a grotesque or carnivalesque representation of the body was one mode of representation artists employed to resist the oppression of the military regime.¹¹⁵ Lastly, Malcolm Silverman suggests that a shift to more direct treatment of sex in A Via Crucis do Corpo has to do with the rise of feminism.¹¹⁶

O Corpo

While she shares with Coutinho a concern for romantic relationships in the domestic sphere, Lispector’s short story “O Corpo” (“The Body”) presents a radical challenge to the way in which not only women themselves but female sexuality fits into a larger world of social, political and cultural life. Combining elements of forced exile, domestic violence and State authority, Lispector’s short story is a hyperbolic, sarcastic treatment of the way in which female sexuality and challenges to non-traditional sexual practices and/or gender identities are simply disavowed in Brazilian society.

As in the other stories in Lispector’s collection, here, too, we find a narrative based on a relatively simple structure. A third-person narrator introduces the reader to three central characters: Xavier, a man described as having “uma fome que não acabava mais”¹¹⁷ (a hunger that could never be satisfied), and two women who live with him, Beatriz and Carmem. The insatiable desire to eat, understood as sexual activity in Brazilian slang,

¹¹⁴ Robert Stam, Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism, and Film (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 135-137; quoted in Elissa Rashkin, “Swearing the Body: Female Violence and Revolt in ‘O Corpo’ and *Mar de Rosas*,” Torre de Papel 4.1 (1994): 31.

¹¹⁵ Rashkin rightly cites the work of underground (udi-grudi) filmmakers such as Rogério Sganzerla who argued that an aesthetic of garbage could be radical. See her “Swearing the Body,” 27-41.

¹¹⁶ Malcolm Silverman, Moderna Ficção Brasileira, trans. João Guilherme Linke (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira; Brasília: INL, 1978), 82.

¹¹⁷ Clarice Lispector, A Via Crucis do Corpo, 22.

exaggerates the male character's sexually dominant role.¹¹⁸ The reader is also informed that Xavier, an aficionado of tangos, had seen the film O último tango em Paris (The Last Tango in Paris) but, just as he is incapable of attaching significance to bodily pleasures, the meaning of the film is lost on him as well.¹¹⁹ The reference to tango in the opening passage alludes to the key questions addressed by the story. The tango can be defined as a balanced struggle between the sexes, or between two individuals. Dance scholar Marta E. Savigliano adds to the definition, explaining that tango “expresses, performs, and produces exiles and alterity” and the history of tango “is a story of encounters between those who should never have met or between those who, having met, will remain forever disencountered.”¹²⁰ Indeed, the story can be understood as a tango of sexed beings where the sexualized other is dis-integrated from the sociopolitical boundaries of the nation and state.

The relationships between the characters are not driven by gender harmony but, as suggested by their introductions, by exaggerated dominance and submission. But such lopsided social dynamics set the stage for rebellion. Carmem and Beatriz are faithful to the arrangement that has been established in the household and seem to reveal little individual subjectivity. Their (sexual) existence seems completely directed towards pleasing Xavier. They shop for sexy lingerie and Carmem keeps track of how many times Xavier has called upon her to fulfill his sexual needs.

¹¹⁸ Note that in Brazilian slang, to eat is to be sexually dominant while to be eaten is to be sexually submissive.

¹¹⁹ Released in 1972 and directed by Bernardo Bertolucci, the film treats the relationship between Paul (Marlon Brando) and Jeanne (Maria Schneider) who retreat from the outside world and engage in an anonymous, erotic relationship which, ultimately, fails to satisfy Paul. Banned in several countries for its explicit depiction of sex, the film is a curious juxtaposition to the short story by Lispector.

¹²⁰ Marta E. Savigliano, Tango and the Political Economy of Passion (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), xiv-xv.

The long, lonely days with Xavier away from home leads to the disruption of the *ménage à trois*. Carmen and Beatriz lay down together one day and “a pesar de não serem homossexuais, se excitavam uma à outra e faziam amor. Amor triste” (despite not being homosexuals, they excited one another and made love. Sad love).¹²¹ On the one hand, the assertion that they were not lesbians but engaged in same-sex eroticism speaks to human sexuality being far more fluid than people would like to codify. On the other hand, the text here engages in a form of exiling or erasure of difference in order to maintain a certain status quo. The two women engage in same-sex eroticism but this should not worry anyone since they aren’t really lesbians. They are sad, lonely and just looking for some affection in the absence of a male figure. Or, in other words, they want something more than to be defined by that which is purely physical.

The two women become closer and, having discovered his tryst with a prostitute, their disdain for Xavier grows. Beatriz and Carmem stab Xavier to death while he sleeps. They bury him in the backyard and plant roses on top of him. Having noticed his absence from work, Xavier’s secretary alerts the police. When the police and the coworker arrive, they discover the dead, buried body of Xavier in the back yard. Contemplating the situation, the police officer comes to an incongruous decision:

— Olhe, disse um dos policiais diante do secretário atônito, o melhor é fingir que nada aconteceu senão vai dar muito barulho, muito papel escrito, muita falação.

— [“Look,” said one of the policemen in front of the astonished secretary, “the best thing is to pretend that nothing happened, because otherwise there’s going to be a lot of noise, a lot of paperwork, a lot of talk.”]¹²²

¹²¹ Lispector, *A Via Crucis do Corpo*, 23.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 28.

To which the officer accompanying him responds:

— Vocês duas, disse o outro policial, arrumen as malas e vão viver em Montevideú. Não nos dêem maior amolação.

— [“You two,” said the other policeman, “pack your bags and go live in Montevideo. Don’t give us any more trouble.”]¹²³

Rather than follow the laws established and charge the two women with the murder of Xavier, the authorities opt to not protect and promote social justice. In fact, this story reverses the common narrative of the crime-of-passion murder where a man kills his female partner in an act to salvage his honor and, through a circuitous and antiquated legal process, is able to go free, unpunished.¹²⁴ Ultimately, the narrative begs the question: Which is more unacceptable: active female sexuality or murder? The story reflects on the male-defined nation-state boundedness of citizenship whereby threats to the patriarchal order are eliminated or made to disappear.

Neonaturalism, Reportagem and its Sociopolitical Import

The style of language in the short story “O Corpo” is straightforward, which offsets the exaggerated scenarios described. In an article treating A Via Crucis do Corpo, Nelson H. Vieira argues that Lispector employs a highly mimetic literary style in this anthology. Of those stories he discusses, Vieira argues that the mimetic qualities “are enhanced by more naturalist, frank, concrete, blunt, even kitschy circumstances and settings” and as such the collection “acquires a veritable ‘real,’ historical quality.”¹²⁵ Moreover, what Vieira refers to as this “inherent verisimilitude” is effected by a prose language shorn of

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Nelson H. Vieira coincides with this observation in his article, “The Stations of the Body,” 63.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 66.

lyrical excess as well as the first-person interventions by Lispector who makes references to the act of writing the stories as well as other stories published in the collection.¹²⁶

Vieira is not alone in this assessment. Others have noted the naturalist tendencies in Brazilian literature at this time as well as in Lispector's writing more specifically.

It bears repeating that the development of a neonaturalist aesthetic in Brazilian literature of the 1970s was closely tied to the sociopolitical moment. As an artistic practice very much invested in representing the social reality of the country, literature was dedicated to acts of resistance in the face of state-sanctioned repression. Noting this, it is imperative that the communicative dynamic established in Lispector's short narratives illustrates a desire to reach out and connect with a public realm, to challenge it, to redefine it and to reformulate how individuals interact and what values they share – specifically revolving around questions of class, gender and sexuality – within a public realm.

This is not to say that the language in either Lispector or Coutinho's work completely lacks literary figures. Rather, the language that both writers employ is quite accessible and seems to report the story. If journalists are the watchdogs of democracy, then a reporting style at this juncture in time steps in where censorship has cut newspapers and reporters off from engaging with people and politics. Conversely, literature at this time allowed people to engage with politics to overcome the demobilization and depoliticizing of civil society.

On Demobilizing, Depoliticizing Society

¹²⁶ Ibid.

Since its inception, the military regime was intent on depoliticizing and demobilizing society. It is important to recognize that the authoritarian regime that installed itself in 1964 was not an entirely new phenomenon in Brazil. On the contrary, Brazil has been marked by authoritarianism since the arrival of Europeans in the 1500s and the colonial period that left a scar of social inequality on Brazilian society. It was these historic social inequities in Brazil that were being fought against in Brazil by workers' unions in urban centers as well as in rural communities. Accused of representing a communist threat, the mobilization of people fighting for greater social justice and equity was violently repressed by the regime.

In order to protect and ostensibly improve the functioning of Brazilian society, the authoritarian military regime instituted a multifaceted approach to social and political control. As mentioned above, shortly after the coup d'état in Brazil, the regime created several instruments of power (i.e. state-run institutions), with special interest in the cultural sector.

A censorship and propaganda program was established that helped not only install the military regime but also aided its continuation. Ironically, the printed press that had played a fundamental role in bringing about the coup d'état in 1964 and helped foment fears of a communist threat and social disorder was a target of censorship soon after the coup d'état.¹²⁷ Television followed a similar pattern. As will be discussed below, television played into the hands of the authoritarian regime, contributed to the solidification of its power and also fell subject to government authorities. As a complement to censorship, the military government established a campaign of

¹²⁷ Alzira Alves de Abreu, "A participação da imprensa na queda do Governo Goulart," in 1964-2004: 40 anos do golpe: ditadura militar e resistência no Brasil. Seminário 40 anos do Golpe de 1964: Ditadura e Resistência no Brasil (Rio de Janeiro: 7Letras, 2004), 15-25.

propaganda. As Carlos Fico points out, the military's propaganda machine allowed for constructing its own farce of progress and well-being. Television spots promoted the notion of a Christian, Western democratic Brazil whose people were happy, optimistic and well-mannered.¹²⁸ Campaign slogans announced "Ninguém segura o Brasil," "O Brasil merece nosso amor," and "Este é um país que vai pra frente" ("Nobody can catch Brazil", "Brazil deserves our love," and "This is a country that is going forward").¹²⁹ In 1971, Zuenir Ventura speaks of a "vazio cultural" (a cultural vacuum) created when the state repressed intellectual activity and tried to promote its own official culture by way of its numerous institutions.¹³⁰ A few years later, Ventura addresses the sense of suffocation in Brazilian culture in which self-censorship had taken root and cultural production had become highly commercial and easily digestible.¹³¹

As part of the economic restructuring of the country, the military alongside foreign multinational corporations and Brazilian business interests formed a tripartite alliance that resulted in the exclusion of the people. In particular, workers were cut off from any decision making processes. Social movements in the Northeast that fought for agrarian reform (i.e. the Ligas Camponesas and rural workers' unions) were violently repressed by the landholding elite with the assistance of the Brazilian armed forces.¹³² Strikes by metalworkers were thwarted in the industrialized South (Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo).

¹²⁸ Carlos Fico, "A pluralidade das censuras e das propagandas da ditadura," in 1964-2004: 40 anos do golpe: ditadura militar e resistência no Brasil. Seminário 40 anos do Golpe de 1964: Ditadura e Resistência no Brasil (Rio de Janeiro: 7Letras, 2004), 76-77. See also his book-length study, Reinventando o otimismo: ditadura, propaganda e imaginário social no Brasil (Rio de Janeiro, Brasil: Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Editora, 1997).

¹²⁹ Fico, "A pluralidade," 77.

¹³⁰ Zuenir Ventura, "O Vazio Cultural," in Cultura em Trânsito: da repressão à abertura, eds. Elio Gaspari, Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda, and Zuenir Ventura (Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano Editora, 2000), 40-51.

¹³¹ Zuenir Ventura, "A Falta do Ar," in Cultura em Trânsito: da repressão à abertura, eds. Gaspari, Buarque de Hollanda, and Ventura, 52-85.

¹³² Manuel Correia de Andrade, 1964 e o Nordeste: golpe, revolução ou contra-revolução? (São Paulo: Editora Contexto, 1989), 23.

Thus, in terms of culture, politics and economics, the military regime effectively arrested active citizenship.

The demobilization and depoliticization of civil society can be detected in the short stories by Clarice Lispector and Sonia Coutinho. Specifically, the experience of being cut-off from society and politics can be noted in moments when characters seem trapped, immobile or isolated in their surroundings. The direction of their critiques hinges on the notion of the citizen as an embodied subject. In a larger sense, their work engages with the idea of the citizen as a universal or particular subject. Whereas Lispector employs acts of erasure and reinscription in her short stories “Miss Algrave,” “Ele me bebeu,” and “Praça Mauá,” Coutinho takes up the question of the body as it relates to the mind-body continuum and questions of political subjectivity in her short story “Versão do suicídio de um poeta.”

Miss Algrave

Written in third person point of view, the story “Miss Algrave” underscores that women’s liberation and inclusion in public life requires reconsideration of female sexuality and gendered difference. In this story, the female body becomes an offering to a heteronormative, gendered system that fails to incorporate her as a being in harmony with her sexuality. In the end, Miss Algrave is as immobile and excluded socially as she was prior to the apparent reclaiming of her body and her sexuality.

The story has a basic structure and can be divided into three parts. In the first section, the narrative voice characterizes Miss Algrave, the protagonist, as ascetic, highly moral, loath to all things corporal, including touching or seeing her own unclothed body, eating

red meat and all forms of physical affection. She is single, a virgin – not counting an undetailed interlude with a cousin when she was young – blonde, and a typist working in an office somewhere in London. And she is utterly lonely, in fact, “[a] solidão a esmagava” (the solitude crushed her).¹³³ The second part includes a sexual encounter with a male figure named Ixtlán, an otherworldly figure from Saturn who introduces himself as the ultimate subject: “Eu sou um eu” (I am an I) (16). The third section describes the transformation that Miss Algrave experiences after the sexual encounter with Ixtlán. She no longer goes to church and she now considers herself a fully realized, married woman. She feels she was chosen by Ixtlán and embraces a life she had previously rejected, which includes eating red meat, drinking red wine, and pulling back her clothing to reveal her body to the sun’s rays in the park. And her routine changes. At night she patiently awaits the return of Ixtlán to her bedroom on the night of the next full moon. She quits her low-paying job as a typist and becomes a prostitute.

We find a pair of oppositions in this story – a(n overly) rational female who negates her body and a passionate female who embraces her body vis-à-vis an absent, otherworldly masculine figure. The absent male figure here recalls a comment made by French anthropologist Maurice Godelier quoted in Joan Scott:

It is not sexuality which haunts society, but society which haunts the body’s sexuality. Sex-related differences between bodies are continually summoned as testimony to social relationships and phenomena that have nothing to do with sexuality. Not only as testimony to, but also testimony for – in other words, as legitimation.¹³⁴

¹³³ Lispector, *A Via Crucis do Corpo*, 15.

¹³⁴ Maurice Godelier, “The Origins of Male Domination,” *New Left Review* 127 (May-June 1981): 17, quoted in Joan Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review* 91.5 (1986): 1069.

The transformation from a virgin to a prostitute is catalyzed by the presence of an invisible, otherworldly, male entity. So, what we find here is a particular subject positioning for the female – either virgin or prostitute, and a universal, abstract subject position for the male figure. The female character undergoes a transformation from negating her body to embracing it but this does not result in her liberation. She does not truly join society but rather she remains just as socially isolated as she was prior to her encounter with Ixtlán and before “Deus iluminava seu corpo” (God illuminated her body).¹³⁵ She remains particular and concrete vis-à-vis his haunting, abstract, invisible presence that rules over her.

An opposition between the universal and the particular has been discussed by political theorists working on the question of citizenship. Iris Marion Young makes several key observations about the model of universal citizenship in modern political thought. She notes that citizenship status has been understood as transcending particularity and difference, with universality being defined in opposition to the particular.¹³⁶ In terms of gender, she asserts that “the opposition between universality of the public realm of citizenship and the particularity of private interest become conflated with oppositions between reason and passion, masculine and feminine.”¹³⁷ Women were to be kept from the public realm of citizenship because they represented affectivity, desire and the body.¹³⁸

Miss Algrave’s particularity in the story is vacated against the universality of the otherworldly figure Ixtlán. A question is then posed about the way in which the different

¹³⁵ Lispector, *A Via Crucis do Corpo*, 18.

¹³⁶ Iris Marion Young, “Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship,” in *Feminism and Politics*, ed. Anne Phillips (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 401.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 405.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

bodies are demobilized and depoliticized in Brazil. For Miss Algrave, the story suggests, a woman who rejects or embraces her sexuality is still socially immobile. She is the particular, the private that opposes the abstract and universal that transcends her. Similar to the protagonist in “A língua do p”, Miss Algrave’s sexuality must be kept chaste or confined to avert social disorder.¹³⁹

Ele me bebeu

Lispector continues to question the role that a gendered, differentiated body can have in Brazilian polity in her short stories “Ele me bebeu” and “Praça Mauá.” Both stories reflect on the relevance of gender and sex in defining social relationships and offer a refusal to the erasure or reinscription of difference as the basis upon which individuals become incorporated into social networks.

In “Ele Me Bebeu” Lispector revisits the image of nonbeing, a theme previously developed in Lispector’s 1964 novel *A Paixão Segundo G.H.* (*The Passion According to G. H.*).¹⁴⁰ The narrative revolves around two close friends, Serjoca, a makeup artist who loves men, and Aurélia, a beautiful blonde woman who calls on her friend to do her makeup when she wishes to look stunning.

Beyond friendship, the story speaks to larger questions of existence and subjectivity. Serjoca and Aurélia enjoyed going out together to clubs and having dinner. During an evening out, the two are caught without transportation. While they are talking, Affonso, a wealthy businessman, listens in and becomes aware of their predicament. He offers them

¹³⁹ Young makes this observation with regard to female heterogeneous sexuality. See Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ For an excellent discussion of “nonbeing” in Clarice Lispector’s work, see Debra A. Castillo’s essay “Negation: Clarice Lispector” in her text *Talking Back: Toward a Latin American Feminist Literary Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 185-215.

a ride, which then turns into drinks and dinner at his luxurious apartment. Aurélia and Affonso exchange amorous glances while Serjoca remains quiet. The sexual dynamic changes once the threesome retires to the living room after dinner. There, Serjoca engages in animated conversation with Affonso and glances at him with “olhos lânguidos.” The glances the characters exchange constitutes a process of triangling. In social psychology, triangling refers to a process whereby people are excluded or included in a social grouping.¹⁴¹ The situation found in the short story “Ele me bebeu” resembles a process of triangling in which one member of an out-group (Serjoca) is pitted against another marginalized figure (Aurélia). In the process, an alignment is made between a dominant force (Affonso) and one of the minor figures (Serjoca) while the third figure is cast out. In this case, it is Aurelia.

The following day, the wealthy businessman calls Aurélia, expresses his admiration for Serjoca, and arranges for a second rendezvous at a restaurant. Aurélia goes to Serjoca’s house to have her makeup done. The narration takes a fantastic turn as Aurélia feels that Serjoca was not putting on her makeup but rather erasing her face:

Então, enquanto era maquilada, pensou: Serjoca está me tirando o rosto.

A impressão era a de que ele apagava os seus traços: vazia, uma cara só de carne. Carne morena.

Sentiu mal-estar. Pediu licença e foi ao banheiro para se olhar ao espelho. Era isso mesmo que ela imaginara: Serjoca tinha anulado o seu rosto. Mesmo os ossos – e tinha uma ossatura espetacular – mesmo os ossos tinham desaparecido.

[So, when she was having her makeup done, she thought, “Serjoca is removing my face.”]

¹⁴¹ See Charles Ramírez Berg’s discussion of psychotherapist Murray Bowen’s theory of family systems as triangles in *Latino Images in Film: Stereotypes, Subversion, Resistance* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002): 58-65.

The impression was that he was erasing her features: empty, only a face of flesh. Brown flesh.

She didn't feel well. She excused herself to go to the restroom to look at herself in the mirror. It was exactly what she had imagined: Serjoca had annulled her face. Even her bones – and she had a spectacular bone structure – even the bones had disappeared.”] ¹⁴²

With her face made null and void she remains quiet during the dinner. Afterwards, Affonso and Serjoca decide to go out but Aurélia claims she is too tired, hiding the truth that she did not want to join them because she did not have a face to show. At home, Aurélia becomes alarmed, fearing that her entire self will be erased:

Chegou em casa, tomou um longo banho de imersão com espuma, ficou pensando: daqui a pouco ele me tira o corpo também. O que fazer para recuperar o que fora seu? A sua individualidade?

[She arrived home, took a long bubble bath, and thought: in a little bit he is going to take away my body, too. What could she do to recuperate what had been hers. Her individuality?] ¹⁴³

She slaps herself in the face a few times and then looks in a mirror where the narrative voice reveals that Aurélia saw a sad, delicate human face. It is at this moment of recognition that the narrator makes known the woman's full name: Aurélia Nascimento. From the Portuguese verb nascer, meaning to be born, Aurélia's last name literally means birth. Thus, self-recognition is an act of reclaiming the female body, individual identity, and coming into the world anew.

The relationship between the body and subjectivity has been widely discussed by feminist theorists. In her text Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism,

¹⁴² Lispector, A Via Crucis do Corpo, 43-44.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 45.

philosopher Elizabeth Grosz takes up the question of the body and subjectivity and argues that the body is a “thing” that is not reducible to being merely a thing nor does it rise above the status of thing. For Grosz, human bodies are ontologically incomplete, open to social completion, ordering and organization. That is to say, bodies are physical but cannot be thought of exclusively in physical terms. Central to Grosz’ understanding of the body is the notion of flow whereby bodies interact productively with their environments and extend beyond and push the frameworks that seek to contain them.¹⁴⁴

In the short story “Ele me bebeu,” the erasure of the female character’s face can be interpreted as a negation of her physical presence and denial of her participation in political discourse. As it relates to the context of Brazil, the erasure of Aurelia’s physical presence speaks to larger questions regarding the materiality of the body and the struggle for rights in Brazil. Not all share Grosz’ conception of the body. There are theorists such as Judith Butler who sees the materiality of the body as “not a site or surface, but as a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter.”¹⁴⁵ At another point on the spectrum, scholars like Elaine Scary assert that there are aspects to the human body that can never be fully assimilated into discourse.¹⁴⁶ Still, Sonia Alvarez asserts that the radical restructuring of Brazil’s economy profoundly altered the social, economic and political roles of women in Brazil. She further states that these rapid changes in women’s roles “created new material bases for the articulation of gender-based political claims.”¹⁴⁷ Since processes of materialization do not bleed, go hungry or lack access to healthcare, one of these material

¹⁴⁴ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 3-24.

¹⁴⁵ Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, 9.

¹⁴⁶ Elaine Scary, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

¹⁴⁷ Alvarez, *Engendering Democracy*, 8.

bases was the body. If we take into account these points about the body and the struggle for rights in Brazil, we can see how Lispector's short story here parallels ongoing debates surrounding the material needs of women and women's subjectivity in the women's movements in Brazil.

Praça Mauá

As a contrast to the reclaiming of the body found in "Ele me bebeu," the short story "Praça Mauá" asserts that reclaiming one's body is not directly related to reclaiming one's gender or sexual identity. Rather, the narrative asserts that sexuality and gender identity arise from continual negotiating between social contexts. Whereas the body is subjected to erasure in "Ele me bebeu," here Lispector asks fundamental questions about gender, sexuality and the difference between a public and private self. Ana Luiza de Andrade has detected a play of male and female identities in Lispector's work. What is more, she asserts that a gendered masquerade can cover and uncover, "traditional partitions between being/existing, subject/society, male/female" to ultimately unveil "sociocultural desires and the monstrosity of human isolation in a modern world-stage of multifaceted identities."¹⁴⁸

Indeed, the main characters in the story participate in a gendered masquerade. The female protagonist, Luísa, works at a cabaret where she uses her *nom de guerre*, Carla. Luísa is married to a carpenter named Joaquim; Carla has two jobs: "dançando meio nua e enganando o marido" (dancing half-naked and deceiving her husband).¹⁴⁹ Carla and

¹⁴⁸ Ana Luiza Andrade. "In the Inter(t)sex(t) of Clarice Lispector and Nelson Rodrigues: From Drama to Language," in *Tropical Paths: Essays on Modern Brazilian Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson. (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1993), 148.

¹⁴⁹ Lispector, *A Via Crucis do Corpo*, 61.

Luísa are the flip side of the same coin: “Carla era uma Luísa preguiçosa” and “Carla era uma Luísa tímida” (Carla was a lazy Luisa and Carla was a shy Luisa).¹⁵⁰ The contrast underscores differences – found in the same person – that vary according to spaces. In private, Luísa is a married woman. In public, she is a lazy cabaret dancer. In her low moments, Carla/Luísa seeks solace from a friend who also works at the cabaret, Celsinho, described as “um homem que não era homem” (a man that was not a man).¹⁵¹ A successful transvestite, Celsinho’s *nom de guerre* is Moleirão. Celsinho, who is not referred to by the name Moleirão in the text, and Carla, who is not referred to as Luísa in the text except for the beginning and ending, follow very different lives. So, while the male figure retains his original name, the female figure is referred to by her stage name or her alter ego. And, lastly, as an adoptive parent to a young girl, Celsinho fulfills the role as a mother and caretaker. Meanwhile, Carla has a cat that she barely has time to keep track of.

The harmony between Celsinho and Carla turns to jealousy when a man, whom Celsinho is attracted to, chooses Carla over him. In a rage, Celsinho accuses Carla of not being a real woman: “Você, vociferou Celsinho, não é mulher coisa alguma! Nem ao menos sabe estalar un ovo! E eu sei! eu sei! eu sei!” (“You,” Celsinho yelled, “are not a woman at all! You don’t even know how to crack an egg! And I know! I know! I know!”).¹⁵² Clara suddenly becomes Luísa. She stands up, leaves the cabaret and walks into the plaza:

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 61.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 62.

¹⁵² Ibid., 64.

Ficou de pé, de preto, na Praça Mauá, às três horas da madrugada. Como a mais vagabunda das prostitutas. Solitária. Sem remédio. Era verdade: não sabia fritar um ovo. E Celsinho era mais mulher que ela.

A praça estava às escuras. E Luísa respirou profundamente. Olhava os postes. A praça vazia.

E no céu as estrelas.

[She stood, in black, in Mauá Plaza, at three in the morning. As if she were the most vagabond of all the prostitutes. Solitary. Without recourse. It was true: she didn't know how to fry an egg. And Celsinho was more of a woman than she was.

The plaza was dark. And Luisa breathed deeply. She looked at the street lamps. The empty plaza.

And the stars in the sky.]¹⁵³

Luísa stands still, stunned by the claim thrown at her. Her identity has been profoundly questioned – both in terms of gender and her personhood. All she can do is take a breath and look out into the night sky.

But, how do we interpret the relationship between the body and the plaza? As open, urban public spaces, plazas have served historically as centers of social and political life. Indeed, the plaza holds a historic role in the exercise of citizenship. For instance, in ancient Athens, the agora was an open area that served as a meeting space in the city where ostracism was discussed. In ancient Athenian democracy, ostracism was a practice whereby citizens could be expelled for up to ten years. Similar to the connections made between private romance and public settings in Sonia Coutinho's short stories discussed above, here we see a female figure looking out into a public realm. As she stands still in the plaza by herself, Luísa not only questions what it means to be female or male but also

¹⁵³ Ibid., 65.

the degree to which having a categorizable gendered identity intersects and determines political subjectivity.¹⁵⁴

Versão para o suicídio de um poeta

The theme of becoming demobilized and depoliticized is taken up in Sonia Coutinho's "Versão para o suicídio de um poeta" ("Version of a poet's suicide") where the relationship between an individual and the urban landscape again takes center stage.

The short story by Coutinho portrays a shifting multiplicitous world that becomes increasingly coherent. It is with increasing clarity, however, that the individuals become less socially and politically engaged. The narrative is divided into five different acts: "Biografia" (Biography), "O ato" (The act), "Monólogo do sobrevivente" (Monologue of a survivor), "O saber do corpo" (The knowledge of the body) and "A Cidade, o vento" (The City, the wind). The first act, "Biografia," is written in a stream of consciousness style where the reader is introduced to a male protagonist at the age of 10. (Later his name is revealed to be Gabriel). The first section is marked by a high degree of temporal and spatial complexity that contradicts the notion of an ordered life presented in a typical biographical sketch. Instead, the shifting language in this introduction creates an impression more than tells a logical, coherent narrative about an individual life. The rhythm of the language in the following sections slows and syntactical clarity increases. Each act employs a different, and sometimes mixed, narrative voice, including a first-person "eu" (I), an omniscient narrator and the first person plural "nós" (we). The multivocal quality to the text poses a challenge to atomistic notions of subjectivity. The

¹⁵⁴ Noëlle McAfee investigates a similar question regarding politics and subjectivity in her text Habermas, Kristeva, and Citizenship (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000). Here McAfee seeks to pair the Kristevan subject-in-process with the Habermasian concept of deliberation in the public sphere.

development of linguistic styles over the five acts complements one of the central themes: the relationship between what is real and what is possible. Here, Coutinho investigates the problems when established life patterns and expectations are followed and how this results in the disappearance of openings for personal intervention in not only one's own life but also in society at large.

The City, a synecdochal reference to civilization, politics and society, stands as a counterpoint to human development. In the section entitled "Biografia" the city is described as "envolvente" (enclosing), a "máquina" (machine) and a flesh-eater:

seu centro e seu todo sendo formada por pequenas engrenagens
previamente acionadas, rodando, rodando, seus habitantes engatadas e
presos, girando, girando, a Cidade carnívora.

[its center its everything being formed by small gears previously activated,
turning, turning, its inhabitants hooked and imprisoned, spinning,
spinning, the carnivorous City.]¹⁵⁵

This dystopian vision of the city resembles a trend in Brazilian literature observed by Robert DiAntonio who asserts that literature in the 1970s shifted between mythic and anti-mythic modes as a means to reflect on a sense of alienation.¹⁵⁶

Coutinho's narrative underscores the process of individuals being subsumed by the City and the importance of the body as a key factor in political subjectivity. In the section entitled "O ato," the poeta, Gabriel, is said to be 25 years old. At this point in his life, he has acclimated to the tedium of life and, overtaken by sleep, he dozes off, "entregando-se ao sono e ao da Cidade" (abandoning himself to his sleep and that of the City).¹⁵⁷ The

¹⁵⁵ Coutinho, *Nascimento de uma Mulher*, 49-50.

¹⁵⁶ Robert E. DiAntonio, *Brazilian Fiction*, 61-64.

¹⁵⁷ Coutinho, *Nascimento de uma Mulher*, 53.

anthropomorphizing of the city and the act, defined as sleepily abandoning one's self to a larger entity, suggests that the individual has become an irrelevant force.

Indeed, the isolation and reduction of the body comes to the fore in the section entitled "Monólogo do sobrevivente." Written in first person, the narrator/character Gabriel reflects on the loss of desires, dreams and a sense of what is possible, summing up the experience in the understanding (and yet questioning at the same time) that "a única verdade possível é – que um homem é do tamanho do seu corpo" (the only possible truth is – that a man is the size of his body?).¹⁵⁸ But the narrative refuses to accept that an individual is reduced to a physical presence. On the contrary, the body in Coutinho's text is located between what is real and what is possible. The body is depicted as having been made unconscious: "O mundo se esclarecia, num grande e insosso saber – que vinha do corpo? (The world became informed, in a grand and dull knowledge – that came from the body?). The question asked here regards how the world can be known without the role of the body as a source of knowledge.

Coutinho underscores the synthetic relationship between the body, knowledge and the city in the last section entitled "A Cidade, o vento." Here, the narrative voice offers a description of an asphyxiated city where people "recusam complicitades" (refuse complicities) and gazes are "desviados" (diverted). The wind, a quiet, unstoppable force of nature, represents an energy that cannot be completely eradicated. With the gusts of wind, the City's population that had become immobilized, "volta a se movimentar" (starts moving again).¹⁵⁹ The metaphoric reference to the wind in these final passages suggests

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 54.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 60.

the idea that despite the standstill that society has reached, the people will retain the ability to act.

Concluding Remarks

A significant shift occurs in Lispector and Coutinho's work from the short stories they published on or before 1974 and the novels they published after this date. These women make a notable move to discuss larger macrostructures of exclusion. A focus on relationships between individuals segues to more explicit discussion of the relationships between people and society. Sonia Coutinho, whose concern with the body and political subjectivity was outlined in her short stories, sharpens her attention towards the transformation and recuperation of civil society in her novel O Jogo de Ifá (1980). In Clarice Lispector's novel A Hora da Estrela (1977), the last work published in her lifetime, Lispector illustrates a concern for the socially marginalized, most clearly illustrated by the novel's female protagonist Macabéia. While Coutinho offers a slightly more positive outlook on human potential to participate in the transformation of the world in which they live, Lispector's representation is more subdued. The difference in perspective can be attributed, in part, to the three years separating their works – A Hora da Estrela was written and published prior to the declaration of Amnesty in 1979 whereas Coutinho's O Jogo de Ifá was published in 1980.

However, for both writers, their comments are still somewhat veiled as it was still too early to make specific claims on the state. It was not until 1979 that Amnesty was declared in Brazil and the period of Abertura commenced. After this point in time we find an even greater degree of freedom in public expression, albeit guarded until the period of

democratization officially began in 1984. As we shall see in a discussion of women's filmmaking and, then, women's video practice, explicit attention turned to the relationships between women and the state.

The shift in focus found in Lispector and Coutinho's writing echoes transformations in society during the 1970s. With General Ernesto Geisel leading the slow process of political opening (distensão), the women's movements in Brazil – both feminine and feminist groups – expanded greatly after 1975. But women's movements faced new challenges after the declaration of Amnesty and a tangible relaxing of political repression. The discourse on women's rights and the struggles they would wage diversified. Women, who had been living abroad, returned to Brazil after Amnesty was declared and with them they brought different theoretical tools to address women and their roles in society. In some respects, these women were bringing in a “foreign vision” of women's roles and rights. This tension between foreign ideas and Brazilian realities continues to this day in discussions of feminism(s) in Brazil. In the case of the Brazilian women's movements, social differences translated into questions about how and in what directions the women's movement should proceed – general versus specific demands (as lutas gerais versus as lutas específicas). A discussion of the social and political changes that took place in the later 1970s and the early 1980s will be brought up presently in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 3

Comparative Perspectives on Brazilian Women's Filmmaking and the State during the 1970s and 1980s

“o filme é uma arte,
o cinema, uma indústria”

During the years following General Geisel's declaration of distensão in 1974, the door to democratic freedoms opened and closed on several occasions. Artists pushed against the limits placed on the process leading towards democracy and sometimes found themselves in a room before government censors. Both political censorship as well as economic censorship were key issues at stake during the second half of the 1970s. Prior to 1974, women who were interested in directing films had to draw from their own savings or seek out private investors to fund their short or feature-length film projects. After 1974, cultural policy in Brazil shifted. Embrafilme, previously dedicated to film distribution, began programs to fund independent film production and provide technical assistance. Young women filmmakers were able to take advantage of Embrafilme's new programs and its generally proactive role in the Brazilian film industry. However, by the early 1980s, state-led cultural policy in the film sector developed a market-oriented approach, thereby shutting out potentially more aesthetically or thematically challenging productions in favor of those that would be financially successful.

In this chapter, I aim to fill a void in Brazilian film historiography and chart the contemporary history of women's film production in Brazil. Brazilian films have

received international acclaim since the arrival of directors associated with the Cinema Novo group in the 1960s. Filmmakers such as Glauber Rocha, Carlos Diegues, and Nelson Pereira dos Santos rose to international prominence and were seen as revolutionizing filmmaking in Latin America. More recently, films such as Central do Brasil (Central Station, 1998), Orfeu (Orpheus, 1999), and Cidade de Deus (City of God, 2002) have had wide international distribution and received nods to the Academy Awards for best foreign language film. Film historians have taken note, publishing several critical works on Brazilian cinema.¹ These texts have laid the fundamental groundwork in the study of Brazilian cinema. In addition to interpretive works, these texts have provided much needed statistical data on film production, the laws and provisional government measures that affect the film industry and the direction of institutions and agencies dedicated to Brazilian cinema.

To date, however, no study has adequately addressed the role of women in the Brazilian film industry during the last decades of the 20th century. Randal Johnson and Robert Stam briefly acknowledge women's filmmaking in their co-edited text Brazilian Cinema (1982), translating and adapting the article by Elice Munerato and Maria Helena Darcy de Oliveira, "When Women Film."² Under the direction of Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda, the text Quase Catálogo: Realizadoras de cinema no Brasil (1930/1988) provides the most complete listing of women filmmakers in Brazil. In addition to the titles of films directed by these women and their formats (i.e. 16mm, 35mm, super-8 or

¹ See for example, Randal Johnson and Robert Stam, eds. Brazilian Cinema (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Ismail Xavier, Allegories of Underdevelopment: Aesthetics and Politics in Modern Brazilian Cinema (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); and Randal Jonson, The Film Industry in Brazil: Culture and the State (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987).

² Elice Munerato and Maria Helena Darcy de Oliveira, "When Women Film," in Brazilian Cinema, eds. Randal Johnson and Robert Stam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 340-350.

Betacam), the catalogue provides key production information for each work. Lastly, in 2002, Brazilian film scholar Ana Pessoa published her text Carmen Santos: O cinema dos anos 20, focusing on the actress, film director and producer Carmen Santos (1904 – 1952) who established her own film studio Brasil Vox Film in 1934.³

In the preface to the article they include in their text on women's filmmaking in Brazil, Johnson and Stam refer to the presence of women filmmakers in world cinema as a strong but subterranean current.⁴ It is my goal in this chapter to bring women's activity in Brazilian film to the surface and place an important group of women filmmakers on the cultural map of contemporary Brazilian cinema. I draw on both published materials as well as oral interviews as I consider two key processes taking place in Brazilian cinema in the 1970s and 1980s. First, I investigate the role of the State in women's filmmaking. How and to what degree were new women filmmakers able to negotiate with the State and Embrafilme during the 1970s and 1980s? What access points were available to them and to what degree were they able to take advantage of them? Second, I take into consideration the changing social and political landscape. How did these women filmmakers position themselves in the context of a society undergoing significant political and social change?

Roughly speaking, the time period for this study extends from 1969 when the State founded the film agency Embrafilme to 1989, shortly before the agency was closed by then elected president Fernando Collor de Mello. These two decades can be broken down into four subperiods. The first period includes the most violent years of the military regime from approximately 1968 to 1972 when the government declared the Fifth

³ Shortly after this date, the studio was renamed Brasil Vita Filmes. Ana Pessoa, Carmen Santos: O cinema dos anos 20 (Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano, 2002), 163, 173.

⁴ Randal Johnson and Robert Stam, eds. Brazilian Cinema, 340.

Institutional Act. The second period refers to the process known as distensão. Having begun when General Geisel assumed power in 1974, this process refers to the slow, gradual return to democratic rule. The next period known as Abertura, or opening, begins in 1979 with the declaration of amnesty for all individuals who had gone into exile for their political activities against the military regime. Lastly, the period of redemocratization begins in 1984 with the first direct, free elections held in the country since the coup d'état of 1964 and ends with the ratification of the new Brazilian Constitution in 1988.

The years discussed in this chapter refer to a key period in Brazilian film history as it was during this period that three influential forces converged. First, the state film agency Embrafilme, established by the military regime in 1969, was at its height of operation. Second, the military state, which had taken a central role in all questions regarding the nation, was undergoing a slow transformation towards a new democracy. And third, social movements, including the second-wave contemporary women's movement, were actively seeking that the new state include them in its policies and that the nation be redefined with all members of society in mind.

Women's Filmmaking in Brazil, 1930 to the Close of Studio Era

In Brazil, pioneer women filmmakers sought out their own opportunities from within the structures of the film industry. They often began as actresses who would exert influence on the film sets. Others relied on their personal finances to produce their own films. This is referred to as cavação and has also been a staple of production practices in

Brazil.⁵ In 1930, Cleo de Verberena produced, directed, and starred in the film O mistério do dominó preto (The Mystery of the Black Domino).⁶ Carmen Santos, who began acting at the age of 15, starred in many roles and produced films before taking a role behind the cameras. Drawing upon her own finances, the 1948 film Inconfidência mineira was the only film Santos completed and released.⁷ Lastly, Gilda de Abreu is said to have intervened decisively in several sequences of the film Bonequinha de seda (Silk Doll), directed by Oduvaldo Vianna in 1936. Later, de Abreu wrote and directed the film O ébrio (The Inebriated), which was produced by the newly-founded film studio, Cinédia.⁸

Once it began modeling itself after the Hollywood studio system, women's participation in Brazil took new directions. The industrialization of cinema during the 1950s resulted in a decrease in the number of women participating behind the cameras as directors; meanwhile, positions became increasingly available to women as script girls and editors.⁹ Greater industrialization also resulted in increased cross-cultural dialogue. Many foreign technicians, primarily from Italy, moved to Brazil to perform various duties in the growing Brazilian film industry.¹⁰ Notable among those who arrived are Maria Basaglia and Carla Civelli, two women who went on to direct feature-length films.¹¹

The vast majority of women who directed films in 16mm or 35mm were able to do so when they themselves, a member of their families, a husband, or friend sponsored their

⁵ Anita Simis, O Estado e Cinema no Brasil (São Paulo: ANNABLUME, 1996), 44.

⁶ Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda, ed. Quase Catálogo: Realizadoras de Cinema no Brasil (1930 / 1988) (Rio de Janeiro: CIEC/Escola de Comunicação / UFRJ; Museo da Imagem e do Som do Rio de Janeiro; Secretaria de Estado de Cultura; Fundação de Artes do Rio de Janeiro -- FUNARJ; Livraria Taurus -- Timbre Editores), 7.

⁷ Drawing upon her own finances, the 1948 film Inconfidência mineira was the only film Santos completed and released. Hollanda, ed., Quase Catálogo, 8.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 9.

¹¹ Ibid.

film projects. If the past holds lessons for the present and future, this brief overview of women's participation in the film industry in Brazil from the 1930s to the close of the studio era suggests that women have benefited from contexts that fostered independent production. As will become clear, independent, state-sponsored production was central to launching the careers of women entering the field during the mid 1970s.¹²

Brazilian Filmmaking: The End of the Studio Era to the End of State Intervention

Upon assuming a position as Secretary of Culture towards the end of March in 1991, Sergio Paulo Rouanet referred to the cultural policies being implemented by then president Fernando Collor de Mello as a phase of “creative destruction.”¹³ Rouanet was referring to the cultural policy measures implemented by the president one year earlier in the Plano Collor, which, among other acts, extinguished fiscal incentive laws for cultural production, demoted the Ministry of Culture by replacing it with a Secretary of Culture, eliminated public companies and foundations such as the Fundação do Cinema Brasileiro (FCB, The Brazilian Film Foundation) and dissolved autarquias such as the Empresa Brasileira de Filmes (Embrafilme).¹⁴ Embrafilme was defined as an autarquia, which, in Brazilian public administration, is a decentralized, autonomous auxiliary state agency instituted by law and assigned to oversee matters of public administration. Despite having its own operating budget, an autarquia's operating funds are overseen by the State.

¹² This statement is based on a comparative analysis of production information published in the text Quase Catálogo. The producers of the films as well the year of production served as primary data.

¹³ In the original Portuguese, Rouanet called this “a destruição criadora” (“a creative destruction”). Hamilton dos Santos, “Projeto cultural de Collor é moderno, diz Rouanet,” O Estado de São Paulo 15 March 1991, caderno 2, p. 18; quoted in Denise Costa Lopes, “Cinema Brasileiro Pós-Collor,” (M.A. Thesis, Niterói: Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2001), 42.

¹⁴ The name of Embrafilme was changed in 1987 to the Distribuidora de Filmes S.A., a name which reflected what was conceived of as its primary role at that time. Since the publicly-held company is more commonly referred to as “Embrafilme,” I retain its use here.

Fernando Collor's reforms in March of 1990 were intended to limit the role of the State in the culture sector. This gesture stands in stark contrast to the steps taken by the State before and during the years of the military regime from 1964 to 1985.

Prior to the authoritarian regime of 1964, the Brazilian State had taken two basic measures to protect the national film industry: screen quota laws and import limitations.¹⁵ Neither measure effectively supported or promoted the national film industry. Ultimately, foreign films from Hollywood and Europe flooded the internal market, establishing aesthetic standards with which Brazilian films were unable to compete. This is the fundamental underpinning of the Brazilian film industry before women began taking on technical roles in contemporary filmmaking. This context reveals some problems that would reappear in the 1970s and 1980s.

The economic situation of filmmaking in Brazil prompted debates surrounding the film industry. In the 1950s and 1960s, these discussions took two key directions. One group, termed the "nationalists," advocated an interventionist role for the State in the film industry and a move toward socialization of the industry. They rejected any form of foreign participation in the Brazilian film industry. On the other hand, the "universalists" opposed state intervention in the film industry and saw the state taking on an essentially neutral, technical role. The universalist group supported studio system production and

¹⁵ For a fuller account of import laws and screen quotas, consult Alcino Teixeira de Mello, Legislação do Cinema Brasileiro, Vols. 1 and 2 (Rio de Janeiro: Embrafilme, 1978), Randal Johnson The Film Industry in Brazil (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987) and Anita Simis O Estado e Cinema no Brasil (São Paulo: ANNABLUME, 1996). Randal Johnson's "State Policy Toward the Film Industry in Brazil," Technical Papers Series, No. 36 (Austin: The Institute of Latin American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, 1982) includes a useful table indicating the year, number of Brazilian features produced, and the screen quota law in effect at the time.

liberal import policies as the most advantageous to the development of the Brazilian film industry.¹⁶

Concurrent with these debates, a loosely defined film movement which became known as Cinema Novo began earning international acclaim in the early 1960s. In 1962, the film O Pagador de Promessas (The Promise Keeper) directed by Anselmo Duarte, received the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. The film also received an Oscar nomination for best foreign language film in the same year. Taking inspiration from Italian neorealism and the French notion of the filmmaker as auteur, a group of young Brazilian filmmakers introduced their own understanding of filmmaking in a Latin American context. The influences of the Cinema Novo group indirectly influence the first generation of women filmmakers in the contemporary era. Cinema Novo filmmakers are a reference point for contemporary Brazilian cinema and greatly influenced Latin American filmmakers and helped train women filmmakers such as Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares, Tizuka Yamasaki, and Ana Maria Magalhães.

Debate surrounding the film industry in the 1960s eventually led to the creation of GEICINE (the Grupo Executivo da Indústria Cinematográfica, The Executive Group for the Cinema Industry) in 1961 at the beginning of the administration of Jânio Quadros.¹⁷ Generally speaking, GEICINE successfully articulated the concerns of the film industry to ministries and government agencies and reflected the economic developmentalism of the Kubitschek era and followed “universalist” positions. The participation of foreign investment formed the cornerstone in GEICINE’s proposals to develop the national film

¹⁶ For a more in-depth discussion of the Nationalist vs. Universalist debate in the 1960s, see Anita Simis O Estado e Cinema no Brasil (São Paulo: ANNABLUME, 1996) and Randal Johnson The Film Industry in Brazil: Culture and the State (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987).

¹⁷ Johnson, The Film Industry in Brazil, 87.

industry.¹⁸ Most notably, this agency brought about three key programs. Foreign distributors were required to distribute Brazilian films, a co-production program with foreign distributors was put into place, and a loan program was introduced.¹⁹ These programs ultimately benefited large production companies and foreign distributors. Independent filmmakers were at a great economic disadvantage as there were few funding options available to filmmakers starting out in the late 1950s and early 1960s. As will be discussed below, once the government took on a more supportive role in the film industry, contemporary women filmmakers began participating in the filmmaking.

Some financial relief would come to independent directors in 1963 when Guanabara governor Carlos Lacerda decreed the formation of the Comissão de Auxílio à Indústria Cinematográfica (CAIC, Commission for Aid to the Film Industry). This agency, charged with administering two programs of financial assistance to the film industry, became a major source of funding for filmmakers in and near Rio de Janeiro. It eventually became a primary source of funding for Cinema Novo filmmakers and was the first state agency to provide money to a woman filmmaker. Helena Solberg received funds from the CAIC to produce her groundbreaking short film A Entrevista in 1966.²⁰ The CAIC brings about another important “first” involving the State and the film industry in Brazil in that it exerted ideological control over the film projects that would receive its financial assistance. Monies were denied to any film that attacked the democratic system through the use of violence, racial or class prejudice or propaganda. These early signs of economic and political censorship proved to be a multifaceted problem during the 1970s and into the early 1980s during the authoritarian military regime.

¹⁸ José Mário Ortiz Ramos, Cinema, Estado, e Lutas Culturais (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1983), 19-23.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 94-98.

²⁰ Helena Solberg, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 27 November 2001.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the military regime, despite its neo-liberal economic stance, took a nationalist turn and began investing and taking control of the cultural sector soon after assuming power. In short, the military regime centralized economic and political support of the cultural sector. It created EMBRATEL (Empresa Brasileira de Telecomunicações, Brazilian Telecommunications Company, 1965); joined INTELSAT (1965); created EMBRATUR (Empresa Brasileira de Turismo, Brazilian Tourism Company, 1966); established the Conselho Federal de Cultura (the Federal Council on Culture, 1965), which promoted a conservative cultural ideology;²¹ founded the Ministério de Telecomunicações (The Ministry of Telecommunications, 1967); fostered international investment into Brazilian television, leading to the consolidation of TV Globo.

The creation of these institutions reveals a concern for national integration and unification driven by overarching concerns for national security, economic progress and modernization.²² The military regime largely failed in its attempt to develop the culture industries as the private sector became increasingly distanced from investment due to centralized control of the cultural arena and the arbitrary exercise of censorship.

Quickly after assuming control, the military regime included the film industry in its cultural policies. In 1966, the Instituto Nacional de Cinema (INC, The National Film Institute) came into being by decree. The INC was a federal autarquia empowered to formulate and execute government policy concerning the development of the film industry in Brazil as well as regulate the importation of foreign films.²³ During its

²¹ Renato Ortiz states that the main objective of the CFC was preserving national traditions and cultural patrimony. See his Cultura Brasileira e Identidade Nacional (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1985), 92-98.

²² Escola Superior de Guerra, Fundamentos da Doutrina (Brasília: Escola de Guerra Superior) 1981.

²³ Johnson, The Film Industry in Brazil, 108.

existence from 1966 to 1975, the INC was responsible for increasing film production in Brazil by 157%.²⁴ The Institute passed a number of resolutions that provided funds for the importation of expensive filmmaking equipment, provided cash awards and subsidies for film production, and established an increase in compulsory exhibition of national films. It is important to note that some opposed the creation of the INC. Specifically, several members of the Cinema Novo group opposed the INC as they feared it would monopolize finance capital and result in the loss of freedom of expression.²⁵ They had little to fear since, as a group, Cinema Novo filmmakers benefited greatly from the programs the INC established. However, as will be discussed below, the concentration of capital, the loss of freedom of expression and the increase in production during this period had a negative impact on women's filmmaking in Brazil in the 1970s and 1980s.

In retrospect, the Institute effected some positive changes in the national film industry. However, the nature of those successes needs to be evaluated more closely. Starting in 1967, the INC sponsored three key programs to provide production assistance to Brazilian filmmakers: an awards program based on quality, a subsidy program based on box-office receipts, and a co-production program drawing from income taxes of foreign distributors. All three programs became important sources of funding for Brazilian filmmakers, especially the members of the Cinema Novo group.²⁶ As established, the INC policies did not benefit newcomers and very few women were in a position at this point in time to take advantage of the funding made available. Several women had just begun to learn the skills and techniques of filmmaking. The INC measures largely assisted already established filmmakers and production companies, which would prove to

²⁴ Ibid., 132.

²⁵ Ibid., 109.

²⁶ Ibid., 114-119, 121-123.

be a trend in later years. The parameters for selection were subjective at best given that the quality of a film is highly subjective and a factor easily influenced by the characteristics of dominant, foreign film and prevailing ideologies. Lastly, success in the market as a condition for continued financial support established a context with a high likelihood for supporting a particular mode of expression and limited political viewpoints. From 1965 to 1969, no women working in 16 or 35mm film received funds from the INC. From 1970 to 1974, the INC helped fund no feature length film projects and a total of 7 out of a total of 71 short film projects, representing approximately 9.85% of women's short film production during this period of time.²⁷ While the INC was in existence, most women drew from their own finances or from private investors to help fund their short or feature-length film projects.

The Research, the Methodology

My goal to chart the contemporary history of women's filmmaking was met with several complexities. The idea to progress in linear fashion according to period quickly proved to be an insufficient and incomplete method of research. The development of women's careers in the film industry was not an evenly sustained process. There were periods when some women were not active in the field while pursuing other interests or working in other areas of cultural production. Each woman followed a particular path within filmmaking and each was positioned differently vis-à-vis the State and the State-sponsored filmmaking agency Embrafilme. As a result, it is difficult and problematic to chart the history of contemporary women's filmmaking in Brazil chronologically. A thematic approach, taking into consideration the different historical moments, proves far

²⁷ Numbers drawn from Hollanda, ed., *Quase Catálogo*, passim.

more productive. This approach allows for a greater appreciation of the strategies these women employed to enter the field and the responses they had to the film industry, the government, and their changing social and political landscape. It also allows for more comparative perspectives between time periods and among women filmmakers.

Film historians face unavoidable challenges when conducting research on Brazilian filmmaking that necessitate drawing on alternative but no less accurate or profound resources. During the closure of Embrafilme and the Fundação do Cinema Brasileiro, documents detailing the agency's activities in the film sector were destroyed, lost or dispersed to various locations in Brazil. Some of these documents from this time period were available at the Museu de Arte Moderno in Rio de Janeiro where I was able to consult a wide range of major Brazilian newspapers, film journals and trade publications from the 1970s and 1980s, and a few documents from Embrafilme's distribution and marketing branch.

Although textual documentation may often form the basis for historiographic work, textual evidence should not be considered the only source for understanding what has unfolded in the past. Reliance on textual evidence as sole sources for understanding the past can greatly limit a historian's perspective. Paul Thompson provides a foundational account of how oral testimony holds a central role in the charting of history. As a methodology, he asserts that oral histories offer several advantages when conducting historical research. Oral histories allow for understanding the experience of others outside central power structures. They illuminate "official" history by providing key insights into social, political, and economic processes where the course of events as they are understood and experienced by a range of individuals are juxtaposed with documented

dates, names and places. Calling on participants' experiences then allows the cultural historian to explore alternative angles of established history and consider the viewpoints of "minor" figures. Oral histories allow researchers to cross the public-private divide to consider those participants in political processes that have not held an elected office or other public position. And, lastly, oral histories offer the advantage in that they serve as a key mode of research for investigating the lives of women and how they have "unofficially" participated in political processes.²⁸

Scholars have published a large body of work discussing the practice of oral histories and interviews as methods of feminist research.²⁹ Collecting oral histories or conducting oral interviews are not inherently feminist activities but they become so when the objectives for collecting the oral data are feminist.³⁰ I see that my objectives and work coincide with feminist methods of conducting research: I take gender as a central concept and I seek to situate women's experiences in a specific historic, political and economic context. In addition, I have chosen to give these women a voice in their own representation.

It is important to note that most of the women film directors I spoke with do not consider themselves to be feminists. Sherna Gluck in her work on feminist oral history, notes that women's oral histories are feminist encounters "even if the interviewee is not

²⁸ Paul Thompson, The Voice of the Past: Oral History (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1-24.

²⁹ The number of texts published in this area precludes my mentioning all of them here. See, for example, Shulamit Reinharz, Feminist Methods in Social Research (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds., Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History (New York and London: Routledge, 1991) and Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Margaret Strobel, eds., Expanding the Boundaries of Women's History: Essays on Women in the Third World (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992).

³⁰ Susan Geiger, "What's So Feminist about Doing Women's Oral History?," in Expanding the Boundaries of Women's History: Essays on Women in the Third World, eds. Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Margaret Strobel (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 306.

herself a feminist.”³¹ Although some women dismiss feminist proposals, others accept fighting for women’s rights generally. Most express a clear concern with the female condition – practical concerns that women face as members of society – and they accept feminist readings of their words as a result of others’ interpretations. Disidentification with the terms feminista or feminismo is understandable given that feminist thought in Brazil has been critiqued for being an imported philosophy from Europe and North America. Latin American contexts and Brazil specifically have developed different notions of race, class, gender, and ethnicity. In turn, femininity, female sexuality, and women’s issues generally speaking (e.g. access to reproductive healthcare) are understood and experienced in ways that differ significantly from a North American or European context.

The research methodology I employ combines elements of oral interviews as well as elements of oral history research. The line between the two is quite fine and a consensus on the definitions of these terms is lacking. Shulamit Reinharz offers the explanation that interviews tend to focus on a particular experience or phenomenon, while oral histories tend to deal more broadly with a person’s past.³² At the same time that I wanted to know what these women think about issues concerning the Brazilian film industry and how these women established their careers in the film industry, I also wanted to know how and to what degree did these women filmmakers engaged with politics and society at that time. In short, I was looking for specific information as well as general personal history on how these women established their careers in order to form a richer understanding of their experiences as women film directors in the 1970s and 1980s, to what degree they

³¹ Sherna Gluck, “What’s So Special About Women?: Women’s Oral History,” Frontiers 2.2 (1979): 5.

³² Shulamit Reinharz, Feminist Methods, 130.

worked with State-led film agencies during the military regime and how their careers developed over time.

The use of individual experience as captured in oral interviews carries with it several epistemological and methodological responsibilities. Experience can serve as evidence as it provides information that has been lived, felt, perceived, and shaped by an individual. This information can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand it can serve to challenge normative history. On the other, the information, taken as uncontested knowledge, may ultimately serve to normalize difference from an established norm. Adopting this philosophical stance towards the historiographic task at hand takes experience to be, as Joan Scott points out “already an interpretation *and* something that needs to be interpreted.”³³ As she suggests, the historian should “read for the literary” so as to be able to see experience as a category of analysis that is contextual, contested and contingent.³⁴ It seems beneficial, then, not only to cite the experiences these women filmmakers related to me but also interpret their words. In this way, their words, reflecting their perspectives, do not constitute unquestionable knowledge and scholars can better establish relationships – coherent or incongruous – among these women’s experiences in the film industry in Brazil as well as come to a better understanding of how these women’s experiences are related to the shifting social and political contexts of the 1970s and 1980s.

In selecting women filmmakers, I decided to focus on filmmakers whose careers began in 16 or 35mm film in the late 1960s or the early 1970s and who went on to direct

³³ Joan Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” *Critical Inquiry* Summer (1991): 797.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 796.

feature-length films in the 1970s and 1980s.³⁵ As an outsider to Brazilian culture and the filmmaking community in Brazil, I was fortunate to meet a few of these filmmakers at social functions where I introduced myself, described my project and requested an interview. In other cases, I met individuals who led me to obtaining the necessary contact information after which I phoned their homes or places of work. In each case, I spoke with the filmmaker and personally requested an interview. The filmmaker chose the date, time and location for our meeting. I was eventually able to speak with thirteen women filmmakers in Brazil in 2001, 2002 and during additional interviews in 2005 and 2006.³⁶

In most cases, I met with these women in their places of work. A few invited me into their homes. For each interview, I introduced myself again, described the nature of the project and asked permission to record our conversation on audio tape or digital video tape. All clearly understood who I was and what I was doing and provided their oral or written consent to be recorded and included in the project. Each filmmaker was allowed to ask questions about my background, my experiences in and with Brazil and each was free to inquire about any other matter they felt they needed or wanted to know. That is to say, in keeping with a feminist approach to oral interviewing, I shared personal information with them to make them feel comfortable about revealing personal information about themselves and their experiences in the past. All interviews were conducted in Portuguese with the exception of Suzana Amaral who chose to speak in both English and Portuguese.

³⁵ It is not unusual for filmmakers in Latin America to begin learning the craft by producing short films and then move onto longer films.

³⁶ All interviews were conducted in person with the exception of a few follow-up electronic messages sent in 2005 and 2006. All interviews and correspondence are duly cited.

I then transcribed the recorded interviews and translated them from Portuguese to English. When requested, sections of the interviews used in this text were provided to the interviewees for them to provide their feedback. This is an important step to ensure that they have not been misunderstood and, more importantly, to respect their need to protect themselves as they are still actively producing and directing films and did not wish to compromise their professional position in the Brazilian film industry. Most demonstrated some interest in receiving final copies of this text. However, two women demonstrated greater concern, which I believe stems from the fact that both had experienced state repression first-hand during the 1970s. In one interview, I was asked to turn my tape recorder off on three occasions so that she could make highly critical commentary which she did not wish to be quoted as having stated.

For each interview, I had prepared a series of questions relating to selected aspects regarding the film industry, society and politics in Brazil. Interviewees were asked to respond freely to this set of questions and I would then ask more specific follow-up questions based on the information they had offered in response to my first question. The areas of inquiry included how they took an interest in film as a mode of expression, how they learned the craft of filmmaking, their relationship to social movements, their thoughts on feminism, their political involvement, their experience(s) with political and economic censorship, their evolution in the profession, working with Embrafilme and other State-led agencies dedicated to the film industry, their relationship(s) to Cinema Novo filmmakers or the Cinema Novo group, from where the inspiration for their subject matter has come and their perspectives on filmmaking in the past vis-à-vis the cultural context in the 1990s.

At times, my questions about how measures taken by the State affected them were met with either some difficulty recalling specific dates or a mixing of the past with the current context of film production. During my third round of interviews in late 2005, these women were in the midst of new political scandals in the Lula government, another series of frustrations with government policies and problems in the direction taken by the cultural sector.³⁷ This most certainly contributed to the way in which they addressed my questions. However, any uncertainty with dates or the order of events was far surpassed by the rich comparative and illustrative descriptions they offered of their experiences directing (and, depending on the filmmaker, producing) their works. This blending of past and present comes through in my discussion of salient issues regarding the film industry in Brazil and their work.

The comments these women made in response to my questions are clearly not unmediated information. While I do seek to preserve the integrity of their comments to the highest degree possible, I have selected and included these women's comments, paying close attention to the original question I asked and the context in which an issue was raised. I have paid close attention to nonverbal gestures and tones of voice to most appropriately and accurately reflect their thoughts.

Professional Development and Training of Women Filmmakers

Women who began their careers in film in the mid to late 1960s were entering into a profession that had not been truly open to them previously. Given the film industry in

³⁷ Although the interval between the first series of interviews and the second series was not intentional, it was fortuitous in many respects that I was able to return to Brazil a few years later. At this juncture, the scandals in the Lula government, combined with debates surrounding the renewal of the incentive laws, prompted keen reflection on the current state of filmmaking in Brazil, the "Retomada" and the context of filmmaking during the military regime some twenty to thirty years earlier.

Brazil, filmmaking was a mode of expression open to few individuals. This, in part, explains why women took different paths to learn the craft of filmmaking. A few decided to go abroad to study filmmaking. Suzana Amaral and Helena Solberg both went to the United States in the late 1970s.³⁸ Sandra Werneck completed a one-year practical course in Holland. Eunice Gutman studied in Brussels, Belgium where she completed a degree at the National Institute of Art, Spectacle and Techniques of Diffusion (INSAS). Others took less conventional routes. Tereza Trautman indicates she became interested in cinema in her teenage years but when she wanted to learn how to make films, she was aware of only one private school in São Paulo, which was not an economic option for her. Instead, she learned by reading books on her own, borrowing materials and working with friends who contributed supplies or their labor.³⁹

This sort of cooperative work that Trautman describes is common to many of these women filmmakers and has been central to the development of their careers. Tata Amaral explains that she learned to make films by collaborating with an informal group of people in São Paulo and assisting her husband at the time, who was involved in filmmaking.⁴⁰ Amaral's experience resembles that of Lúcia Murat who was dating a man involved in cinema and journalism. Murat notes that, as an experienced journalist, her involvement in cinema came about organically since the two were closely linked in the 1960s and 1970s.⁴¹ Sandra Werneck reflects on her own experience selling a family cow to get supplies to make her first film and working in a context where, lacking a commercial

³⁸ Suzana Amaral, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 14 November 2001 and Helena Solberg, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 27 November 2001.

³⁹ Tereza Trautman, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 29 November 2001.

⁴⁰ Tata Amaral, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 13 November 2001.

⁴¹ For example, at this time, the news segment *Globo Repórter* was filmed on 35mm film stock and then edited to show on television.

structure, “tudo era co-operativado.”⁴² Julia Lesage has discussed different modes of media production by women, noting that a collective approach such as the one described by Sandra Werneck allows for, in addition to sharing economic resources, skill-sharing and non-hierarchical, collective scripting, editing and filming.⁴³ Werneck notes that her daughter, who is trying to break into the field, has to come up with a lot more money to complete her first film. Werneck asserts that the collaborative environment she experienced no longer exists.⁴⁴

Some followed the path that women directors took in the early years of cinema. Ana Maria Magalhães worked behind the scenes on films in which she also acted. Under the direction of Glauber Rocha and Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Magalhães learned to edit film, the discourse of film, and the professional rigors of being a film director. She notes, however, that her proximity to production as an actress did not translate into an easier entrance into the field. Actresses who showed interest in the technical realms of the profession were not always taken seriously.⁴⁵ Lastly, Ana Carolina and Tizuka Yamasaki combined their formal study of cinema with practical experience. Both women went to film school in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, respectively, but worked on film sets with established directors such as Walter Hugo Khoury, Glauber Rocha and Nelson Pereira dos Santos.⁴⁶

⁴² Sandra Werneck, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 16 July 2002.

⁴³ Julia Lesage, “Women Make Media: Three Modes of Production,” in The Social Documentary in Latin America, ed. Julianne Burton (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990), 315-347.

⁴⁴ Sandra Werneck, *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Ana Maria Magalhães, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 28 November 2001.

⁴⁶ Ana Carolina recalls that there were approximately four female students in a group of about 30 when she studied at the Escola de São Luis in São Paulo starting in 1966. Note that she is unclear during the interview when the school closed and when she stopped studying there. In contrast, Tizuka Yamasaki recalls one other female student when she studied in Brasília and then in Rio de Janeiro. Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 26 August 2005; Tizuka Yamasaki, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 21 August 2005.

The contact Ana Carolina and Tizuka Yamasaki had with these respected male filmmakers provided them with invaluable experience as well as gave them additional credibility when they needed to apply for production funding with Embrafilme and private investors in order to direct their first feature-length films. Revealing the importance of her experience working with Cinema Nôvo directors, Yamasaki declares that during her years of learning the trade the most important thing for her “era ter conseguido ficar perto do Nelson (Pereira dos Santos) que era uma ponte para o mercado de trabalho.”⁴⁷ The influence of Cinema Nôvo filmmakers was as much a benefit as it was a detriment to aspiring women directors. In short, they appreciated the experiences they had with these filmmakers but they certainly do not feel they owe their success to Cinema Nôvo.

Ana Carolina notes that when she began making films, the Cinema Nôvo directors had firmly established their presence in Brazilian cinema. When asked if she feels that their aesthetic proposals or their strategies for production influenced her, she highlights her similarities and differences from Cinema Nôvo filmmakers:

Eu, quando chego no cinema, os cineastas do Cinema Nôvo já estavam estabelecidos, consolidados. E já tinham criado uma estratégia de produção que a gente absorveu inteiramente. Este tipo de produção barata de muita gente no mesmo filme, muitas pessoas – você consegue a camera, depois você consegue o som, depois você consegue o laboratório. Não sei o quê. Um da um dinheirinho. Outro da um dinheirinho. Um dinheirinho. Isso ahi, eu assimilei completamente. A diferença é que quando eu chego na longametragem em 74 ou 75, a Embrafilme já está funcionando, já está existindo. E eu com o primeiro ficção, parto para fazer com a Embrafilme – que é uma mudança substancial do Cinema Nôvo. Eu sou filhote do Cinema Nôvo. Eu não sou representante do Cinema Nôvo legítimo. Quando eu chego já estão crescidos. E os filhotes,

⁴⁷ Tizuka Yamasaki, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 21 August 2005.

os primeiros filhotes do Cinema Nôvo, que eu estou incluída, todos eles foram correndo para a Embrafilme.”⁴⁸

Here, Ana Carolina makes the keen observation that she and her generation of filmmakers bridged two different modes of production. A cooperative, inexpensive form of production came into contact with the support structures of the State-led agency, Embrafilme. In addition to aesthetic and thematic differences, these women entered into a new era of film production in Brazil after the creation of Embrafilme in 1969. The consequences of this shift will be discussed below.

When they have not been producing or directing their next film project, these directors gravitated towards other areas of visual communication, including television and video. For some, such as Lúcia Murat, cinema was an outgrowth of their work in television and journalism.⁴⁹ For others, such as Tizuka Yamasaki, working in television has developed parallel to their work in the film industry.⁵⁰ Lack of funding for independent film projects as well as increasing costs of production have inspired a few directors to work with less expensive technology such as digital and traditional video formats. Eunice Gutman moved to video also because of the opportunities that became available to work in traditional video format with various social organizations.⁵¹ Others have distanced themselves from television altogether. Ana Carolina, for example, has chosen to work in opera when she has not been able to secure funds for her film projects.⁵²

⁴⁸ Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 26 August 2005.

⁴⁹ Lúcia Murat, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 27 November 2001.

⁵⁰ Tizuka Yamasaki, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 21 August 2005.

⁵¹ Eunice Gutman, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 28 August 2005.

⁵² Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 26 August 2005.

Working with the System

The Empresa Brasileiro de Filmes (Embrafilme) came into being nearly one year after the declaration of the Ato Institucional Número 5 (The Fifth Institutional Act, AI-5) and during the most repressive years of the military regime.⁵³ Originally created to promote and distribute Brazilian films abroad, Embrafilme was charged to oversee commercial and non-commercial film activities such as film festivals, the publication of film journals, and training of technicians. As discussed above, an autarquia, works alongside the State and is an independent enterprise that operates with funds from the State. Although the organization is self-governing, the State can still exert a great deal of influence.

Embrafilme held relatively few powers during the first years of its existence but by 1974 had grown into a national distributor and a source of film production financing. The agency began a low-interest (10%) loan program in 1970. These funds were made available to production companies based on a ranking system. Each company was placed into three categories according to its production history. The vast majority of available funds went to well-established firms and a small percentage went to less experienced or beginning producers. Beyond production history, Embrafilme did not presumably make qualitative or ideological judgments about proposed film projects, which explains why some producers of porno-chanchadas, a genre of film produced in the 1970s that combined soft-core porn and comedy, were able to take advantage of State financial assistance.⁵⁴

With little to no production history, Embrafilme's loan program did not benefit many women filmmakers. From 1970 to 1974, only one woman, Lenita Perroy, received

⁵³ See the discussion of AI-5 in Chapter 2.

⁵⁴ For a full account of the first years of Embrafilme's existence and the direction of its programs, see Johnson, The Film Industry in Brazil, 137-70.

production assistance from Embrafilme to produce her second feature-length 35mm film A Noiva da Noite (The Night Bride, 1974). In contrast, women received most of their support from funds they were able to come up with on their own and, to a limited degree, monies from private investors, programs still in effect in the INC, and regional and local sources of support of filmmaking. From 1965 to 1974, no regional or state entity funded a woman's 16 or 35mm feature-length film.⁵⁵ During the same period, regional or state entities assisted with the production of 9 (or 12.7%) short films made from 16 or 35mm film stock.⁵⁶ Ana Carolina, as a case in point, was able to direct her first 35mm short film in the late 1960s after winning a prize from the Secretary of Culture in the State of São Paulo.⁵⁷ Other beginning women directors received financial support to make films while they were enrolled in University programs that were opening up in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁵⁸ These awards and University programs were an important source of local and regional funding for women's filmmaking.

Simply stated, in Brazil, at this time, filmmaking was limited to the privileged few. Likewise, the same comment could be made of the current situation. Because of the expenses involved in production, filmmaking is not an art form generally open to the vast majority. Film, as an art form, takes place on an industrial scale. For those individuals who lacked their own funds or financial assistance from state or local governments or connections with those who could provide financial assistance, it was highly unlikely they would be able to produce their own works. It is important to also keep in mind that, unlike the vast majority of industrial goods, films transmit cultural values and contribute

⁵⁵ These numbers are drawn from Hollanda, ed., Quase Catálogo.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Ana Carolina, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 26 August 2005.

⁵⁸ Hollanda, Quase Catálogo, *passim*.

to the cultural development of a nation. Films function as an influential mode of expression and a means of participating in larger social and political discussions. Barring access to private financial networks or personal finances, the importance of government funding cannot be overemphasized as it allows film to be a mode of expression open to the broader public.

The 1970s can be defined as the years when women were just beginning to appear in the contemporary film industry as directors and they were entering a context that was entirely prepared for them or what they had to express. Tereza Trautman describes her experiences in the early 1970s that are illustrative of the context many women directors faced. Lacking mechanisms of support for film production, Trautman took on several roles in film production, relied on loaned equipment, bought expired film stock, and solicited the help of many friends to complete her first film Fantástico (Fantastic) in 1970.⁵⁹ She signed a contract with a small distributor, which has long since gone out of business. Once in the hands of the exhibitors, the film was given the subtitle Os Deuses do Sexo (The Gods of Sex) but the film, she states, had nothing to do with sex at all.⁶⁰ The title of Trautman's film had been altered to attract spectators. A government censor stopped the film and demanded scenes be cut, which she did before the distributor put the scenes back in a week later.⁶¹

Aware of her need to build a curriculum to submit for future proposals and concerned about the future of her film, she entered one of the nation's most respected newspapers, A Folha de São Paulo, to announce the release of her first film. Here she was met with shock, disbelief, and comments such as “uma mulher fazendo filme, aqui no Brasil?” and

⁵⁹ Tereza Trautman, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 29 November 2001.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

“eu não tinha nem idéia de nada disso.”⁶² Shortly thereafter, exhibitors and distributors asked about her next film, which she would complete three years later.⁶³ The film, Os Homens Que Eu Tive (The Men I’ve Been With, 1973), contested the objectification of women in Brazilian society and marked a significant point in women’s production when women sought to make a shift from being discursive objects to being discursive subjects.⁶⁴ As mentioned in Chapter 2, Trautman’s second feature-length film entered a context when the military government exercised strict control over all forms of mass media. Charged with denigrating the Brazilian woman, the film was hypocritically banned until 1983⁶⁵ while pornochanchadas became a staple in the Brazilian film industry.

What is clear from the experiences Trautman describes is that women began to gain access to film expression but they entered a context in which they had little to no production assistance and a very limited infrastructure to support independent filmmaking. If their points of view were not accepted, they were vulnerable to censorship and the ruining of their careers. Years later, many of the multiple roles Trautman took on to produce, direct, market, and distribute her film would be overseen by units within Embrafilme.

For women, the struggle to gain access to film as a means of expression would not truly take off until the mid 1970s at the confluence of Embrafilme’s reorganization and the redirection of the State in 1974. On the heels of rising social protest following an economic boom, which created greater social divides between the wealthy elite and the

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Although in a poor state of preservation, a copy of the film is available in the film archives of the FUNARTE in Rio de Janeiro.

⁶⁵ Tereza Trautman, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 29 November 2001.

working classes, General Ernesto Geisel assumed the office of the president in 1974. As indicated above, one of his first declarations was the slow, gradual return to democratic rule. Geisel's political position was not met with unanimous support and the period is marked with tensions and contradictions within the military regime. Nonetheless, the nation entered a period of political decompression (or, distensão) that lasted until approximately 1979 when the regime declared general amnesty.

Parallel to these political events, several important changes took place in the state film apparatus. Embrafilme was reorganized in 1974 and took over many of the duties previously held by the INC. One year later the INC was abolished and, by 1976, a new policy-making body, the Conselho Nacional do Cinema (National Film Council, CONCINE) was established. CONCINE was charged with determining policies affecting the film industry that Embrafilme would then execute. Soon the Fundação Nacional de Arte (National Art Foundation, FUNARTE) was established and, in 1976, the State published its cultural policy in the document "Política Nacional de Cultura" ("National Cultural Policy," PNC). According to Randal Johnson, the PNC is a document that seeks to construct a harmonious national identity while simultaneously effacing class conflict.⁶⁶ Together, these events represent an expansion of state intervention in the culture sector.⁶⁷

As part of Embrafilme's reorganization, the film director Roberto Farias was chosen as the agency's new general director. Many members of the Cinema Novo group joined him and eventually secured a place within the State apparatus.⁶⁸ During Farias' tenure, state policy shifted away from what had been a relatively neutral, technical, and supportive role regarding the film industry to a selective, market-driven approach. The

⁶⁶ Johnson, The Film Industry in Brazil, 154.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 150, 157, 161, 163.

original loan program Embrafilme instituted in 1970 was restructured to further benefit stable production companies. Only those producers with moderately established capital could apply; thus, new or beginning producers were not eligible for financing.⁶⁹ Second, Farias expanded an existing co-production program. The maximum amount Embrafilme would contribute to a film's production cost rose from 30% to 100%.⁷⁰ To be eligible for co-production financing, producers were ranked according to a point system based on prior experience, awards received, and activity in the industry. With a history in filmmaking and more awards to their credit, these guidelines clearly favored producers and directors associated with the Cinema Novo group.⁷¹ In his assessment of the film industry in Brazil, Randal Johnson notes that these new policies, combined with the arbitrary exercise of censorship ultimately resulted in the State becoming the primary source of funding for independent film production.⁷²

As relative newcomers to the profession, women worked with the economic and political system laid before them. What becomes clear from their recounted experiences is that independent filmmaking by women was socially, politically, and economically marginalized. The modes of marginalizing women's independent filmmaking were rarely experienced or witnessed directly; nor were they necessarily limited to women filmmakers. However, as a social group historically excluded from the money networks, women filmmakers were at a disadvantage. Filmmaking in Brazil was an increasingly closed-door industry, making it difficult for most novice film directors and producers to establish themselves. I would now like to focus on how women worked vis-à-vis the state

⁶⁹ Ibid., 142.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 157.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., 160-161.

film apparatus and then consider the particular (social, artistic, and political) effects on women's independent filmmaking brought about by the shifts in the state filmmaking apparatus from approximately 1974 until 1984.

The response from these women filmmakers was to establish their own production companies, work to produce their own projects with or without government assistance and, if possible, become eligible for production funding according to the requirements set forth by Embrafilme. A notable example is that of Tizuka Yamasaki. While working on film sets in the mid 1970s, Tizuka developed the idea for her first feature-length fiction film. But, as a student, a newcomer, and without a family that could support her, she didn't know how she would be able to make her first film. It was at this point, she states, she realized she needed to form her own production company. With two friends, she established the Centro de Produção e Comunicação (Production and Communication Center, CPC) in 1976, two years after Embrafilme was reorganized.⁷³ Other women have established their own production companies but few state they enjoy this aspect of their work. Ana Maria Magalhães does not feel that her authorship is at risk if she allows someone else to manage the production of one of her films.⁷⁴ Suzana Amaral falls on the opposite spectrum. She reported feeling taken advantage of by the producer of her 2002 film Uma Vida em Segredo, an adaptation of the 1964 novel by Autran Dourado.⁷⁵ Sandra Werneck sees the lack of producers in Brazil as a problem and wishes there were

⁷³ Tizuka Yamasaki, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 21 August 2005.

⁷⁴ Ana Maria Magalhães, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 28 November 2001.

⁷⁵ Suzana Amaral, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 14 November 2001.

individuals who would take on this role.⁷⁶ Lúcia Murat stoically states that if she wants to direct, then she has to produce.⁷⁷

In order to request funds from Embrafilme, new filmmakers needed to develop a curriculum. Specifically, Yamasaki explains that she needed to produce one film with funds from Embrafilme and one film made outside Embrafilme.⁷⁸ Yamasaki and her partners in the CPC worked with a mutual friend to produce a very inexpensive film called JS Brown: O Último Herói (J.S. Brown: The Last Hero). At this point in time, Glauber Rocha was looking for a producer for his film A Idade da Terra (The Age of the Earth, 1980) and, according to Tizuka Yamasaki, he liked the idea of a group of young people producing his film as it would allow him to make the film as he wished.⁷⁹ Since Rocha's film was funded by Embrafilme and her friend's film was not, she explains that when both films were completed they had the right to request funds from Embrafilme. The CPC was to act as the producer and she would be the novice director. In this way she was able to make her first feature-length film Gaijin: Os Caminhos da Liberdade (Gaijin: Paths to Freedom, 1980).

Embrafilme played an important role in helping many women finish their first feature-length fiction film. Rare, however, are the cases in which women received full or continuous support from the state agency. By contrast, the members of the Cinema Novo group had much greater financial support from the state. In his analysis of the film industry in Brazil, Randal Johnson characterizes the Cinema Novo group as forming a

⁷⁶ Sandra Werneck, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 16 July 2002.

⁷⁷ Lúcia Murat, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 10 July 2002.

⁷⁸ It is interesting to hear Tizuka Yamasaki describe her experience as working *inside* and *outside* Embrafilme. Her comments reveal awareness that the film industry was developed such that there was an imagined structure where one could be positioned inside or outside the state-sponsored system of film financing.

⁷⁹ Tizuka Yamasaki, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 21 August 2005.

hegemony in the state apparatus, which is perhaps most evident by the fact that nearly all films by Cinema Novo participants were co-produced by Embrafilme.⁸⁰ The three films not co-produced were ultimately distributed by Embrafilme and, in this way, still benefited from state support. Indeed, filmmaker Glauber Rocha unsuccessfully presented his film A Idade da Terra (The Age of the Earth) to producers in five different countries over the course of five years but was only able to obtain production funding from Embrafilme in Brazil.⁸¹ In fact, Embrafilme financed 100 percent of Rocha's film.⁸² This further reveals the degree to which Embrafilme was an important resource for Cinema Novo.

Unlike the Cinema Novo group, women filmmakers did not hold a privileged position within the state apparatus and did not bank on continued production support from the State. In addition to Tizuka Yamasaki and Ana Carolina, whom I will discuss in more detail below, Ana Maria Magalhães (Mulheres de Cinema, 1976), Suzana Amaral (A Hora da Estrela, 1985), Norma Bengell (Eternamente Pagú, 1987), Lúcia Murat (Que Bom Te Ver Viva, 1989), Teresa Trautman (Sonhos de Menina Moça, 1988), and Maria do Rosário (As Pequenas Taras, 1980) utilized funds from Embrafilme to produce and direct their own works. Of a total of fifteen feature-length films directed by women from 1975 to 1989 in 16 or 35mm format, approximately twelve (or 80%) were made with some financial support from Embrafilme.

⁸⁰ Johnson notes that three films were not co-produced by Embrafilme. They are Nelson Pereira dos Santos' Estrada da Vida (Road of Life, 1980); Rui Guerra's A Queda (The Fall, 1978); and Arnaldo Jabor's Eu Te Amo (I Love You, 1981). Johnson, The Film Industry in Brazil, 150, 161.

⁸¹ Gustavo Dahl, "Embrafilme: Present Problems and Future Possibilities," in Brazilian Cinema, eds. Randal Johnson and Robert Stam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 106.

⁸² Randal Johnson, "The Rise and Fall of Brazilian Cinema, 1960-1990," in Brazilian Cinema, eds. Randal Johnson and Robert Stam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 369, 384n10.

Despite its perceived deficiencies, the agency is noted for helping and allowing new people to enter the film industry. Lúcia Murat, who arrived on the filmmaking scene towards the end of Embrafilme's existence, expresses mixed feelings about a centralized agency:

If you have a centralized agency that has the conditions to define support for a project, it permits, on the one hand, distortions such as using influential contacts – like any bureaucratic society in the name of equality – but it also permits that new people can begin, so they can function in some manner. It still is, I think, a way for people to get a start in these things.”⁸³

As a relatively new film director, Murat received help from Embrafilme to produce her first widely-distributed film, Que Bom Te Ver Viva (How Nice to See You Alive, 1989), which treated state-sponsored torture and repression of women during the military dictatorship. She explains that the project took off after she won a prize sponsored by Embrafilme for media-metragens (medium-length films). In the end, she credits Embrafilme for providing up to 70% of the production funding for her film. With this money and the contributions of four additional co-producers, she completed what she refers to as a very inexpensive film.⁸⁴ It is important to note that Murat emphasizes that it was a very inexpensive film, thus putting the amount of funding into perspective. Although Embrafilme provided a substantial percentage of production funding, it was a relatively small sum considering the total costs of producing this film.

As indicated earlier, women may have started with Embrafilme but they did not count on continued production support. After releasing her first film and with assistance from

⁸³ The translation is mine. Lúcia Murat, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 10 July 2002.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Embrafilme, Tizuka Yamasaki went on to establish herself as an award-winning feature-length film director. With CPC, she produced and directed Parahyba Mulher Macho (Parahyba: Macho Woman, 1983) and Patriamada (Sing, the Beloved Country, 1984) with monies from private investors. All three films were distributed by Embrafilme and, in this way, benefited from the state film agency. Yet her memory of this period in the late 1970s and early 1980s when she produced and directed her first feature-length fiction films reveal a particular frustration:

Eu brinco muito, eu falo assim, que demorou muito o Cinema Nôvo me aceitar, me dar carteirinha como cineasta. Eu fiz um filme mas isso não deu. Eu sou cria do Cinema Nôvo.⁸⁵

Despite the close working relationships that Tizuka Yamasaki developed with Cinema Nôvo filmmakers Nelson Pereira dos Santos and Glauber Rocha, she does not feel she was considered a true colleague. She further states that she does not describe her experience as having been admitted to the inner power structures of the Brazilian film industry:

Eu não fui chamada pelo poder do cinema brasileiro, o que foi durante muitos anos, nas mãos do Cinema Nôvo. O Cinema Nôvo nunca me admitiu no grupo. [...] A gente nunca, nunca foi bem recebida. Durante muitos anos, a gente não, eu não fiz parte do poder do cinema brasileiro. A minha atividade sempre foi isolada, paralela, porque queria saber o que estava acontecendo.⁸⁶

Although it is impossible to specify when or how this underlying social and political marginalization within the power structures of Brazilian cinema expressed itself overtly,

⁸⁵ Tizuka Yamasaki, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 21 August 2005.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

it is reasonable to believe that it manifested itself in some concrete fashion. This issue will be explored below when I discuss the effects of political and economic censorship.

Ana Carolina has unambiguous opinions regarding how power was exercised inside Embrafilme when she reflects on her experiences producing and directing her films in the 1970s and 1980s. Ana Carolina directed three films regarded as forming a trilogy. They are Mar de Rosas (Sea of Flowers, 1977), Das Tripas Coração (Hearts and Guts, 1982) and Sonho de Valsa (Dream Waltz, 1986). Emphasizing that she received limited help from the state film agency, she reveals that of the films in her trilogy, “só tinha com a Embrafilme com o Mar de Rosas, que teve Embrafilme mais quatro produtores associados, um com equipamento, outro com laboratório, tudo, como um grupo de gente.” Ana Carolina further reveals that her first feature-length documentary film, Getúlio was completed in 1974 and had no support from the INC or Embrafilme. In a rare gesture of cooperation between film producers and exhibitors, she reveals that Severino Ribeiro, the owner of a chain of movie theaters in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo entered in the final stages and helped with the promotion of the film.⁸⁷ Her comments suggest that Embrafilme was far from being a neutral government agency charged with overseeing the Brazilian film industry:

Acho que a Embrafilme foi uma criação extraordinária com um percentual de perversão muito grande. Porque ao mesmo tempo que ela vem para somar, para unir cineastas e dar guarita, ela vem com uma coisa muito perversa porque ela começa a eleger, ‘Você sim, ele não. Você sim, ele não. Você sim, ele não.’ Qual é o *darling* da Embrafilme? Ahí, você é o *darling* da Embrafilme e você tem o maldito que está fora da Embrafilme. Não houve uma correção de rota na Embrafilme. Ela não precisava de ser demolida da maneira que foi. Ela foi demolida muito rápida e com muita

⁸⁷ Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 26 August 2006.

raiva. Alguma coisa está estranho nisso. Ela passou a representar uma coisa madrastra, uma mãe perversa, que alimentava uns e matava outros. Isso é complicado. Isso foi a ausência total de política de cinema.”⁸⁸

However, Ana Carolina does not reveal specific moments of having felt she was excluded from the privileges afforded by Embrafilme. Similar to Tizuka Yamasaki, her next two films, Das Tripas Coração (1982) and Sonho de Valsa (1986) were produced with private funding and then distributed by Embrafilme. Notably, both films were completed many years apart due to difficulties in amassing the necessary production funds.

Regardless of the degree to which they feel they were or were not integrated into the inner circle of power controlling the film industry in Brazil, Tizuka Yamasaki and Ana Carolina were both able to establish contacts with the necessary financial networks to produce and direct their films. For this, they should be commended but also seen as holding a particularly privileged position vis-à-vis other women who were equally interested in and motivated to produce and direct films during the 1970s and 1980s.

Their critiques need to be balanced with praise for the state agency. Independent efforts to improve filmmaking in Brazil were supported by the State through its film agencies. In fact, Embrafilme provided much-needed assistance to the film industry that all too often goes overlooked. In addition to its financial assistance to produce films, Embrafilme developed a legal discourse to protect and promote Brazilian films. One of the most important laws affecting women’s filmmaking was the Lei do Curta (Short Film Law), first ratified in 1975. This law stipulated showing a short Brazilian film before every foreign film shown in the Brazilian market. The vast majority of films produced and directed by women are, in fact, short films.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

São Paulo filmmaker Tata Amaral notes that, in addition to the Lei do Curta, regional financial support of short filmmaking has been a vital resource. Since the 1970s the State of São Paulo has offered an annual “Prêmio de Estímulo à Produção de Curta Metragens” (Prize to Stimulate Production of Short Films).⁸⁹ Other states started to hold a similar annual award program in the mid 1990s.⁹⁰ While some disparagingly refer to short films as cartões de visita (calling cards), short filmmaking requires smaller budgets and for this reason is a more accessible format than feature-length projects. Moreover, short films have served a vital role in training new filmmakers and is certainly an artistic format in its own right.

Eunice Gutman describes taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the Lei do Curta. With a colleague, Regina Veiga, she explains they would produce their short films in 35mm and then Embrafilme would give them an advance on the distribution. If she hadn't spent much on the short film's production, she would recoup her capital and make another one.⁹¹ In this way, she and other young women filmmakers were able to break into the film industry and, perhaps more importantly, short films became a viable outlet for their work. Because their films were produced with 35mm film stock, they could enter the mainstream theater circuits and be distributed throughout Brazil. The full potential of the short film program was not realized, unfortunately, as exhibitors would produce low quality short films and randomly include them with the feature-length film. Spectators

⁸⁹ Tata Amaral, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 13 November 2001.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Eunice Gutman, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 28 August 2005.

became disgruntled and there were few measures to enforce compliance with the statute.⁹²

Gutman describes a number of services Embrafilme offered to filmmakers that she found highly beneficial which the current filmmaking context lacks. First, there were projection rooms for 16 and 35mm film when you needed to show your film. Parties interested in the film or its progress would sometimes like to view a work in progress. At that time, it was impossible to screen your work without access to a 16 or 35mm projector. A press service would spread news about a film's release. Assistance was available to mail films abroad to festivals without cost to the producers. Moreover, if a film was accepted in a film festival, Embrafilme would pay for part of the travel expenses for the director.

Eunice also underscores the importance of Embrafilme's physical existence. Because Embrafilme was a public facility, the average person had the right to go there to see films made by fellow Brazilians.⁹³ With the vast majority of Brazilians living in poverty, this democratized access to cultural works. Lastly, Embrafilme established a supportive environment for filmmakers. She notes that its existence benefited filmmakers as a community. Although situated in Rio de Janeiro, Embrafilme was a location where people could meet, talk about their projects, and perhaps find work. That is to say, the existence of Embrafilme led to a greater degree of dialogue among filmmakers in Brazil.⁹⁴ Eunice emphasizes the importance of being able to meet with other members of

⁹² As with other compulsory exhibition programs, there were great tensions between exhibitors, producers and the state such that the program was made inviable. See Randal Johnson, "The Rise and Fall," 376-378.

⁹³ Eunice Gutman, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 28 August 2005.

⁹⁴ Clearly this advantage was limited to those who lived and or worked in the southern regions of the country. Those who lived and worked in the northern regions were at a disadvantage. Needless to say, filmmaking was concentrated in the South.

the profession to solidify their professional demands vis-à-vis the State and in conjunction with state-sponsored agencies such as Embrafilme and Concine. In contrast, she finds today's context to be much less organized and fragmented:

...a gente estava muito mais em contato do que hoje. A classe cinematográfica hoje está tudo dispersa. O grande golpe, um dos grandes golpes no cinema, foi o desaparecimento da Embrafilme. [...] Então a gente tinha uma vida muito ativa, a classe cinematográfica, porque a gente tinha uma representação nos congressos. Eu não estou dizendo que essa representação hoje não existe. Existe mas não da mesma forma.⁹⁵

Similarly, Sandra Werneck holds some praise for the past and critique of the current situation. Active in short film production during Embrafilme's existence, Sandra commends the ways in which selection committees assisted new filmmakers. As a new filmmaker, she says she would submit her project proposals to a selection committee that would then provide her with an evaluation. She feels this process greatly contributed to her learning the craft but, unfortunately, she does not believe the current landscape provides this form of support for novice filmmakers. Sandra notes that this selection process was really democratic. This description stands in contrast to what has occurred during the years of the "Retomada" when committees composed of trained film professionals were replaced by marketing executives of companies that transferred a portion of their tax income to the State for cultural production.⁹⁶ When asked to reflect on the current funding situation and the past, Sandra feels there are now few film awards such that most people work on others' projects and gain experience this way rather than

⁹⁵ Eunice Gutman, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 28 August 2005.

⁹⁶ Sandra Werneck, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 16 July 2002.

develop their own projects.⁹⁷ For those starting out now, she has two words: “Puxa vida!” (Gosh!).

Despite the technical and financial assistance with production, distribution, and, to a limited extent, exhibition, few women filmmakers miss Embrafilme. A common critique these women launch against Embrafilme is the traffic of influence within the agency. These women’s comments on Embrafilme need to be put in context. They are now distanced greatly from the years of Embrafilme and in the midst of their own production difficulties. Some see the absence of a centralized state film agency as positive. Some see a film agency as something that is really good if it works effectively. Others feel that they have been squeezed out of the film industry. Several women filmmakers claim they enjoy a certain degree of freedom that has resulted from the absence of a centralized state film agency.

Women’s Filmmaking at the Crossroads of Economic and Political Censorship

Shortly after Roberto Farias took over the position as general director of Embrafilme, the organization shifted to a market-driven approach. This continued orientation indirectly altered the formats and modes of production for several women filmmakers. Increased pressure for films to be commercially successful resulted in a decreased share of the market for documentary films and a decisive shift away from less expensive, cooperative film productions. While this would have certainly had an effect on all filmmakers in Brazil, the consequences for this shift hold specific significance when we consider women’s filmmaking, which was effectively emerging at the crossroads of

⁹⁷ Ibid.

economic and political censorship. In Chapter 6, I will discuss the importance of documentary film and video formats.

When women started taking roles in film production, they were keenly interested in gaining access to a mode of audiovisual communication to which they had not previously had access. Once they arrived, they were interested in developing new modes of expression.⁹⁸ One of the challenges women filmmakers faced was distancing themselves from prevailing aesthetics while competing for their own place in movie theaters. Tizuka Yamasaki explains that when she was starting out, Cinema Novo was such a strong point of reference that if your work was not similar then it was considered inferior.⁹⁹ However, these women did not wish to follow established modes and styles of filmmaking.

Cinema Novo aesthetics had gained a dominant position in the Brazilian film industry in part because of the international attention it received and in part because Cinema Novo filmmakers were able to work within the political and economic system. As Randal Johnson suggests, the most important factors contributing to the dominance of the Cinema Novo group were their relationship to the state and their highly pragmatic approach to filmmaking.¹⁰⁰ Johnson and Stam note that directors associated with Cinema Novo initially rejected commercial cinema and Hollywood-style aesthetics and sought to produce films that contributed in a struggle against neo-colonialism. In time, Cinema Novo directors began to see greater advantage in making films that combined popular appeal with a left-leaning vision of Brazilian society. Having solidified a presence within

⁹⁸ Ana Maria Magalhães states that she and other women she worked with wanted access to this form of communication, which had been dominated by men. Ana Maria Magalhães, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 28 November 2001.

⁹⁹ Tizuka Yamasaki, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 21 August 2005.

¹⁰⁰ Johnson, The Film Industry in Brazil, 161.

Embrafilme, their works continued to seek popular appeal but were critiqued for seeking commercial success over political perseverance.¹⁰¹

There were two significant problems with Cinema Novo discourses as seen through a feminist lens. Despite her praise and respect for her predecessors and mentors, Tizuka Yamasaki expresses mixed feelings about the discourses advanced by the Cinema Novo group:

Eu tive na verdade o privilegio de ter dois, dois grandes cineastas na minha formação. Mas ao mesmo tempo essa convivência muito próxima aos dois me deixou muito frustrada, muito decepcionada. Os discursos do Cinema Novo eram maravilhosos, em termos de política, em termos de questões sociais, em termos de pensar sobre o Brasil. Mas eles eram muito, muito machistas no cotidiano da vida deles. No trabalho não, mas é uma observação deles na família, entre eles. Você pode ver o Cinema Novo. Não tem nenhuma mulher. Então isso foi uma observação. Nessa época eu ainda não tinha muita noção das coisas. Mais tarde sim.”¹⁰²

It is difficult to believe these filmmakers would not have expressed chauvinist attitudes while working on their film sets. But, Tizuka does not feel that they expressed these attitudes while working. I would argue that, in fact, they did express their bias in their work. Tizuka, regarding this very issue, touches on one critical shortcoming of Cinema Novo discourses. The representation of women was relatively nonexistent and scant consideration is paid to issues affecting women. Few female figures appear in Cinema Novo films and, when they do, they are not developed characters. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, a second fault with Cinema Novo discourses was allegorical representation. Allegories, by definition, provide generalizations about human experience on a literal and

¹⁰¹ Randal Johnson and Robert Stam, eds., *Brazilian Cinema*, 32-40, 47.

¹⁰² Yamasaki, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 21 August 2005.

figurative level. The tendency toward generalization in allegorical representation may contradict a more feminist goal to speak to difference and specificity. In the case of the Cinema Novo directors, their use of allegory, as Ismail Xavier has observed, tended to provide totalizing visions of the nation and contemporary society.¹⁰³ And, as noted above, these visions failed to include women.

The first women directors to emerge in the contemporary film industry did not follow the aesthetic and political proposals of those that came before them. Ana Carolina feels her work proposes a significant thematic departure from Cinema Novo filmmaking. Her first feature-length film, Mar de Rosas discusses psychoanalytic and political questions, such as female sexuality and the state's role in limiting women's political enfranchisement, taken to an extreme that did not exist at that time in Brazilian Cinema.¹⁰⁴ Tizuka Yamasaki feels that her work proposes a rupture from prior film aesthetics and treated themes, stating that her first film (Gaijin: Caminhos da Liberdade) inaugurated a new "cinema of emotion" in Brazil.¹⁰⁵ Prior to this, Tizuka explains, there was no middle ground between doing "political" cinema – meaning work that was similar to Cinema Novo – and pornoanchadas.¹⁰⁶

By contrast, women filmmakers were interested in exploring subject matter that affected them personally as well as held ties to the political and social context of the time.

¹⁰³ Ismail Xavier, Allegories of Underdevelopment, 5.

¹⁰⁴ Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 26 August 2005.

¹⁰⁵ Sandra Werneck also states that she proposes a cinema of emotion. Prior to and to some extent during the first years of their careers, subject matter was limited. This issue surfaces again when filmmakers reflect on the closure of Embrafilme in the Retomada / pos-Retomada context. This issue is also treated in Chapter 3 while discussing the films by Tizuka Yamasaki and Ana Carolina.

¹⁰⁶ Tizuka Yamasaki, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 21 August 2005.

They shifted away from allegory and introduced psychological and emotional experiences to reveal the effects of social, political and cultural marginalization. Overall, the women filmmakers I interviewed revealed a concern with particularity.

These women drew on personal experience and emotion to talk about the nation. Tata Amaral advocates representing women's emotion and sees it has having a political role as a great harmonizing force:

Muitas vezes a gente vive no mundo de homens e esses valores são os conhecidos. A emoção de feminino não é conhecido publicamente. Ela não é posta na tela. Quando você faz uma coisa tão forte do ponto de vista de feminino, e põe isso na tela, é realmente surpreendente para os homens também. É uma nova visão das coisas. É a revelação de alguma coisa que estava lá – que nada de aquilo é novidade, mas que nunca foi visto.¹⁰⁷

Her assessment suggests a close tie between revelation and participation. As Amaral points out, concealed female emotion harmonizes or balances out predominant male values. It's important to put her words into context here and state that she does not essentialize the feminine or masculine. In other words, feminine emotion does not counter masculine rationality. Rather, she refers to the political potential of acknowledging female experience. The representation of emotion was a way to intervene in society.

Instead of receiving praise for their aesthetic and thematic innovations, women filmmakers paid for it in the form of censorship of their films. From the declaration of the AI-5 in December of 1968 until the first direct, free elections held in 1984, the military regime actively and arbitrarily censored mass media. It is important to note that no woman I spoke with, who was directing films at this time, reports having felt pressured to

¹⁰⁷ Tata Amaral, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 13 November 2001.

not express herself in a particular way for fear of being censored. For those whose films were targeted by the authorities, they had to negotiate with the censors to prevent having scenes and dialogue edited out of their films. The egregious case of Tereza Trautman's Os Homens Que Eu Tive has been described above. Yet she is not alone. Ana Carolina reflects on her own experience with censorship, stoically listing the films that have come under attack:

Tive sempre experiências de censura. Pantanal foi. Guerra do Paraguai foi. Getúlio foi. Mar de Rosas foi. Das Tripas foi. Eu tive realmente anos e anos. Sonho de Valsa não foi. A Abertura já tinha chegado. Então a censura acabou com Das Tripas. Censura mesmo.¹⁰⁸

Ana Carolina was able to free her films from the censors but only after a great deal of effort on her part. In the case of Mar de Rosas, the film was banned for six months, during which time she successfully argued with the censors in Brasília to keep all scenes intact.¹⁰⁹

Ana Carolina's second film, Das Tripas Coração (1982), was banned for ten months and released under unusual circumstances. A Canadian Catholic priest came to the film's defense, claiming that it was a manifestation of God. She reveals that he accompanied her to Brasília on several occasions to help defend the film and they both participated in open debates where they discussed sexuality in general, homosexuality, family, religion, and other controversial issues of the day.¹¹⁰ In exchange for having no scenes deleted, Ana Carolina was forced to include a statement at the beginning of the film taking responsibility for and completely discrediting her work:

¹⁰⁸ Ana Carolina, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 26 August 2005.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Eu tive que assinar um termo de responsabilidade no Das Tripas e botar um leteiro antes. Eu achei ótimo. Eu falei, ‘isso eu topo. Isso ahi, eu topo. Ou isso, nada.’ [O leteiro falou] que era um filme delirante, que não tratava nenhuma realidade e que eu assumia totalmente a responsabilidade por aquela loucura. Eu falei ótimo. Eu achei legal porque é tão louco alguém fazer isso – uma pessoa fazer isso com a outra. Tão louco que eu falei que é bom que fique visível. Isso era o governo. Ahi, eu assinei. Botei esse texto na frente assinado por mim. Era como se eu me promettesse nunca mais falar bobagem. Como se tudo fosse uma loucura minha. Não existe, isso não existe. Era o governo militar. Eu achei, ‘é claro que isso, como que isso não existe, cara’.¹¹¹

Clearly the declaration of Amnesty in 1979 and the move towards direct, free elections had not translated into greater expressive freedom in the cinema. This, as Ana Carolina states, was the government in Brazil at this time, a government that censored people and ideas in a perversely mobile and undefined way. Ana Carolina notes that censorship was not limited to Brazil alone. When she participated in a film festival in Portugal, she says the festival director demanded that she rise in front of the audience to apologize for having made Das Tripas Coração. She rose to present herself to the crowd but refused to apologize.¹¹²

Despite official declarations moving towards greater political freedoms, filmmakers continued to experience censorship. For example, the 1976 film Iracema: Uma Transa Amazônica (Iracema) directed by Jorge Bodanzky and Orlando Senna was detained by government censors. Although the film was critiqued for denigrating a native Amazonian woman, Randal Johnson notes that the film was not screened until 1980 for technical reasons. The film stock had not been processed in Brazil and, therefore, did not qualify

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Recall that Portugal, at the time of Ana Carolina’s visit, had recently begun its own return to democracy after the protracted authoritarian, right-wing regime led by António de Oliveira Salazar (1932-1974).

for industry protections offered to Brazilian films.¹¹³ The process towards greater freedom of expression was quite slow and cultural producers were under much greater scrutiny than might be expected. No individual was free from the possibility of censure, even on the eve of redemocratization. Although political parties could start forming in the early 1980s, materials of a politically sensitive nature were still censored. Embrafilme chose not to distribute Sílvio Tendler's 1984 documentary Jango for fear of political consequences.¹¹⁴ Lastly, the case of former Embrafilme director Roberto Farias stands out. In 1982, his film Pra Frente, Brasil (Onward Brazil) was banned for showing acts of torture that had taken place during the 1970s. Although censorship was, in fact, waning, the cases of these films by Farias and Tendler in particular illustrate that discussions attacking the foundations of the conservative, neo-liberal bases of the military regime were not allowed.

During the period of redemocratization from 1984 to 1988, censorship was lifted and filmmakers could develop projects related to more controversial topics with substantially greater freedom in feature-length fiction films (Ana Carolina's Sonho de Valsa [1986], Tereza Trautman's Sonho de Menina Moça [1988]) and in nonfiction film (Tetê Moraes' Terra para Rose [1987] and Lúcia Murat's Que Bom Te Ver Viva [1989]). Political openings met advances in technology, paving the way for the rise of popular and alternative video production at this time. The development of popular and alternative video will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Women filmmakers reveal that economic censorship, not political censorship, has been a more daunting problem affecting their film practice. There are several

¹¹³ Randal Johnson and Robert Stam, eds., Brazilian Cinema, 373-374.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

consequences of economic censorship. Women have moved from less expensive, cooperative filmmaking to more expensive, commercially viable filmmaking. Some left documentary filmmaking and moved to fictional filmmaking for economic as well as personal reasons. Others eventually left their work in film completely and began working with (Betacam) video. The term, economic censorship, is one that these women introduced during their interviews. From their comments, the concept can best be defined as a feeling that one has not been allowed access to production funds to make a film project based on criteria related to predictions regarding the film's potential success in the market place.

During the military regime, economic censorship ran alongside political censorship. Ana Carolina and Tereza Trautman reflect on their experiences having their films banned for extended periods of time and note that this translated into a form of economic censorship. There are concrete economic consequences of having a film banned. If the film is not released, then, as an independent producer and director, your production company can go bankrupt along with your reputation. Ana Carolina notes that having one film censored did not prevent her from getting to do subsequent films but that she was put on a sort of list of the malditos (damned).¹¹⁵ Tereza Trautman states she was told by the general director of Embrafilme that she wasn't going to receive more funds because she would just end up making one more banned film.¹¹⁶ Trautman asserts that an official in Embrafilme said that her film Os Homens Que Eu Tive was going to be nominated to

¹¹⁵ Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 26 August 2005.

¹¹⁶ Tereza Trautman, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 29 November 2001.

compete for the Coruja de Ouro (a prestigious film award in Brazil). But, since her film was banned, she was not eligible to compete for the award.¹¹⁷

Perhaps the most insidious factor characterizing political censorship in Brazil is the way in which it diverted attention away from the realities of economic censorship. Ana Maria Magalhães reveals they all knew political censorship would end one day but they didn't have an adequate plan to address structural changes when this became reality.¹¹⁸ Once redemocratization began in 1984, she says the situation for artists turned into a violent form of economic censorship in which you had to “matar um leão por dia para conseguir trabalhar dignamente, fazer teu filme.”¹¹⁹ Suggesting favoritism described earlier by Ana Carolina, Ana Maria goes on to explain that this context of economic censorship is a rigid system and operates from within:

[nesse contexto] muitas injustiças são cometidas contra os artistas. Entre eles, entre si. Tem um artista com mais estatus. Tem outro com menos. Isso tudo é muito ligado ao poder econômico. [...] Tem uma censura econômica do poder aliada à própria classe e isso é uma coisa muito triste.¹²⁰

Ana Maria Magalhães believes that the main difference between the type of censorship people experienced under the military regime until the mid 1980s and the type of economic censorship experienced since then is that there is no light at the end of the tunnel for economic censorship.¹²¹ Comments by other filmmakers suggest they concur with Magalhães' assessment but they do not go into details. Clearly, complaints about the

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ana Maria Magalhães, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 28 November 2001.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

inner workings of a system in which they still wished to work would not advance their careers.

Partly as a response to the changing economic landscape, these women filmmakers changed their film practice. Many left documentary filmmaking to direct fictional films. The reasons for this shift in film practice can also be understood as a continuation of a learning process. Novice filmmakers often start by directing shorter works and less expensive documentary films before taking on more expensive, feature-length fiction films. The move to fiction filmmaking was also a result of women being able to secure production funding – from private as well as public resources. Some women began working in fiction for personal reasons. And, lastly, some women left documentary filmmaking because there was simply no market for it. Embrafilme provided indirect support for documentary film in the form of distribution. But the exhibition sector was not interested in screening documentary films and the orientation of Embrafilme from the mid 1970s on supported feature-length fiction filmmaking to compete with imported foreign films (i.e. American and European films).

Although the shift to fictional filmmaking as a result of Embrafilme's focus on the market and competing with Hollywood films, these women gave individual reasons for moving into fictional filmmaking. Their rationale often relates to a desire to talk about the nation from a personal, intimate perspective as opposed to a distant, intellectual approach. Sandra Werneck, who produced and directed many short documentary films, decided that documentary film was not an effective tool for her. She says she felt that denouncing social ills didn't help and, for this reason, decided to focus on human beings

and their feelings as a possible outlet for her concerns about politics and society.¹²²

Others felt that documentary filmmaking was, in fact, an effective tool for intervening in social and political issues. Lúcia Murat indicates that the structure of her film Que Bom Te Ver Viva was directly related to the politics at the time. At a point when there was a strong general desire to move beyond the years of the dictatorship, Lúcia felt that the combination of documentary style testimonies and fictional scenes would be the most effective way to discuss the long-term effects of torture, political repression, and survival.¹²³ Murat states she thought her strategy of representation was effective in that the documentary-style testimonies would provide the information and the fictional scenes with the actress would provide the emotional response.¹²⁴ Ana Carolina describes her departure from documentary to fiction film as a highly personal endeavor related to a change in her curiosity:

Os documentários já tem uma preocupação grande de ‘o que é isto aqui?’ Mas com os documentários, eu ainda estava preocupada em ser uma intelectual que analisa as questões. Eu estava falível de grandes erros na condição de socióloga, que eu não sou. Mas quando eu parti para a ficção, abandonei completamente o salto alto e falei, ‘vou descrever a minha preocupação, o que estou sintindo na discussão da minha inserção à identidade brasileira, do meu mal-estar de ser ou não ser brasileiro.’¹²⁵

For Ana Carolina, the shift to fiction filmmaking represented an opportunity to talk about highly personal experiences. As she indicates, she was greatly concerned with Brazil, Brazilian identity and how she fit into the prevailing concepts of brasilidade. The shift to

¹²² Sandra Werneck, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 16 July 2002.

¹²³ Lúcia Murat, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 27 November 2001.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 26 August 2005.

fiction filmmaking, for her, represented a way of making herself the subject and object of the discussion.

However, independent, auteur filmmaking came under attack as being detrimental to the success of the Brazilian film industry. Considered a highly personal manner of expression, auteur film was central to women's filmmaking.¹²⁶ The ability to maintain an independent, auteur film practice was extremely difficult and led to unfair criticisms of both groundbreaking filmmakers. Whereas the auteur visions of the Cinema Novo filmmakers were lauded and seen as the gemstone of Brazilian filmmaking, by the time women filmmakers starting directing their own films they faced a context that did not necessarily welcome aesthetically challenging, thoughtful films. A balance needed to be struck between films that are commercially successful and then reinvesting that money into those projects that were socially and culturally significant.¹²⁷

The successes these women filmmakers have had as both directors and producers belie the presence women have in Brazilian cinema. Countering the assertion that Brazilian women had confirmed their place in the film industry, Gutman asserts:

O espaço da mulher era restrito. O espaço como produtora e como diretora, claro. Como técnica, a gente já tinha conseguido algumas vitórias. Não é isso. Mas quando chegar à área da produção e à direção era mais complicado.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ In her interview Yamasaki thinks that, ironically, auteur filmmaking was likely subsidized by the success of pornochanchadas. Yamasaki, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 21 August 2005.

¹²⁷ The filmmaker Sílvio Tandler addresses the importance of those films that are culturally and socially significant – and which may not be commercially viable – in his thesis “Cinema e Estado: Em Defesa do Miúra,” (M.A. Thesis, Pontífica Universidade Católica, Rio de Janeiro, 1982).

¹²⁸ Eunice Gutman, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 28 August 2005.

She explains that the process became more complicated when it came to matters of handling large sums of money. Women (historically) have lacked access to and control of financial networks and, thus, were at a distinct disadvantage when they wanted to direct their own films.

Women Filmmakers and the Bigger Picture

Organizing and fighting for a spot in the Brazilian film industry as women filmmakers posed a challenge. Women held very different opinions about their work, how they had or had not been integrated into the film industry, how they had or had not suffered from gender discrimination or the same forms of oppression that other women claimed to have experienced. Some questioned the term “women filmmakers,” doubting the significance of being female and directing a film. They also questioned the role of the State.

Not everyone believes that State support led to women’s success as filmmakers. Some would place less importance on financial support and argue that women filmmakers in Brazil made their way to the director’s chair as a result of larger shifts in society. Ana Maria Magalhaes, who worked as a film and television actress in the 1970s and 1980s, produced and directed the 1976 film Mulheres de Cinema (Women of Cinema), which treats the participation of women as actresses and members of production crews since the introduction of the art form into Brazil. When she reflects on women as directors, she states: “Nos anos 70, na época em que eu fiz esse filme, não era tão comum a mulher que estava dirigindo filmes Tinha umas pessoas fazendo filmes. Mas não era, assim,

muito comum.”¹²⁹ She notes that she associated the emergence of women filmmakers such as Ana Carolina with an emerging feminism and that many women,

já naquela época estavam começando a invadir o cinema pelo desempenho do equipe. Elas deixavam de ser só *script girl* – porque só tinha *script girl* – e elas começavam a deixar de fazer só isso para trabalhar um pouco em produção, assistente de direção, trabalhar um pouco aqui, um pouco ali. E isso foi formando uma geração de cineastas.¹³⁰

Magalhães makes an important connection between the increased presence of women in cinema, this being associated with an emerging feminism, and the broadened opportunities afforded to women at this time. Her reflection on this period suggests that there was an awakening of possibilities and that the success of one woman led to others wanting to gain access to filmmaking as well, most notably by participating in film production crews in technical positions. She reveals that she considered Ana Carolina to be a role model as a woman director because she was serious, highly skilled, knew cinema very well, and put her personal vision into her films.¹³¹

Ana Maria Magalhães’ comment that there was an invasion or sudden presence of women filmmakers suggests that a structural shift took place that brought about their participation. As indicated previously, film production in Brazil increased dramatically under direction of the INC. This increase in the number of films being produced translated into an increased number of opportunities for women to fill positions in film crews. This experience became a vital step in developing the skills and connections women needed to direct feature-length films during the era of Embrafilme. However,

¹²⁹ Ana Maria Magalhães, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 28 November 2001.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

when asked if she felt that Embrafilme played a role in helping women enter the film industry as directors, Magalhães emphasizes women's desire to express themselves and gain greater social acceptance over state support:

eu acho que isso foi uma coisa, uma especie de como a sociedade brasileira absorveu a liberação feminina. Acho que a sociedade brasileira absorveu a liberação feminina e se manifestando dessa forma. Porque a forma do audiovisual, a forma de expressão do audiovisual era até então uma forma iminentemente masculina de expressão, com raras exceções A partir da liberação feminina e de uma produção grande, a cinematográfica no Brasil na época, nos anos 70, a produção é grande, juntou uma coisa com a outra e eu acho que a mulher começou a ocupar esse espaço na produção de filmes. Mais, equipes, em todas as áreas. E eu acho que essa é uma resposta das mulheres brasileiras. E das mulheres que sempre, em relação a essa liberação. Quer dizer, é uma resposta prática. Não foi uma coisa coordenada. Não foi uma coisa pensada. Não foi um movimento formal.¹³²

Magalhães' comments indicate that tangible and intangible factors came together and led to more women directing films in Brazil. The observation that "one thing joined another" reflects on the gradual creation of access points and establishing a context that was more hospitable to newcomers, women included. Although clearly not a coordinated movement or a result entirely attributable to one or two specific measures, there are a few salient forces that helped restructure filmmaking in Brazil, which, in turn, facilitated women's progress to becoming film directors. It is curious that state film agencies did not figure into Magalhães' memory as providing specific benefits to women and filmmaking. This indicates some difficulty defining what it meant to be a woman and a filmmaker in the 1970s and early 1980s as well as conflicting opinions of Embrafilme and its role in supporting filmmaking in Brazil.

¹³² Ibid.

The appearance of several young women film directors coincided with the rise of the international women's movement in the mid 1970s. Not surprisingly, this group of young Brazilian women filmmakers found themselves and their work interlinked with larger questions about the changing roles of women in society and politics. Being women and entering a profession that had been dominated by men led to discussions of how women filmmakers had inserted themselves into the profession. In what ways, if any, did they differ from dominant, male models of producing and directing films?

When asked to reflect on the idea of a specifically women's cinema or films by women, differing opinions arose. Although most state that filmmaking in Brazil had been dominated by men and had been a highly masculine mode of expression for years prior to their arrival, few explicitly agree that a category of "films by women" or "women's cinema" exists.¹³³ Most vocal in her rejection of the category, Ana Carolina views the concept as nothing more than a chauvinist maneuver to marginalize women filmmakers.¹³⁴ Rejection or uncertainty regarding the category may stem from difficulties in defining what specifically characterizes films made by women other than the fact that there is a woman making the final decisions behind the cameras. Another explanation may rest with the idea that these women do not feel they have been oppressed in any significant way or that being female prevented them from advancing in their careers. Illustrating this point of view, Tizuka Yamasaki highlights that she grew up in a

¹³³ Tata Amaral sees this not as a division that she engages with but rather as a gesture that film scholars take in order to critique films. Sandra Werneck asserts that women do not have any special talents. Tata Amaral, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 13 November 2001. Sandra Werneck, interviewed by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 16 July 2002.

¹³⁴ Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 26 August 2005.

household with three generations of independent women and, as such, did not feel that she experienced the same forms of oppression that others may have.¹³⁵

One characteristic used to define films directed by women or women's cinema was the notion of a particular way of seeing – a gaze – or a particularly female mode of communicating that could be attributed to the filmmaker. In feminist film studies, the issue has largely fallen out of favor but it was a controversial issue women faced when they first started directing films and one that resurfaces on occasion. The main theme of the São Paulo Short Film Festival held in August of 2001 was women in cinema. A plenary session was held where several generations of women gathered to discuss the notion of an “olhar feminino” (a female gaze). Eunice Gutman reveals that women gathered to discuss these same issues in the 1970s and 1980s.¹³⁶

These women film directors generally reject the concept of the “gaze” as theorized by Laura Mulvey. They do not embrace the voyeuristic-scopophilic ways of seeing as described by Mulvey in her essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” originally published by Screen in 1975. The concern over whether or not a woman sees the world in a way differently from a man stems from anxious joy. On the one hand, some women directors embrace the communicative potential, resistance and liberation of holding firm to the notion that women see the world in a way differently from men arising from their biological sex and subsequent social conditioning. On the other hand, some women directors are wary that the potential to challenge prevailing understandings of gender and society may be jeopardized if the message and the message maker are positioned as belonging to a separate context. For these women, embracing the notion of the “female

¹³⁵ Tizuka Yamasaki, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 21 August 2005.

¹³⁶ Eunice Gutman, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 27 August 2005.

gaze” may only serve to short circuit the goal to participate fully in social dialogue. In short, these women do not embrace the notion of a female gaze tied to the female body. Uninterested in essentialist notions of representation, these directors seek to work on issues that pique their curiosity or affect them or the worlds in which they live.

Eunice Gutman most clearly defends her position. She supports the idea of women’s cinema but denies the idea of a particularly female way of representing. Instead, she maintains there is one cinematic language that is used differently by different filmmakers depending on his or her background:

A linguagem cinematográfica é uma, que é uma técnica ... como é que você usa um plano geral, como é que você usa uma *close*, como é que você usa um plano médio. Essa linguagem é única, é universal. Existe o filme de autor, existem várias tendências – mas dentro dessa linguagem. Agora, logicamente, se você vai interpretar uma história, você vai interpretar de acordo com a educação que você recebeu. Então tudo vem de ahi.¹³⁷

What matters fundamentally, according to Gutman, are the experiences you have had and how you have been shaped as an individual. In addition, Ana Maria Magalhães asserts that, as a director, you have to develop a complex vision of the world. She warns against “uma visão compartimentada” (a compartmentalized vision) and stresses that you have to move beyond yourself when directing.¹³⁸

Women’s Filmmaking and Social Movements

Today, it is unlikely these women would be asked to reflect on the fact that they are female and directing films. Their work would most likely not be analyzed with the

¹³⁷ Eunice Gutman, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 27 August 2005.

¹³⁸ Ana Maria Magalhães, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 28 November 2001.

surprise or curiosity that a woman directed the film. However, these questions arose from a context in which many social shifts were taking place. In 1964, the military regime took power with the goal to effectively silence social and economic reform movements. The State punished trade unionists and labor activists in the South and sought to crush land and economic reform movements in the Northeast. The “economic miracle” of 1968 to 1973 exacerbated social inequities and brought union leaders and mothers into the streets to protest for change despite potential state repression. Out of this initial phase in which women were making demands on the government in the name of motherhood arose fervent discussions of women’s rights and their changing roles in society. In 1975, the United Nations announced the Decade of the Woman and, effectively, solidified a new international women’s movement.

A few women active in filmmaking at this time were also politically active. Tetê Moraes took a keen interest in land reform movements in the South. In 1987, she completed the documentary Terra para Rose (Land for Rose), in which she focused on one woman and her family’s struggle for land reform during the occupation of an abandoned farm in Rio Grande do Sul. Prior to this, Tetê had studied law and worked as a journalist. Because of her close connections to individuals who had been captured and tortured by the regime and her work as a journalist, she was arrested and held for three months in 1970. Fearing she would be arrested again under a program called “preso preventivo” she fled the country and remained in exile for ten years.¹³⁹ For Tetê Moraes, filmmaking has been an extension of her training in the law, her work as a journalist, and an expression of her political concerns.

¹³⁹ Tetê Moraes, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 11 July 2002.

Political activism was not the safest or necessarily the most viable option to express one's opinions during the military dictatorship. Filmmaker Lúcia Murat was arrested for her participation in the leftist guerrilla movement. In the text Brasil: Nunca Mais Murat denounces the torture to which she was subjected while imprisoned.¹⁴⁰ When asked if she participated in any social movements or political groups, Ana Carolina states she participated in a great deal of political militancy starting in 1964 and almost entered into the political group Ação Popular. However, she describes her experience as highly frustrating:

Quase entrei na AP, a Ação Popular. Lutei. Rodopiei pelo partido comunista e detestei. Odiei as pessoas. Eu sai sempre muito mal disposta com as pessoas. E todos os, naquela época, o comportamento masculino e feminino era muito diferente do que é hoje. Os homens do partido comunista eram uma coisa horrorosa. Os companheiros. Os compaheiros – eles tinham uma discriminação [com] a mulher que, em fim. [...] Eles eram homens, melhores do que nós. Eles eram homens capazes. Nós éramos apenas mulheres. Nas reuniões eles saíram. Eles foram para outro lugar. Cineasta inclusive! Mandava eu sair para fazer reunião. Quase entrei na Ação Popular. Não entrei. Eu participei de uma militância barra pesada da VPR, Vanguarda Popular Revolucionaria. Logo sai porque em 1970 e 71 fui presa duas vezes. Então, falei, vou parar com esse negócio. Depois assisti a formação do PT (o Partido dos Trabalhadores). [...] Mas ahi, eu fiz filmes muito políticos mas eu não participei em nenhum partido político. [...] A minha militância foi no cinema. Nem foi no feminismo, nem foi nos partidos da esquerda. Foi no cinema. Foi a expressão cultural.¹⁴¹

In addition to the dangers of imprisonment, Ana Carolina's account suggests that it was particularly difficult for women to participate in political activity due to internal discrimination against women members. While it may be upsetting to hear her account of

¹⁴⁰ Arquidiocese de São Paulo, Brasil: Nunca Mais (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1985).

¹⁴¹ Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 26 August 2005.

gender discrimination, the important point to extract from Ana Carolina's accounts is that film was a viable outlet to express her political views and a form of political activism.

Tizuka Yamasaki shares a similar perspective on her filmmaking practice and political activism. Like Ana Carolina, Tizuka Yamasaki reports that she was not welcomed to political conversations. When asked to explain why she believes she was not invited to participate in any political dialogue with other (male) filmmakers, she simply states that politics was an "assunto de macho" (male matter).¹⁴² Although she did not participate in political parties, Yamasaki was invited to participate in the Conselho Nacional das Mulheres in Brasilia in 1985 that oversaw the creation of the women's police delegacies, maternity leave and other issues that affect women's ability to join the work force. Overall, she sees her film practice as her best weapon to defend an issue she feels strongly about and cinema has always been her best tool for manifesting her role as a citizen.¹⁴³

Each woman I spoke with expressed her particular views on society and the issues she prioritizes. Despite their differences, these women share concerns for Brazilian identity or brasilidade, Brazil as a nation, and communication between disparate groups. The women I interviewed were concerned with and advocated for the quotidian needs of women. As discussed before, the women's movement in Brazil was composed of those that advocated for feminist causes and those that fought for what have been termed "feminine" needs. The majority share a common rejection of "feminism." Although they do not define themselves as having feminist perspectives, they acknowledge that feminist readings of their works can result. It is interesting to note that when the subject of

¹⁴² Tizuka Yamasaki, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 21 August 2005.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

feminism was broached, some filmmakers started shaking their heads, or quietly stated “no” at the first mention of the word “feminism.” Many women filmmakers did not openly embrace feminist thought as introduced in Brazil. Although they are unable to specify why they do not and did not embrace feminism, their comments suggest that they associate feminist thought with a great deal of essentialism and antagonism between classes, races and cultures. In this, I believe their rejection of “feminism” stems from a belief that it fundamentally opposes their concern for the nation and integration.

Reflections Post-Retomada

Despite the successes that Embrafilme consolidated during the nearly two decades it operated, many welcomed the ‘creative destruction’ that newly-elected president Fernando Collor instituted in 1990. The company had been criticized since the 1980s and from many angles. As a cornerstone of state support to the film sector, Embrafilme’s demise had been in the offing for some time prior to Collor’s announcement in 1990. Attacks against Embrafilme came from several directions. At the height of its success in the late 1970s and with a 35% share of the internal Brazilian market, newspapers regularly reported complaints of corruption, favoritism and general inefficiency within Embrafilme.¹⁴⁴ Exhibitors critiqued the highly bureaucratic administration of Embrafilme and private distributors were not pleased with Embrafilme’s market share.¹⁴⁵ The idea to

¹⁴⁴ According to filmmaker Bruno Barreto, one of the nation’s most prestigious daily newspapers, the Folha de São Paulo, published unflattering articles about Embrafilme and, thus, established a negative climate for the film agency. Bruno Barreto cited in Denise Lopes Costa, “O Cinema Pós-Collor,” 14, 19.

¹⁴⁵ Randal Johnson, The Film Industry in Brazil, 169. Indeed, André Piero Gatti notes that in the 1970s, Embrafilme was the second most profitable distributor in Brazil. See his Cinema Brasileiro em Ritmo de Indústria (São Paulo: Núcleo de Cinema e Vídeo (CCSP), Divisão de Pesquisas – ETP Cinema, 1999), 44.

privatize the company had been suggested during the redemocratization period from 1984 to 1988.

The prevailing idea among those in support of Collor's measures was the belief that social and economic progress necessitated the State stepping back from supporting and directing the economy. Others held quite different perspective on the imposed neo-liberal measures and argued that state support was vital to Brazilian cultural producers. Caught in the middle were Brazilian filmmakers, who would experience an extraordinary period of painful destruction before the arrival of the slow, modest period of reconstruction several years later, known as the Retomada. The closure of Embrafilme meant that film projects were immediately suspended, production funds were lost and contracts were broken.¹⁴⁶ Because the first films completed during the Retomada were directed by women, the role of women in the film industry received a brief period of recognition. The initial feeling of joy and relief at the start of the Retomada has passed. The current of production financing, distribution and exhibition does not seem significantly better.

As indicated earlier, few women filmmakers miss Embrafilme. Their critiques rest not with the existence of a state agency to assist independent filmmaking in Brazil but rather with the orientation of Embrafilme during the 1980s. In the 1980s, Embrafilme was driven by a concern for the market and producing films that could compete with American (i.e. "Hollywood") cinema. For some the closure of Embrafilme resulted in positive changes. Specifically, they note greater aesthetic freedoms and a break from old patterns. Lúcia Murat feels that because film really isn't an industry in Brazil, you have

¹⁴⁶ The extinction of Embrafilme meant that a total a three films were released in 1992, compared to an average of 80 during Embrafilme's existence. Many films that had been completed did not find distribution. Denise Costa Lopes, "Cinema Brasileiro Pós-Collor," 31-32.

greater opportunities for personal expression. She suggests that independent cinema is quite strong now and will become stronger when ANCINE (Associação Nacional de Cine) develops a pro-cinema discourse. Tizuka Yamasaki agrees with Lúcia Murat's assertion that there are greater freedoms after the closure of Embrafilme but believes that in the current context independent, auteur cinema suffers. Sandra Werneck believes that there is greater diversity now in Brazilian film. There are more genres and there is a greater variety of cinematic languages. Lúcia Murat also believes that the closure of Embrafilme has allowed filmmaking to pop up in other parts of Brazil.

When asked to reflect on filmmaking in the current context vis-à-vis the era of Embrafilme, Werneck notes that now productions are larger, filmmaking has become more glamorous, more polished, there are big contracts, large crews and a lot more money is involved. I believe her description points to the continued market-orientation of Brazilian cinema. A balance needs to be struck such that large, glamorous productions are as valid a piece of Brazilian cinema as much smaller, independent, auteur films. The problem with the current context is that independent, auteur cinema has been usurped. Ana Carolina notes that as an independent filmmaker she has had great difficulty producing. She cites that the only aesthetic that has been able to take root in Brazil is a banal, superficial, polished language promoted by TV Globo. Ana Maria Magalhães agrees. She notes that Brazilian cinema began copying TV in the 1980s, resulting in a horrible superficiality. In the current context, Ana Maria Magalhães feels that people do not develop their own models to represent their reality in TV and cinema. Moreover, TV and cinema continue to be separate worlds.

The current system of film financing is imperfect and tied to the (foreign) market more than ever. At the time of my interview with Ana Carolina, the Lei do Audiovisual was set to expire. Although she believed at the time that it would be renewed, she clearly states that if it isn't, she does not know how she will be able to produce films. Over all, she feels that she has been squeezed out and the market has taken over. Independent cinema, in her mind, was far more independent in the past. It is difficult to disagree with her when, in fact, large corporations in the current context are able to establish foundations, call themselves independent producers, and acquire funding to produce films. Large corporations have established private foundations. For example, TV Globo has spawned Globo Filmes Independente. Technically an independent film producer, it is in a position to take advantage of the Audiovisual Law intended to assist (truly) independent film producers.

The case of Globo Filmes Independent speaks to a general neoliberal trend in Brazilian cultural policies. Film projects are now selected and funded by private industries. In the past, recall, Sandra Werneck noted that the selection process under Embrafilme was very democratic. While she makes no direct critique of the current system of funding, her choice of words to describe the past context as very “democratic” suggests that the current situation lacks this characteristic. Simply stated, this is a continuation of a form of economic censorship against artistically challenging, politically charged, socially relevant works. Although she says she has not had any problems, Tizuka Yamasaki notes that there are certain obligations to associate yourself with the

companies that support your film. She also notes that companies may choose not to support your film because they do not like the “cara” (look) that it may have.¹⁴⁷

What has been shown is that State support, direct or indirect, is a vital source for independent filmmaking in Brazil. Financial assistance to filmmaking and political policies that promote independent cultural productions are absolute necessities for the continued existence of independent filmmaking. Without proactive legal backing and State orientation favorable to Brazilian cultural production, access to participate in the cultural development of the nation will continue to be limited to the privileged few, creating an entirely anti-citizen, anti-democratic context.

¹⁴⁷ Tizuka Yamasaki, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 21 August 2005.

Chapter 4

Contesting the Boundaries of Belonging in the Early Films of Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares and Tizuka Yamasaki

In the interviews with Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares and Tizuka Yamasaki, both women reference their relationship to Cinema Novo filmmakers but are quick to establish their thematic distance from their predecessors. Although Cinema Novo directors such as Nelson Pereira dos Santos and Arnaldo Jabor investigated the question of gender vis-à-vis the failures of the political left in the early 1970s, their films failed to challenge the heteronormative, patriarchal family. In this chapter, I discuss how both Ana Carolina and Tizuka Yamasaki develop the question of alienation, prevalent in the films by Cinema Novo directors. However, in contrast to their predecessors, both women investigate the question of being separated or estranged from society by focusing attention on the experiences of women, female sexuality, and the roles women play in the family. Thus, I explore the ways in which the early films by Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares and Tizuka Yamasaki fall on a continuum between rejecting an old society and engaging with a new one. Despite aesthetic differences between them, both filmmakers reflect a common desire to (re)insert women into a redefined civil society.

The question of alienation was at the heart of cultural debates during the 1950s and 1960s. Shortly before democratically elected president Juscelino Kubitschek took office

in 1956, a center of studies and intellectual thought called the Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros (Institute of Higher Studies, ISEB) was founded. The thinkers who joined the ISEB formulated a nationalist thesis, seeing the primary social problem of Brazil as one in which an “authentic” nation clashed with an alienated, inauthentic, “anti-nation.”¹ Set against the backdrop of the fervent developmentalism under president Juscelino Kubitschek, the ISEB thinkers suggested that a foreign presence was to blame rather than an alienating structure of Brazilian society since its inception. Then emerging Cinema Novo directors were greatly influenced by the Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros (ISEB).² Randal Johnson observes that Paulo César Saraceni’s O Desafio (The Challenge, 1966), Glauber Rocha’s Terra em Transe (Land in Anguish, 1967), Gustavo Dahl’s O Bravo Guerreiro (The Brave Warrior, 1968) and Nelson Pereira dos Santos’ Fome de Amor (Hunger for Love, 1968) all focus on the failures of the political left.³

The issue of alienation and sociopolitical failure becomes exacerbated in the 1970s. Nelson Pereira dos Santos’ 1970 film Azyllo Muito Louco takes the story “O Alienista” (“The Psychiatrist”) by Machado de Assis as its basis. While the literary work by Machado de Assis reflects on the abuses of science and power in 19th century Brazil, the film by dos Santos is a veiled critique of the military regime that has usurped power, turning normal citizens into lunatics. In the early years of the decade, the question of gender emerges as an issue of concern parallel to that of the failures of the political left. For example, Nelson Pereira dos Santos’ Quem é Beta? (Who is Beta?, 1972) treats the

¹ Randall Johnson, The Film Industry in Brazil, 89. Note that this is also the primary dichotomy found in the Anthropophagist movement – what is authentic and what is foreign? How to proceed in defining Brazilian culture and national identity?

² Ibid.

³ Randal Johnson and Robert Stam, “The Shape of Brazilian History,” 34-35.

destruction of civilization and disruption of patriarchal harmony when a third woman unbalances a couple.

Of the Cinema Novo group, it is Arnaldo Jabor's films that reflect most on questions of alienation and gender in the 1970s. Two films directed by Jabor, Toda Nudez Será Castigada (All Nudity Will Be Punished, 1973) and O Casamento (The Wedding, 1976) are adaptations of literary works by novelist and playwright Nelson Rodrigues. Both films discuss male homosexuality within the heteronormative family. In the case of Toda Nudez Será Castigada, a young man's homosexuality is related to the upbringing by three single aunts, resulting in his sexual deviance. The main tension in the film (and novel) O Casamento rests on whether or not a father should reveal that his daughter's fiancé is homosexual.⁴ A third film by Jabor, Tudo Bem (Everything's Fine, 1977) has been identified as an elaborate metaphor of construction to comment on the process of development in Brazil.⁵ Although the films by Jabor and dos Santos are concerned with society and questions of alienation, the focus is largely on male characters who were disconnected, emasculated, and "lost" in their own worlds. The vision in these films is largely acritical of female gender, female sexuality and women's position in families and society at large. Ultimately, these films represent little desire to change or challenge the gendered order from which these male characters have been seemingly rejected. Conversely, the unspoken goal for these male characters is to gain reentry and overcome problems that stem from the disruption of a previously (assumed) harmonious order.

⁴ The novel, one of the more polemical works by Rodrigues, was banned by the Castelo Branco regime for being indecent shortly after its publication in 1966.

⁵ Robert Stam and Ismail Xavier note that the idea of disruption and construction found in the film Tudo Bem finds a parallel in Ruy Guerra and Nelson Xavier's A Queda (The Fall, 1976) and Glauber Rocha's A Idade da Terra (The Age of the Earth, 1980). See their article "Recent Brazilian Cinema: Allegory / Metacinema / Carnival," Film Quarterly 41.3 (Spring, 1988): 26.

Questions raised regarding gender in these films address patriarchal loss rather than investigate the intersection of gender and political power.

Three box-office successes from the second half of the 1970s bring the question of female gender to the fore but also in a very acritical manner. These films include Bruno Barreto's Dona Flor e Seus Dois Maridos (Dona Flor and her Two Husbands, 1976), Carlos Diegues' Xica da Silva (1976), and Neville de Almeida's A dama da Lotação (The Lady on the Bus, 1978). The film Xica da Silva focuses on the 18th century Afro-Brazilian slave woman and her rise within the inner circles of colonial power. Meanwhile, Sonia Braga stars in the leading role of Bruno Barreto's adaptation of Jorge Amado's 1966 novel. Braga also stars in A Dama da Lotação (1978), the tale of a young woman who engages in sexual affairs with men she meets on a public bus. Notably, all three films were supported with funds from Embrafilme.⁶ Although all three films have female characters in the leading role, they do not seek to regain their female protagonist's subjectivity or question gender-influenced social and economic disparities. Conversely, these three top-grossing films of the decade take a cue from the financial success of vapid pornochanchadas and share a highly sexualized representation of Brazilian women that ultimately serves to uphold essentialized definitions of Brazilianness, including the hypersexualized mulatto and Afro-Brazilian woman.

Women filmmakers took the question of alienation in different directions starting in the second half of the 1970s. Their approach to this question distinguishes itself from their male predecessors. Films by directors such as Ana Carolina [Mar de Rosas (Sea of Flowers, 1977), Das Tripas Coração (Heart and Guts, 1982) and Sonho de Valsa (Dream Waltz, 1986)] and Tizuka Yamasaki [Gaijin: os caminhos da liberdade (Gaijin: Paths to

⁶ Johnson, The Film Industry in Brazil, 44.

Freedom, 1980), Parahyba, Mulher Macho (Parahyba, Manly Woman, 1983), and Patriamada (Sing, the Beloved Country, 1984)], focus on female characters that experience alienation but, unlike in previous films, the protagonists do not suffer because of a social system that has been disrupted or gone awry. By contrast, these films locate women's exclusion in how society itself has developed and functions.

The aesthetic strategies employed by both filmmakers vary over time, gradually moving towards redefining and reclaiming female subjectivity and women's participation in Brazilian culture and society. As will be noted, this shift in mode of representation can be attributed partly to the choices made by individual directors as well as key changes in cultural and political policy during the second half of the 1970s.

Starting in the middle of the 1970s, the sociopolitical landscape began to shift consequently allowing for greater, more vocal participation of women in civil society. Three key shifts took place in Brazilian politics. As mentioned above, the hard-line position of the military regime was attenuated when General Ernesto Geisel assumed power in 1974 and declared distensão. Shortly thereafter, women gained international support when the United Nations declared the International Decade of the Woman in 1975. And, third, the Brazilian Catholic Church gradually adopted a new message in the 1970s that women should be treated as equals. Despite these openings, a place for women in the public realm was hard fought and not without its vicissitudes

The period of political relaxing, distensão, from 1974 to 1979 is characterized by tensions between democratically-leaning leadership, recalcitrant military leaders who did not wish to give up their power and a reinvigorated populace eager to restore and claim their civil, political and social rights. Although some progress was made towards

redemocratizing the nation, the specter of violence and repression loomed. Wladimir Herzog, journalist and director of TV Cultura, died as a result of state-sanctioned torture in the DOI-Codi (Destacamento de Operações de Informações – Centro de Operações de Defesa Interna [Department of Information and Operations – Center of Internal Defense Operations]) in São Paulo in 1975.⁷ Herzog's death reverberated throughout the country and prompted one of the first post-coup mass public protests. Approximately one year later the metalworker Manuel Fiel Filho was also found dead in his cell from torture, prompting additional public outcry. By 1978, students returned to the streets to demand change and emboldened union workers went on strike in São Paulo. Repressive politics may not have changed by the mid to late 1970s but a reempowered Brazilian public's expectations for their government had.

A period of political opening known as Abertura, witnessed the declaration of general amnesty in 1979, the subsequent return of exiles to Brazil and the movement for direct, free elections in the early 1980s. Political opening was not immediate. Right-wing paramilitary groups staged a series of bomb attacks on groups organizing new political parties, the Municipal Assembly in Rio de Janeiro, and a number of newspapers.⁸ Union organizer and future president of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula) along with other labor organizers were jailed by the DOPS in São Paulo under the Lei de Segurança Nacional (LSN, National Security Law).

⁷ The DOI and the CODI were separate but related organizations within the military regime's repressive apparatus and answered to the SNI (Serviço Nacional de Informação, [National Information Service]), which took on the responsibility of fighting "the enemy within." For further information on the DOI, the CODI, and other agencies cited as practitioners of torture in Brazil, see Maria Helena Moreira Alves, State and Opposition in Military Brazil (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 119-131.

⁸ These newspapers include the *Tribuna da Luta Operária* and the *Tribuna da Imprensa* in Rio de Janeiro and the *Tribuna de Vitória* and the *Hora do Povo* in São Paulo. A car bomb explodes at the seat of the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* as late as 1983.

Changes in the orientation of the military regime would afford citizens of Brazil greater space for political participation. Motivated by the United Nations declaration of the Decade of the Woman in 1975 and the political liberalization that came with the Geisel government, the second-wave women's movement greatly expanded in the mid 1970s.⁹ Newspapers such as Brasil Mulher (1975) and Nós Mulheres (1976) began publication and women mobilized in favor of general political amnesty (Movimento Feminino pela Anistia) and protested the cost of living (Movimento do Custo de Vida). Advances were made in women's civil and legal status. A measure was put into place to draft a new civil code in 1975. The original proposal took a few steps forward in reducing the civil and legal inferiority of women but maintained that the husband was in charge of the sociedade conjugal (marital union).¹⁰ Women protested the "legitimate defense of honor" (legítima defesa da honra) used in Brazilian courts to exonerate men who had killed their wives or female companions for presumed infidelities. And, in 1977, a law permitting divorce went into effect. In short, these years represent a somewhat undefined mode of feminism in which a tension can be found regarding how and in what directions the women's movement should proceed – general struggles vis-à-vis specific demands (as lutas gerais versus as lutas específicas).¹¹ Until the end of the decade, the second-

⁹ By second-wave feminism, I refer to the rise in feminist activism in the 1960s. The second-wave contrasts with a period of first-wave feminism, taking place in the early years of the 20th century. While the period of first-wave feminism sought to eliminate official obstacles to women's liberation (i.e. suffrage), the period of second-wave feminism generally sought to expand women's liberation, including increased access to education, healthcare and greater career opportunities.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the 1977 Divorce Law, the Project for a New Civil Code, the New Civil Statute for Women and other rights and legislation affecting women in Brazil, see Florisa Verucci, A Mulher e o Direito (São Paulo: Nobel, 1987). For a discussion of the new civil code, which finally went into effect in the year 2000, consult Keila Grinberg, Código Civil e Cidadania (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahara Editora, 2001).

¹¹ Alvarez, Engendering Democracy, 96.

wave women's movement in Brazil can be considered relatively unified but on the verge of splintering as groups focused increasingly on more specific objectives.

With the declaration of Amnesty, society mobilized and began demanding political change. The first mass public demonstration for direct free elections took place in late 1983 and continued into the first half of 1984. Over a million people filled the Praça da Sé and the Vale do Anhangabaú in São Paulo. In Rio de Janeiro, a million people occupied Candelária, an event which was captured by Tizuka Yamasaki in her film Patriamada (1984). Emotional highs were met with lows when the National Congress rejected the amendment for direct, free elections. One day later, the military ordered an end to student protests and the president of the União Nacional de Estudantes (UNE, the National Student Union) was arrested. Direct, free elections did eventually take place and the military-led dictatorship effectively ended in March of 1985.

Filmmaking and the State During the Distensão

The period from 1974 to 1979 was also characterized by dramatic shifts in cultural policy. Most notable is the state's institution of a two-pronged approach to control the cultural sector. On the one hand, it sponsored artistic expression it deemed consonant with its objective to consolidate its power. On the other hand, the state directly censored cultural works that defied its mandate. This state orientation with regard to the cultural sector rose out of the definition and redefinition of cultural policy which started in the early 1970s and was cemented in the "Política Nacional de Cultura" of 1975. Overall, the second half of the 1970s represents the most intense period of state intervention in the cultural sector.

As mentioned above, stimulating cultural production was one part of the state's mechanism to control the cultural sector. The active role of the state experienced in the early years of the military regime would begin to slow in the early 1980s. This is largely due to enormous financial debt and high inflation rates which placed limits on imports. Randal Johnson notes that this resulted in a rise in film production costs and a decrease in revenue for film producers.¹² What is more, Embrafilme, which had provided financing for some of the best Brazilian films, began to retreat from its involvement in film production, solely providing advances on distribution.¹³ Economic protections shifted to a neoliberal approach towards cultural production. As mentioned above, political leaders had been calling for the privatization of the cultural industry which came to fruition during the presidency of Fernando Collor.

Women Auteurs

Both Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares and Tizuka Yamasaki can be considered auteur filmmakers and, in fact, they refer to their films on the female condition as their auteurist works. The notion of feminist auteur filmmakers has received substantial attention in feminist film criticism.¹⁴ In artistic production, authorship suggests patriarchal authority or individualistic control of one's work. But in her text on feminist film auteurs, Geetha Ramanathan brings together female auteurship and the feminist text to address that what is truly at stake in women's auteur filmmaking is "the films' larger acknowledgment of

¹² Ibid., 172-178.

¹³ Ibid., 192.

¹⁴ See for example, Alexandra Juhasz, Women of Vision: Histories in Feminist Film and Video (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Diana Robin and Ira Jaffe, eds., Re-directing the Gaze: Gender, Theory and Cinema in the Third World (Albany: State University of New York, 1999); and Isabel Arredondo, Historia oral de las directoras mexicanas (Princeton: Marcus Wiener, 2003).

an informing discourse that is ideological in both form and content.”¹⁵ Rather than shy away from the concept as if replicating a patriarchal system, it is time to reclaim the term for women’s filmmaking and recognize women’s subjective authority. Indeed, Ramanathan’s understanding of feminist film auteurs stresses the need to address an impression of feminist authority in film “over the representation of women in film in ways that counter prior cinematic renditions.”¹⁶ What is at stake then in a critique of these Brazilian women filmmakers’ works is not whether or not they define themselves as feminists but the visual representations of women that challenge previous representations. In other words, these filmmakers are feminist auteurs because there is something very unique about what they say regarding women and female experiences. Ana Carolina and Tizuka Yamasaki have both stated that filmmaking, more than any other outlet, has been their mode of social and political activism through which they have exposed their concerns regarding women and Brazil, brasilidade, and citizenship.

The relaxing of state repression allowed women film directors to develop a discussion of Brazilian society that differed from earlier film aesthetics. The Cinema Novo group, which had begun its own particular, auteurist discussion of Brazil in the late 1950s, had employed artful allegorical representations of the nation and had used the concept of the nation to frame interactions between individuals and larger social structures.¹⁷ However, this “totalizing” view of the nation failed to address the negotiations of women in this equation. Generally speaking, women filmmakers in Brazil moved away from these abstractions and objectifications of the Brazilian sociopolitical landscape in favor of an

¹⁵ Geetha Ramanathan, Feminist Auteurs: Reading Women’s Films (London and New York: Wallflower, 2006), 3-4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁷ Xavier, Allegories of Underdevelopment, 4-16.

investigation of how Brazilian society and politics were being lived or experienced by women.

While their films speak to similar concerns, they do so with very different voices and approaches. Ana Carolina's films are largely about undoing, destruction, fragmentation and separation from systems that oppress women. This is not to say that her works are, in the end, pessimistic. As will become clear, her "trilogy" on the female condition ends in on an uplifting image of women escaping the bonds that oppress them. But Ana Carolina's works offer no solutions, no grand récit (to borrow a term from Lyotard) as her films are concerned with disrupting systems of knowledge that serve to exercise power over others and repress them. Her films are seemingly chaotic and defy simple categorization. As such, her films do not offer themselves up for easy interpretation, perhaps explaining the dearth of scholarly work on this groundbreaking filmmaker.

In contrast, Tizuka Yamasaki's films investigate women's assimilation into society. She sees integration in a far more positive light than Ana Carolina, which can be attributed in part to questions of race and ethnicity. As the descendant of Japanese immigrants to Brazil who have largely isolated themselves from and been isolated by the rest of Brazilian society, Yamasaki takes up the question of integrating women and "others" into Brazilian society and culture on equitable terms. In contrast to Ana Carolina's work, Tizuka Yamasaki's films formulate a larger message of construction, recuperation, solidarity and harmony.

Despite differences between Ana Carolina and Tizuka Yamasaki, both filmmakers are deeply concerned with issues of cultural and sexual citizenship. Their works resonate with concerns revealed in women's literature in the 1970s – concerns surrounding a

presumed public/private divide, violence in the domestic sphere, state-sanctioned violence, equity in heterosexual relationships and female sexuality to name a few thematic parallels with Brazilian women's literature.

The discussion of the short stories by Sonia Coutinho and Clarice Lispector above engaged with the significant debates raised by feminist-oriented political theorists when discussing citizenship (e.g. the private/public divide, the universal subject, etc.). The works of literature depict female figures that approached the subjective limits of citizenship. But there is more to the debate.

Citizenship is often thought of in legal or political terms but this is an incomplete picture. When we talk about citizenship, we are referring to a larger debate about inclusion and exclusion or "the boundaries of belonging." A number of scholars argue that citizenship has always been cultural and refer to the importance of "cultural citizenship."¹⁸ When talking about cultural citizenship, the focus shifts to consider those cultural factors that ultimately contribute to defining the legal and political terms that allow people in or shut them out. The cultural factors that shape legal and political terms include, for example, understandings of ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, language, place of origin and economic level. Although race and gender have been addressed in relation to citizenship, Diane Richardson notes that sexuality has largely been absent from the discussion.¹⁹ The films by Ana Carolina and Tizuka Yamasaki investigate the cultural

¹⁸ See for example, Toby Miller, Cultural Citizenship: Cosmopolitanism, Consumerism and Television in a Neoliberal Age (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007); Nick Stevenson, ed., Cultural Citizenship (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2001); Engin F. Isin and Patricia K. Wood, eds., Citizenship and Identity (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 1999).

¹⁹ Diane Richardson, "Extending Citizenship: Cultural Citizenship and Sexuality," in Culture and Citizenship, ed. Nick Stevenson (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2001), 153.

and sexual boundaries of belonging and call for a renegotiated concept of citizenship in Brazil during the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Trajectories of Alienation in Mar de Rosas, Das Tripas Coração and Sonho de Valsa

The idea of a trajectory is a useful way to describe the overall movement found in Ana Carolina's three films – Mar de Rosas (Sea of Flowers, 1977), Das Tripas Coração (Heart and Guts, 1982) and Sonho de Valsa (Dream Waltz, 1986). The female characters that populate her works seek to escape from confined spaces, they move through unidentified physical geographies and temporal moments and, in so doing, press against the subjective boundaries of cultural and sexual citizenship. The three films have been noted to touch on the key phases of a woman's life – adolescence, youth, and maturity.²⁰ And the popular press in Brazil referred to the three films as a search for female identity, three steps in the same direction,²¹ and marked by a transgressive, "anarquic style."²²

In a context where very few women film directors move beyond their first feature-length fiction film, Ana Carolina's trilogy is of particular importance to Brazilian Cinema as well as women's filmmaking in Latin America in general. Several years passed before Ana Carolina was able to amass the funds necessary to produce and direct the third film in this series. By then, the cultural context of Brazil had changed as well as her approach to discussing female subjectivity and the incorporation of women into Brazilian society and politics. The film, Sonho de Valsa, is notably slower in pace and more accessible to

²⁰ Vivian Schelling, "Ana Carolina Teixeira: Audacity in the Cinema," Index on Censorship 14.5 (1985): 60.

²¹ O Estado de São Paulo (Sunday 6 Nov 1994): D3.

²² Flávio Cândido, "A trilogina de Ana Carolina em Niterói," O Fluminense 29 September 1989.

viewers but no less controversial in subject matter or presentation. Overall, these three films have been seen as delving into the female unconscious but this is an incomplete appreciation of her work. In fact, her films aim to challenge fundamental beliefs about how women are incorporated into and participate in Brazilian society. The trilogy critiques those institutions through which presumably good, moral citizens are manufactured – the family, education, religion, normative heterosexuality, and honoring the Father.

The critiques in these films are not direct. Rather, they radiate outward from the interactions between female characters and the characters and worlds in which they find themselves. Ana Carolina's films are populated by female characters who are confused by and in continual confrontation with their surroundings – constituted by people, things, and feelings. Ana Carolina's work places the female body at the interstices of social relations and explores the experience of female alienation from society and from herself. Ultimately, her trilogy reflects a desire for a new sociability and a new political system in which women are full, equal members.

Mar de Rosas

The first of the three films sets a tone for the trilogy. All three film titles are idiomatic expressions in Brazilian Portuguese and their narratives contradict the very message conveyed by the title. In the case of Mar de Rosas, the title is an expression that means “everything is calm.” However, the narrative structure and aesthetics of the film could not be further from this. When the first two films were screened in Brazil, critics labeled

them as “corrosive,” “disconcerting,” “uncomfortable” and “disordered.”²³ The film can be interpreted as quite caustic. In fact, this is perhaps the most immediately striking characteristic of Mar de Rosas. The general sentiment expressed in this and the other films is an ironic refusal of that which is taken-for-granted in everyday life. The film Mar de Rosas develops a complex aesthetic blend of irony and the absurd to critique the family as the basis of society and the imposed requirement of unity itself found in liberal concepts of the citizen-subject.

Automobile headlights breaking through the darkness of night while vehicles navigate a curving, hilly road constitutes the establishing shot in Mar de Rosas. There is a cut to a close-up shot of a young woman in daylight squatting down to urinate along the side of a parked car. The young woman, Betina, stands up, stretches, looks out over the landscape, and then gets back into the car to join her parents, Felicidade and Sérgio, as they continue on the highway heading towards Rio de Janeiro. Felicidade, whose name ironically means happiness in Portuguese, breaks the silence among them to tell Sérgio she would like to talk.

Specifically, she wishes to discuss their relationship and wants her husband to help her save their marriage. They are clearly not a happy couple and her question is met with a threat from Sérgio to get out the civil code and tell her exactly what their marriage is. Effectively, she should be quiet and do what he says. By referring to the Brazilian Civil Code, the dialogue here reveals the infiltration of the State into private relationships between individuals.

²³ Jornal da Tarde São Paulo, 25 September 1978: 12; Sérgio Habib, “Um filme incômodo” Jornal de Brasília 2 August 1978: “Cinema”; Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda, “Leia o filme e veja,” Jornal do Brasil 11 December 1982, referring to the film Das Tripas Coração;

It is important to note that not all countries have civil codes but for those that do, it is a code intended to orient the creation of laws that regulate social relations. And behind the creation of a civil code rests positivist ideals of order, progress and civilization. In 1975, just two years before the release of Mar de Rosas, a project for a new civil code had been introduced in the Brazilian legislature.²⁴ In the to-be-revised Brazilian civil code, not all individuals were equal. Women, in particular, were inscribed as being under the tutelage of their husbands and categorized as incapable beings next to minors, the mentally deficient, beggars and indigenous peoples.²⁵ Husbands were the defined heads of families to make all legal and social decisions.²⁶ Thus, when Sérgio threatens to get out the civil code in this scene, a connection is made between the marital tensions between Felicidade and Sérgio and the inferior sociopolitical status of women at the time in Brazil and the belief that a civil code should and can regulate interpersonal relationships.

In addition to women's legal status as defined in the civil code, this opening scene brings forth the question of legal divorce in Brazil. During the heated exchange between Sérgio and Felicidade, she states that she wants things to be better for her daughter. She says she wishes to establish a new way of being and, despite her desire to salvage her marriage with Sérgio, she says that she has considered leaving him: "Consigno aceitar uma separação" (I even manage to accept a separation).

At the time of the film's release, the legalization of divorce was being considered by the state and was a hot button topic within the Brazilian women's movement. Resonant with the short stories by Clarice Lispector and Sonia Coutinho discussed above, the focus

²⁴ Keila Grinberg, Código Civil e Cidadania, 77.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

here is on the role of the state in shaping gendered relationships between private individuals and the structure of the Brazilian family. In her work on abortion, divorce and the family in Latin America, Mala Htun categorizes divorce as falling under a larger concern of gender policies and rights, which she defines as “the legal regulations, obligations, and privileges that refer to or reinforce sex relations and sex differences.”²⁷

The paradoxical legalization of divorce within an authoritarian state merits further discussion. Htun provides a clear analysis of how gender policy, specifically the question of legalizing divorce, came to fruition during the military regime in Brazil. Gender policy change results from a “fit” between issue networks (i.e. women’s groups, lawyers, media, etc.) and the state, with several key traditions influencing the negotiations between and among the members of the issue networks. One of these key traditions influencing negotiations is the Catholic Church. Key shifts in Church-State relations took place prior to, during and after the military dictatorship. First, the Church supported the Brazilian military regime’s conservative ideology, which helped bring about middle-class support for the dictatorship. Then, the Brazilian Catholic Church, influenced by liberation theology and no longer willing to support a state with a record of human rights abuses, withdrew its support of the military regime. This break in Church-state relations allowed other social actors such as members of the women’s movement and progressive lawyers to intervene in the reshaping of gender policy with greater success.²⁸ The film, Mar de Rosas, can be seen as participating in these issue networks discussing the legalization of divorce, which was ratified in 1977. That is to say, the first scene of the film Mar de

²⁷ Mala Htun, Sex and the State: Abortion, Divorce, and the Family Under Latin American Dictatorships and Democracies (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4, note 3.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 20-24, 29-57, 78-112.

Rosas addresses questions of gendered sociopolitical importance being debated at the time of the film's release.

From the initial exchange in the car between Felicidade and Sérgio, the narrative of the film develops outward, consisting of a series of attempts on the part of Felicidade to escape and her subsequent capture with no clear ending. Felicidade's first attempt to escape takes place shortly after the exchange in the car. The three arrive at a hotel where Felicidade and Sérgio argue in the bathroom. Felicidade and Sérgio start slapping each other and, while they fight, a close up shot focuses on Felicidade's hand as she grabs a razor from the bathroom sink. She swipes at the back of Sergio's head. Holding bloodied hands in front of him, Sérgio falls to the ground in agony. Thinking she has immediately killed her husband, she looks at herself briefly in the bathroom mirror and pulls her hair back. Felicidade then leaves the bathroom, grabs her belongings and pulls Betina by the arm to get into the car. Off-key, non-diegetic musical outbursts punctuate the action of this scene, characteristic of avant-garde, experimental film.

The first escape attempt begins and the "corrosive" style of Ana Carolina's film is revealed. In the next scene, a disheveled Felicidade sits behind the wheel of the car, driving out of Rio de Janeiro, singing a song about the absurdity of love originally written by the Brazilian musician Noel de Medeiros Rosa (1910-1937): "o que você bem sabe / é que você é um ente / que mente inconscientemente / gosto de você imensamente" (what you don't know / is that you are a being / that lies unconsciously / I like you immensely). The tune has a nursery rhyme quality to it – limited notes with rhyming, repetitive lyrics – and seems particularly incongruent with the previous violent scene. The ironic

juxtapositionings of this scene and the non-diegetic music of the previous scene are consonant with an aesthetic found in late Cinema Novo or Marginal Cinema.

Ana Carolina's first feature-length fiction film develops out of these aesthetic trends in place in Brazilian cinema and countercultural expression from the late 1960s to the late 1970s. Although Mar de Rosas most certainly dialogues with concrete sociopolitical issues of the day, the film can also be seen as possessing echoes of allegory. Specifically, the family and marriage in Mar de Rosas can be seen as an allegory about the dictatorship or society at large. The tempestuous marriage between Sérgio and Felicidade represents a violent, authoritarian regime from which she wants to escape.

Indeed, Ana Carolina's Mar de Rosas can be understood as developing out of a broader allegorical tradition in contemporary Brazilian cultural expression. In the first decades of the 20th century, Brazilian literature of the "cannibalist movement" (os antropofagistas) evidences what Lúcia Helena refers to as an "allegorical impulse."²⁹ In his work on the Tropicalist movement, which took inspiration from the "cannibalist movement," Christopher Dunn notes the implementation of allegorical tendencies in the Brazilian popular music of the 1960s and 1970s.³⁰ In the case of film, Ismail Xavier has discussed the extensive use of allegory in Cinema Novo from the 1960s to the late 1970s.³¹

While allegory served as a way to avoid the censors in dictatorial Brazil, it was also a mode that allowed filmmakers to reflect on issues of national identity and its crisis in an

²⁹ Lúcia Helena, Totens e tabus da modernidade brasileira: Símbolo e alegoria na obra de Oswald de Andrade (Rio de Janeiro: Tempo Brasileiro, 1985), 164-165.

³⁰ Christopher Dunn, Brutality Garden, 2-6, 12-36.

³¹ Ismail Xavier, Allegories of Underdevelopment.

uneven process of modernization.³² In his study, Xavier notes an evolution of allegory from the messianic hope of early Cinema Novo to a more caustic, ironic, disjointed mode of representation found in Marginal Cinema (1969-1973).³³ Films such as O Anjo Nasceu (The Angel Was Born, dir. Julio Bressane, 1969), Matou a Família e Foi ao Cinema (Killed the Family and Went to the Movies, dir. Julio Bressane, 1969), Bang, Bang (dir. Andrea Tonacci, 1971) and O Bandido da Luz Vermelha (Red Light Bandit, dir. Rogério Sganzerla, 1968) illustrate an “aesthetic of violence,” alienation or radical disenchantment in which territorial displacement and a traveler on a pointless journey are significant tropes.³⁴

It is with the aesthetic style of Marginal Cinema that Ana Carolina most clearly resonates such that it is a wonder why she is not included in Ismail Xavier’s foundational historiography of contemporary Brazilian cinema. But despite its aesthetic and thematic similarities, Ana Carolina’s first film does, in fact, differ from the films of (male) Cinema Novo and Marginal Cinema filmmakers in several key ways. First and foremost, she includes a “feminist imprint” on her films. Notably, female characters in her films are integral to the plot rather than function as bystanders or targets of violence. Second, in Mar de Rosas, the concept of the nation is not the “central meditation for understanding human experience.”³⁵ Rather, the experience of the female characters in interaction with their sociopolitical milieu is the point of departure. (This point will be discussed further below.) Lastly, she does not focus her critique on a notion of the nation in the way that her predecessors did. More concretely, Mar de Rosas poses a critique of power

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 235-246.

³⁵ Ibid., 4.

relationships in (heterosexual) marriages as an institution and the role of the state in supporting the patriarchal oppression of women.

Ana Carolina's work here also differs from her filmmaking cohort with regard to the way she discusses the family and marital relations. Ismail Xavier has noted that the family frequently served as a microcosm of the nation in late Cinema Novo (Marginal Cinema).³⁶ It is important to note that a critique of the family as a microcosm of society at large was a salient feature of the literary works of Nelson Rodrigues published in the 1960s and subsequent film adaptations in the 1970s and 1980s.³⁷ The journalist and now former film director Arnaldo Jabor was responsible for two important film adaptations of Rodrigues' work in the 1970s in addition to two films from the 1980s that discuss gender, sexuality and sociopolitical impotence.³⁸ But Ana Carolina's film differs from those by Jabor. While he is ultimately concerned with the crisis of male figures confronted by a shifting sociopolitical landscape, Ana Carolina investigates the perspective of the female figure in crisis. As discussed above, she critiques the family, taking into account the sociopolitical debates of the day regarding gender policy. Despite an evident concern for sexuality and its intersection with sociopolitical identity, Ana Carolina's work offers what had not existed in Brazilian cinema prior to the release of her first feature-length film: a critical reflection on the status of women in Brazil in the late 1970s vis-à-vis the authoritarian, patriarchal State.

³⁶ Ibid., 246-254.

³⁷ Several plays and novels by Nelson Rodrigues have been adapted to film including *O Beijo no Asfalto* (dir. Bruno Barreto, 1980), *Álbum de Família* (dir. Braz Chediak, 1981), *Engraçadinha* (dir. Haroldo Maranhão Barbosa, 1981), *Toda Nudez Será Castigada* (dir. Arnaldo Jabor, 1973), and *O Casamento* (dir. Arnaldo Jabor, 1976).

³⁸ Arnaldo Jabor's *Eu Te Amo* (1980) is an erotically-charged film about the existential crisis of a Rio de Janeiro businessman. Meanwhile, Jabor's *Eu Sei Que Vou Te Amar* (1986) focuses on a separated couple that ostensibly seeks to arrive at new male and female sexual identities. Neither film manages to challenge traditional gendered stereotypes for women.

In her first attempt to escape, Felicidade does not manage to get far before authoritarian forces contain her again. Her daughter, Betina, who is not pleased that she has been forced on this trip with her mother, draws on her face from the back seat. Felicidade continues to drive, ignoring that her daughter is writing on her as if Betina's actions were but a bothersome fly. Betina switches from an ink pen to a safety pin and pokes her mother in the neck, drawing blood and causing Felicidade to scream out. There are two points here on which to focus. First, it is important to consider the level of Felicidade's disconnection from her surroundings. It would be quite difficult to ignore a person writing on your face with an ink pen. Second, the act of violence by Betina against her mother occurs suddenly and without provocation. This suggests the degree to which feelings of alienation and violence have penetrated society, leaving people numb to the experience of both.

Betina's desire to harm her mother continues into the next scene. Felicidade pulls over to fill up with gas. While Felicidade waits for the tank to be filled, Betina grabs a container of gasoline, pours it on the ground and near her mother's feet, and then lights a match, causing the fuel to ignite and burn her mother's legs. We are then introduced to the mysterious man, Orlando, who had been following them in a black Volkswagon Beetle, a symbol of the military regime.³⁹ As if chivalry were his objective, Orlando swoops in to help, attends to Felicidade's injury and, since she is in no shape to drive, charms Felicidade and Betina into accepting a ride with him to São Paulo. Felicidade accepts his offer which she later regrets when she discovers later that Orlando is an agent of her husband, tracking her down to bring her back.

³⁹ Catherine L. Benamou first notes the significance of the VW vehicle in her essay "Mar de Rosas," in South American Cinema: A Critical Filmography, 1915-1994, ed. Timothy Barnard and Peter Rist (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1998), 183-184.

The three continue en route to São Paulo and Orlando engages in what initially seems to be casual conversation. He shares his thoughts regarding family, work, the importance of obeying laws and hierarchies, and his belief that cities are not a good place to raise his family. His comments echo important aspects of Brazilian military doctrine drafted shortly after the military coup of 1964. The family was a unit to be protected and defended and curtailing civil liberties in the name of public safety were crucial to the development of democracy. Orlando also echoes here what anthropologist Roberto da Matta has asserted is a particularly Brazilian investment in authority and hierarchies.⁴⁰ Apparently Orlando believes that authority and hierarchies rest on the body as his comments begin to mix themes of body and pleasure with punishment and control. He shares with Betina and Felicidade that all the women in his family have names that begin with “Cli-”. Betina, sitting in the back seat of the car, ends the list of women’s names by blurting out “clitoris.” For Orlando, the female is equivalent to the physical and evidently that which needs to be controlled as he punctuates the scene by abruptly grabbing Felicidade’s arm with a menacing look on his face.

Orlando’s call for control, hierarchies and order is juxtaposed by slightly absurd, incongruent remarks. After Orlando seizes Felicidade’s arm, there is a moment of calm before Felicidade suddenly shouts out, in English “Oh what a beautiful country. I just love Brazil!” To which Orlando responds by nodding and simply repeating in English, “yes, yes” in a manner giving the impression that he does not know what he is saying. The effect here is strikingly similar to the ironic juxtapositionings characteristic of

⁴⁰ Roberto da Matta, *Carnivals, Rogues, and Heroes: Toward a Sociology of the Brazilian Dilemma* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 2-4, 137-39, 218-19; quoted in G. Harvey Summ, *Brazilian Mosaic: Portraits of a Diverse People and Culture* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1995), 138-142.

Marginal Cinema⁴¹ with the sarcasm found here serving to destabilize accepted notions of order. The use of English along with the fact that a song by U.S. singer and songwriter Stevie Wonder⁴² was playing on the radio earlier could lead to arguing that the film takes a decidedly tropicalist-udigrudi turn here where the perspective and expression of Brazilian reality are seen through a caustic melding of native and foreign influence.

But, in a broader sense, this sequence introduces a critique of what Brazilian sociologist Marilena Chauí has referred to as the “discurso competente” (competent discourse). In her discussion of culture and democracy, Chauí takes up larger questions of intersubjective communication and reveals a concern for a disconnection between ideas, people and places. One process she observes in the Brazilian context is the development of a “discurso competente” which she defines as a form of discourse that comes to be accepted as true or authorized because it has lost its connections to specific places and moments. It is a form of discourse that is instituted and which suffers particular restrictions first because “não é qualquer um que pode dizer a qualquer outro qualquer coisa em qualquer lugar e em qualquer circunstância” (it isn’t just anybody who can say anything to anybody else at any time and under any circumstances) and second because only an authorized or institutionally permitted language can be used.⁴³ Chauí argues that one result from the proliferation of this competent discourse is the conversion of an individual as a political subject into an individual as a political object whose personal experiences with the world are no longer a factor in determining her or his subjectivity.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Xavier, *Allegories of Underdevelopment*, 183-231.

⁴² The 1976 hit song “Isn’t she lovely” played on the radio. To the English-speaking ear, the irony is clear. Felicidade, poked in the neck and with ink markings on her face is not at her loveliest. The song can be found in Stevie Wonder’s album *Songs in the Key of Life*.

⁴³ Marilena Chauí, *Cultura e Democracia: O Discurso Competente e Outras Falas* (São Paulo: Cortez, 2003), 3-7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

What becomes clear, then, is that the outburst in English by Felicidade and Orlando's response underscores a particular disconnect between people, place and ideas in the 1970s. Praising the beauty of Brazil (in English) is not consonant with the actions taking place before or after the exclamation. The exclaimed praise for Brazil resonates more with the ideology of nation supported by the military regime, which sought to unify the nation and erase contradictions and ideological conflicts in the name of security and progress. Military doctrine was particularly interested in national security that sought to eliminate antagonisms and social integration aimed towards an instituted sense of common good (o Bem Comum).⁴⁵ But what is truly at stake here, reflected in the outburst by Felicidade, is the inability to dialogue with others and offer concrete critiques based on one's individual experience which would, in fact, be an instituting discourse rather than an imposed, instituted discourse. It is this "competent discourse" and the ideology that supports it from which Felicidade wishes to escape.

As the film takes a turn to the incongruent and the sarcastic, it is imperative to ask what is at stake here for feminist filmmaking. The aesthetic choices made here by Ana Carolina in this film merit a brief foray into the key debates regarding women's filmmaking by feminist film critics. The question to ask here is: In what ways would an absurdist, experimental approach to filmmaking be most critical of women's oppression in 1970s Brazil?

As film studies consolidated as an area of academic inquiry, feminist film critics focused on the ways in which women's films challenged unjust patriarchal order and sought to reposition women in society. E. Ann Kaplan asserts that there was a common

⁴⁵ See for example the discussion of psychosocial expression of national power in the Doutrina Básica (Rio de Janeiro: Escola Superior de Guerra, 1979), 143-155, 185-195.

belief in feminist film studies that film, by way of reappropriation or re-signification could alter the imaginary.⁴⁶ Among the discussions regarding the re-signification of female sexuality and women's roles in society came debates about realist versus avant-garde or experimental modes of representation.⁴⁷ What has become clear since these early interventions is the importance of addressing the various sociopolitical and economic constraints that require varying strategies of resistance.⁴⁸

For feminist-oriented artists, employing "realist" strategies was not necessarily an effective option in 1970s Brazil. As Flora Sussekind has pointed out in her discussion of literature from this period, the military State sponsored representations that portrayed Brazil and Brazilian nationality in a naturalist manner that failed to recognize important social and political divisions.⁴⁹ An experimental approach serves as a particular mode of resistance in Brazil during the late 1970s and early 1980s. As noted above, for Marginal Cinema and Udigrudi directors an aesthetic of violence and "bad taste" served to contest state-defined notions of the nation. Similarly, for Tropicalia, the aesthetic of the spectacle was made a spectacle in order to question foreign investment, influence and the direction of Brazil's cultural development. In the case of Mar de Rosas, the "chaotic" or "corrosive" style employed has to do with introducing fractures and differences into

⁴⁶ E. Ann Kaplan, "Women, Film, Resistance: Changing Paradigms," in Women Filmmakers: Refocusing, eds. Jacqueline Levitlin, Judith Pressis, and Valerie Raoul (New York: Routledge, 2003), 19.

⁴⁷ Foundational articles regarding the representation of women include: E. Ann Kaplan, "The realist debate in the feminist film: a historical overview of theories and strategies in realism and avant-garde theory film (1971-1981)," in When Women Film: Both Sides of the Camera (New York: Methuen, 1983), 125-141; Teresa de Lauretis, "Rethinking Women's Cinema: Aesthetics and Feminist Theory," in Multiple Voices in Feminist Film Criticism, eds. Diane Carson, Linda Dittmar, and Janice R. Welsch (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 140-161; Claire Johnston, "Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema," in Feminism and Film, ed. E. Ann Kaplan, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 22-33; Elizabeth Cowie, "Woman as Sign," in Feminism and Film, ed. E. Ann Kaplan, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 48-65; and Mary Ann Doane, "Woman's Stake: Filming the Female Body," in Feminism and Film ed. E. Ann Kaplan, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 86-99.

⁴⁸ E. Ann Kaplan, "Women, Film, Resistance: Changing Paradigms," 15-28.

⁴⁹ Sussekind, Literatura e Vida Literária, 27.

assumed social unities. This question of fragmentation, or what Robert DiAntonio refers to as an anti-mythic impulse, speaks to one of two cultural processes found in Brazilian literature during the 1970s, with which Ana Carolina's film coincides.⁵⁰ The second cultural process involves the emergence of what has been called a "literatura do eu".⁵¹ The chaotic style found in Mar de Rosas disrupts preconceived unities in order to make a space for the individual experience of the female protagonist. In this film, the subjective experience of the female protagonist is taken as a point of departure to talk about gendered oppression and what this means for society at large.

The Brechtian, Alienated Body and the Embodied Subject of Civil Society

Ana Carolina's film progresses and the female protagonist is contained – i.e. unity is enforced – but the dialogue and acting present a critique of confinement. Upon arriving in a small town somewhere between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, the three travelers stop so Orlando can make a phone call. At this location, Betina tries to escape but is captured by her mother who shortly thereafter grabs her daughter's arm, dragging her unwillingly through the street to try to escape from Orlando, whom she has discovered is involved with her husband.

During this third attempted escape, Felicidade is hit by a bus, allowing Orlando to catch up with her. Several onlookers appear and, among them, is a concerned woman named Aparecida. She convinces Felicidade, Betina and Orlando to come into her house where they can make sure Felicidade is not injured. All three enter the home and meet Dirceu, a dentist and Aparecida's husband. It becomes quickly apparent, that Aparecida

⁵⁰ Robert E. DiAntonio, Brazilian Fiction: Aspects and Evolution of the Contemporary Narrative (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1989).

⁵¹ Sussekind, Literatura e Vida Literária, 27.

and Dirceu do not have a harmonious marriage. Although they do not physically hit one another, they barely manage to tolerate one another. This second example of marital animosity along with the fact that Dirceu is obsessed with violence suggests that the role of the state in the area of gender policy, such as divorce, is not just an isolated issue for urban women but also one that affects women in other locations in Brazil and of different generations. Making her point very clear, Aparecida critiques marriage as a space that you may enter but never exit, warning “quem está dentro não deve, não pode sair. Quem está fora, não deve entrar” (whoever is in a marriage should not, cannot leave. Whoever is not married, should stay out of it).

Aparecida and Dirceu try to make their guests comfortable, offering them a homemade liqueur and making casual conversation in their living room. The direction of the conversation, although seemingly nonsensical, points towards a common feeling of disconnection from each other and their environment. Aparecida talks about a recipe for potatoes and enters into a sort of religious revelry believing that Felicidade has appeared to her as an angel, rather than simply another human being. While talking, the word “coletivo” (collective) is mentioned. And as if stunned by the word, Aparecida chimes in: “quando penso na palavra coletivo, penso na morte. Eu não posso deixar de pensar na morte” (when I think of the word collective, I think about death. I cannot stop thinking about death). Aparecida’s comments suggest that a collective, cohesive society no longer exists because it has been killed off by the military regime that has censored its people and eliminated numerous political rights. The interaction that does take place between the individuals in Dirceu and Aparecida’s living room consists of isolated co-existence and occasionally slapping each other.

The lack of connection between the characters is underscored by few close ups, minimal camera movement, the positioning of the characters in the living room, and little editing. In fact, the first scene in the home of Dirceu and Aparecida is a relatively long take that frames the characters within three walls as if they were on a theatrical stage. The physical arrangement of the characters in the on-screen space of the living room shows Felicidade between Aparecida and Dirceu on one side and Betina and Orlando on the other. Sitting in the middle, Felicidade is the one character that is most unengaged in the “conversation,” making minimal eye contact, looking forward, and smoking a cigarette. What is more, she does not engage in the absurd dialogue, being the one character who claims a (coherent) right to speak and be free, and whose words reject the situation in which she finds herself.

In terms of the visual representation of the dramatic space and the acting, the scene possesses a particularly Brechtian spirit. Although the full complexity of Brecht’s theory cannot be treated here, several elements in the above scene can be illuminated by his thoughts on performance, notably the notion of gesture detached from language and the concept of alienation.⁵² Very much concerned with the social, the political and the historical, Brecht wished for spectators to engage critically with his work. To this end, he

⁵² For a discussion of how Brecht’s theories have influenced cinema (including feminist film theory, women’s cinema, and Latin American cinema), see, for example: Barton Byg, “Brecht, New Waves, and Political Modernism in Cinema,” in A Bertolt Brecht Reference Companion, ed. Siegfried Mews, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 220-237; Marc Silberman, “Brecht and Film,” in A Bertolt Brecht Reference Companion, 197-219; Thomas Elsaesser, “From anti-illusionism to hyper-realism: Bertolt Brecht and contemporary film,” in Re-interpreting Brecht: his influence on contemporary drama and film, eds. Pia Kleber and Colin Visser, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 170-185; Marina Pianca, “Brecht in Latin America: Theater Bearing Witness,” in A Bertolt Brecht Reference Companion, 356-378; and Renate Möhrmann, “The influence of Brecht on women’s cinema in West Germany,” in Re-interpreting Brecht, 161-169.

promoted the concept of alienation,⁵³ which, in the most fundamental sense, meant making the familiar strange. At the core of Brecht's theory of alienation rests the assumption that what is needed is a way to see the world differently. By making the familiar seem strange questions may then be posed regarding the workings of society.⁵⁴ It is important to further note that the word "alienation" condenses three facets of Brecht's original proposition, which included the state of being alienated or estranged (Entfremdung), the device or act of alienation (Verfremdung), and the moment of bewilderment on the part of spectators (Befremdung).⁵⁵ Alienation, then, can be understood as an experience as well as an aesthetic device; one key device on which Brecht focused was acting.⁵⁶ Thus, when we speak of alienation in the film Mar de Rosas we need to bear in mind how alienation comes about through the acting.

The experience of alienation develops in two key ways in the scene described above. First, there is the alienation on the part of the traditional spectator watching the film. It is difficult to connect with these characters whose comments and actions do not make sense. The highly fragmented, disjointed narrative further prevents the spectator from becoming involved. Second, there is the alienation on the part of the female protagonist, Felicidade, through which the narrative is focalized. Again, Felicidade is not engaged with the people around her, she is the one isolated from, and critical of, the things people say and do.

⁵³ Note that "alienation" is the English translation of the German word Verfremdung, which has been translated into French as "distanciation." Both terms appear in theoretical discussions of Brecht, his work, and his influence on performance.

⁵⁴ Richard Grimm, "Alienation in Context: On the Theory and Practice of Brechtian Theater," in A Bertolt Brecht Reference Companion, 40-43.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 43.

⁵⁶ Bertolt Brecht wrote about his theory of alienation and acting. See his essay "On Chinese Acting," in Brecht Sourcebook, eds. Carol Martin and Henry Bial, trans. Eric Bentley (New York: Routledge, 2000), 15-22.

In reflecting on Brecht's theories of performance and acting, Martin Esslin argues that there is no one particular way of acting that can bring about alienation. Rather, Esslin asserts that what is at stake is to think critically about characters' actions.⁵⁷ In addition to the lack of coherence in the dialogue, what is notable among these characters is the lack of cohesive interaction among them. As if confirming the death of the collective, the characters bodies seem close yet distanced from one another. As well as being emotionally or mentally disconnected from one another, the physical acting reveals people disconnected from their physical space and others within it. At one point, Dirceu leans back and rubs his feet against the chest and abdomen of his wife Aparecida, who doesn't seem to mind or doesn't notice. Betina shifts around uncomfortably on the sofa and Orlando seems engrossed in his own thoughts.

The characters' estrangement from one another, and especially Felicidade's disconnection from the others, becomes most pronounced in the subsequent "dirt pile" scene. While Felicidade is locked inside Dirceu's office and sits down in his dentistry chair, Betina slips outside. In an attempt to punish her mother as well as create a diversion that would allow her to try to escape again, Betina flags down a dump truck and arranges for him to unload red dirt through the window leading to Dirceu's office and in which Felicidade is locked. As the dirt flows through and threatens to smother Felicidade, Betina states nonchalantly, "terra é sempre terra" (earth is always earth). The simplicity of the statement belies the significance of the act and the image of what has happened. In

⁵⁷ Note that Martin Esslin does not believe that there is any one particular way of acting that can bring about alienation. See his essay, "Some reflections on Brecht and acting," in Re-interpreting Brecht, 135-146.

a film by a director who employs numerous metaphors, the red earth can be read as a violent, bloody invasion of the private realm from the outside.⁵⁸

The others gather on the dirt pile in Dirceu's office as if it were a sacred hill on which to gather. This sentiment is punctuated with the religiously ecstatic proclamation by Aparecida at a high-point in the dialogue – urging people to raise their eyes up and just realize that: “O imóvel fica fixo. O iníquo fica inócuo. O histérico fica histórico” (What is unmovable becomes fixed. What is wicked becomes innocuous. What is hysterical becomes historical). Aparecida's comments speak to the reversal of normal process. A hand-held camera is used in this scene, adding fervor and immediacy to Aparecida's proclamation. Felicidade wants to have nothing to do with the absurd dialogue; she is not mesmerized by the “histérico” discourse. In disgust, Felicidade exclaims, “Eu quero viver de algum outro jeito!” (I want to live some other way).

What can we make of these two scenes in the domestic space of the living room scene and on top of a dirt pile? What are these two scenes saying about society and politics towards the late 1970s? In addition to the acerbic critique of women's roles within the heteronormative family, these two scenes underscore the absence of relational subjectivity that forms the foundation for civil, democratic society. Noëlle McAfee proposes an alternative to the modern political subject that brings much to bear on Ana Carolina's representation of these disconnected characters. Following a poststructuralist, Kristevan concept of the subject that is constantly being constituted, McAfee proposes the notion of the relational, political subject. In her formulation, an intrasubjective tension leads to intersubjective deliberation, a central concept in the Habermasian concept of the public sphere. What is more, individuals are most democratic when they

⁵⁸ It should be noted that the red color is a characteristic of the soil in Brazil.

are “inclined” towards one another in the sense that Jean-Luc Nancy proposes.⁵⁹ For McAfee, the relational subject is more apt and posed to deal with those who are different.⁶⁰ What Ana Carolina’s representation here reveals is the absence of this “inclination” towards one another which precludes intersubjective deliberation and democratic process. What we see in the living room scene and the dirt pile scene is a portrayal of people who have been dulled, made incapable of intersubjective deliberation by an absurd, imposed order.

The final scene of this film poses a question as much as it demonstrates an abrupt rejection of authority. Having escaped, Betina and Felicidade find themselves on a train headed to São Paulo. Orlando catches up to them and seizes Felicidade’s arm on the back platform of the train. As a functionary of the state and patriarchal power, Orlando states that he has orders to follow. Betina agrees and then questions, “ninguém pode desobedecer as ordens. Ou pode?” (nobody can disobey orders. Or can they?). In that instant, she pushes Orlando and Felicidade off the train and flips off the spectator, riding off into the sunset as if she were the ultimate anti-heroine of a perverse Hollywood western. As we shall see, Ana Carolina continues to question authority in her next two films.

The Demands of the Imagination in Das Tripas Coração to Sonho de Valsa

In her work on Latin American women’s writing in the early 20th century, Francine Masiello says that women authors focused their attention on the female body to reinscribe the relationship between women, the State and the family. More specifically, Masiello

⁵⁹ McAfee, Habermas, Kristeva and Citizenship, 187.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 125.

observers that the representation of the body by the artists she considers speaks to “fragmentation and exuberant disorder” as a way to “refuse to collaborate with the demands of the masculine imagination.”⁶¹ Ana Carolina’s films evidence a similar approach to the representation of the female experience. The chaos and “disobedience” in the final scene of Mar de Rosas serves as a departure point for the next films in the series, Das Tripas Coração and Sonho de Valsa where Ana Carolina explores the imagination. Although the first film in the trilogy draws on and modifies prevailing aesthetic trends preceding her – allegorical representations found in Cinema Novo and a deconstructive impulse found in Marginal Cinema – the second two films in the trilogy, Das Tripas Coração and Sonho de Valsa, incorporate elements of surrealist representation and develop a more experimental, avant-garde evaluation of the female condition. My goal in discussing Das Tripas Coração and Sonho de Valsa is twofold. First, I analyze particular characteristics of surrealism in her films, noting the degree to which certain Surrealist principles are accepted and/or rejected. Second, I consider how the representation of sexuality and sexual identities in the two films speaks to the question of citizenship for women.

Das Tripas Coração

The title of Ana Carolina’s second feature-length fiction film, Das Tripas Coração, is an idiomatic expression that can be translated to English as “grin and bear it” or, in other words, to force yourself to overcome fear and frustration in order to rise above imposed adversities. In the context of the film, the female characters do not stoically accept the

⁶¹ Francine Masiello, “Women, state and family in Latin American Literature of the 1920s,” in Women, Culture, and Politics in Latin America: Seminar on Feminism and Culture in Latin America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 43.

various facets of repression imposed on them by those social and cultural institutions – education, religion, and the State – meant to make them good moral citizens. Rather, a representation of unbridled, rebellious spirits throws authoritarian, patriarchal views back on themselves.

The opening and closing scenes establish that the film delves into the realm of the imagination. With a military style march playing in off-screen space, the camera follows behind a young woman wearing a private school uniform who tries to speak with a man who identifies himself as a federal administrator. We learn that he has come to inform the school directors that the institution will be closed and the land will be sold off to developers. As he enters the school, the camera is positioned behind him as he walks towards bright lights down a long hallway. He then enters a conference room to wait for the start of his meeting, asks the cleaning lady who serves him some water if the teachers are pretty, and then puts his head down to take a short nap. The camera remains positioned behind the federal administrator adding a sense of anonymity – the spectator does not get a clear shot of the man's face until the closing scene – as well as calling attention to the mind from which misogynist thoughts then proceed. In the final scene of the film, there is a knock at the door of the conference room. The camera, again positioned behind the head of the federal administrator, captures him lifting his head up, looking at the clock in the room and realizing that he had fallen asleep. The school directors and the teachers walk in orderly fashion into the conference room to begin the meeting. Thus, the entire structure of the film is presented as a dream or, more specifically, as a figment of the male imagination.

What takes place during the dream narrative is a frenetic exposé of embodied chaos. A piano, which dramatically reappears at the end of the film, crashes into the window where two teachers, Renata and Miriam are talking, and sets off the disorder. The female students toss instruments around in chemistry class, make phallic symbols with their erasers during lecture, kiss and caress one another in bathroom stalls, dance in circles singing erotic songs while masturbating en masse. Towards the second half of the film, the focus shifts to the adult characters and the relationship between three instructors (Miriam, Renata, and Guido) and the conversations between two female school directors (Muniza and Nair).

The dream-like structure of the film aligns Das Tripas Coração with a surrealist artistic practice albeit with some feminist divergences. In the contemporary era, surrealism has become perhaps best known through reprinted posters of Salvador Dalí's droopy watches and René Magritte's "pipe."⁶² However, as a cultural movement with its own philosophy most vocally developed by André Breton, Surrealism was a highly political movement, dedicated to psychic emancipation and freedom from material repression. According to Raymond Spiteri and Donald LaCoss, Surrealism consists of a two-part political strategy. After first unmasking the depths of alienation in modern life, the Surrealists then sought a reintegrated life through the fusion of the conscious and unconscious mind.⁶³ In terms of artistic practice, the emancipation of the psyche developed outward in automatic texts, dream narratives, and fragmented visions. The revolutionary spirit of Surrealism led to the publication of a number of manifestos and

⁶² It is important to note the convention of writing "Surrealism" to refer to the historical artistic group and the philosophy espoused in the early decades of the 20th century and "surrealism" as the continuation of certain aesthetic and political ideals in the contemporary era.

⁶³ Raymond Spiteri and Donald LaCoss, eds., Surrealism, Politics and Culture (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 5.

members of the movement unsuccessfully joined the Communist Party for a short period.⁶⁴

As a philosophical, political and cultural movement, Surrealism is not limited to a small group of male, European intellectuals in the first half of the twentieth century. A number of women artists were affiliated with the Surrealists and International exhibitions introduced Surrealist works to publics throughout Europe, the Americas and Asia. In terms of historical periods, Surrealism is not bracketed by the years following WWI and up to the death of its most visible leader André Breton in 1966. It is more productive to consider historical Surrealism and its artistic legacy.⁶⁵ In the case of female artists who evidence the echoes of Surrealism, critic and art historian Susan Rubin Suleiman suggests we read for dialogue between contemporary women artists and the historical avant-garde, which she proposes as a far better approach than discussing patrilineage between male predecessors and female successors.⁶⁶

Similar to the historical Surrealists, Das Tripas Coração focuses on repressed erotic desire and places the female body at the center of analysis. The female characters in Ana Carolina's film appear uncontrollably sexually aroused, rubbing against one another. Their bodies are fetishized. Extreme close-ups capture feet in high heeled shoes walking, the school doctor examines the students' "butt crack" to verify their lung capacity, and a male janitor distributes playing cards with images of women posing erotically and

⁶⁴ In addition to serving as the editor to the periodical La Révolution Surréaliste starting in 1924, André Breton published a number of texts, including the Manifeste du Surréalisme (*The Surrealist Manifesto*, 1924), Second Manifeste du Surréalisme (*The Second Surrealist Manifesto*, 1930), and Position Politique du Surréalisme (*The Political Position of Surrealism*, 1935).

⁶⁵ This is a point put forth by Whitney Chadwick in her edited volume, Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998).

⁶⁶ Susan Rubin Suleiman, "Dialogue and Double Allegiance: Some Contemporary Women Artists and the Historical Avant-Garde," in Mirror Images, 131.

engaged in fellatio. In its departure from the female body, the film offers a strategic critique of how women and female sexuality have been included in the social imaginary.

The female body was a central focus of the Surrealists. For male Surrealists, woman was muse, her body was fetishized and female hysteria was celebrated. Although erotic desire was seen as having a disruptive and creative potential, the erotic drive was located in the masculine libido. Whitney Chadwick notes that women Surrealists repositioned desire and

...located the sources of Surrealism's disruption of rational boundaries within their own subjectivity, and gave it concrete form in works that explore the female body as a site of conflicting desires and femininity as a taut web of social expectations, historical assumptions, and ideological constructions.⁶⁷

It merits noting that although there were a number of young women artists active alongside the historical Surrealists, they were not "full members" of the Surrealist movement.⁶⁸ And despite aesthetic and some philosophical similarities, some female artists rebuffed being associated with the Surrealists. This rejection likely concerns the marginalization of women within the Surrealist movement.

The marginalization of women in Surrealism has been noted but Rosalind Krauss asserts that the misogyny in Surrealism is not absolute and argues that this and other received assumptions about Surrealism need to be challenged. For some female artists, Surrealist representation afforded a space of representation that had not existed previously. Krauss further asserts that the deconstructive logic of Surrealism was able to

⁶⁷ Whitney Chadwick, ed. *Mirror Images*, viii-ix.

⁶⁸ Among many others, a few notable female artists whose work has been read as surrealist include Claude Cahun (France), Meret Oppenheim (Germany/Switzerland), Frida Kahlo (Mexico), Lenora Carrington (England), Kay Sage (USA), Remedios Varo (Spain) and Leila Ferraz (Brazil).

lead to a deeply antipatriarchal opening up of the question of “woman.”⁶⁹ Indeed, some female artists were drawn to surrealist practice as a way to call attention to the construction of identity, gender and as a way to explore female subjectivity.⁷⁰

Ana Carolina deploys the fetishizing, the hypersexual and the erotic in this film to call attention to female marginalization. The representation here of female sexuality is thrown back against those institutions that seek to repress female eroticism. The film takes aim squarely at the State and the educational system. As part of the opening sequences that establish the surrealist nature of the film, Miriam talks with her colleague Renata reflecting on how strange “that day” was and mentions how Guido was just starting his first class. There is a cut to the classroom where Guido, who is in fact the dreamt incarnation of the federal administrator himself, lectures about the general inferiority of women. During his pontificating, he states:

Alguma de vocês aqui conhece melhor da minha loucura do que eu mesmo? A loucura é a melhor maneira de se elogiar. Aqui hoje eu detono a minha loucura e vocês vão representá-la.

[Does any one of you know of my madness better than I? Madness is the best way to praise oneself. Here, today, I am going to set off my madness and you are going to represent it.]

Ana Carolina’s film addresses the unconscious mind and, by extension, the way women are incorporated into the social imaginary. The representation that follows – from the madness of the male imaginary – questions the logic that has shaped the concept of woman and female sexuality.

⁶⁹ Rosalind Krauss, Bachelors (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 16-17.

⁷⁰ Take for example Krauss’ discussion of the work by Claude Cahun and Dora Maar in her text Bachelors, 1-50.

The representation of the female body and female sexuality put forth by the film throws this image back to its originator. This is achieved, in part, by the deploying of “anti-social” behavior. The young women’s disorderly behavior reaches an apogee during the celebration of mass in the school’s chapel. In the middle of the priests’ sermon, a young woman gets up, walks to the front of the pews, and urinates in the middle of the aisle in order to win a bet. Such “anti-social” behavior serves as a physical rejection of bourgeois values and repressive social conventions encapsulated in the institutions of education and religion.⁷¹

Public urination is one instance of taking aim at the Church. A number of venerated symbols of the Catholic Church are also called into question. Indeed, the repressive nature of Christianity surfaces several times in the course of the dream narrative. The teacher, Miriam, stops to read a banner painted in the auditorium before she begins her day that reminds the female students and the female teachers on a daily basis that they are the source of original sin. The Catholic priest is portrayed as an authority figure who can be very easily aroused sexually. The scene where the young woman wins a bet by urinating in the aisle during mass has been mentioned. Rather than becoming outraged, the priest becomes sexually excited and must be carried away by his assistants. In other instances, the priest is portrayed as a pederast. After an apparently cross-dressed student raises his skirt, showing that “she” in fact is a “he,” the priest squeezes the students’ thigh assuring that they are going to be “very good friends.” And towards the end of the film,

⁷¹ It is interesting to note that the Surrealists embraced such acts of defiance. Whitney Chadwick points out that the women Surrealists in the 1930s engaged in uninhibited behavior, which included appearing naked in public at inopportune moments and a notorious instance when Meret Oppenheim urinated into the hat of a man in a Paris café. For a history of the women Surrealists of the 1930s and 1940s, see Whitney Chadwick, Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1985), 106.

the priest walks with a female student, suggesting in their conversation that they are going to go have sex as they enter a private area.

The agents of Christianity are not the only targets. Ana Carolina's film takes aim as well at the figure of Christ. Here, the Christ figure is portrayed as coming to life and a real man standing on a cross platform. In one instance, the school directors, Muniza and Nair, take a group of girls to an isolated area as a form of punishment. Rather than contemplate their misbehavior the girls make out in front of a human Christ figure who looks down over them. In a second, more scandalous scene, the three young teachers, Miriam, Renata and Guido are engaged in a steamy *ménage à trois*. The living Christ figure, who has been watching them, descends from the cross structure, leans over the three and says, "Let me lick." Like the historical Surrealists, Ana Carolina's film clearly attacks organized religion. Her approach takes aim specifically at the patriarchal hypocrisy associated with conservative Christian beliefs that espouse chastity, fidelity and eternal dedication and veneration of a male figure. The representation of the Christ figure is literally humanized and portrayed as a voyeur and a man of flesh with sexual desires.

Ostensibly liberating leftist politics are not immune from critique. At a rehearsal for a concert to celebrate the end of the school year, a male professor from the University of São Paulo shows up and sits down next to the school directors. However, he is particularly interested in two young cleaning ladies. He leans over and asks one of them if she has had the chance to read the "pamphlet" he had prepared for her. His voice and gestures suggest that this is not a work of political enlightenment but something more along the lines of the Kama Sutra. Two of the cleaning ladies and the professor leave the

rehearsal hall to go clean the boiler room. There, he asks one cleaning lady about her education. She says she is enrolled in the first course of MOBRAL (Movimento Brasileiro de Alfabetização, the Brazilian Literacy Movement). Generously, he offers her private lessons in “coito” (coitus). Laying on top of her in the boiler room while she squirms and cackles underneath, he ecstatically cries out various names for cleaning ladies: “mucama,” “faixineira,” “doméstica,” and “criada.” In a metaphoric critique, the professor finds himself impotent and unable to “conquer” the young cleaning lady. As she leaves, thinking that she must have done something wrong, the professor asks her if she has read Engels. The scene mocks the ostensibly progressive, left-wing intelligentsia that views the poor as an abstract object of desire but is incapacitated and unable to address the material realities of the poor and working class.

It might seem incongruous to relate a surrealist film to the question of citizenship. However, it is important to recall the fundamental revolutionary, liberating goals of Surrealist thought. A surrealist mode of representation, in fact, speaks very much to the question of citizenship in Brazil. In a first instance, the choice to develop a surrealist mode of representation serves as a rebuttal to the years of authoritarian rule that began even prior to the military coup d’etat of 1964. Although Surrealism was an international phenomenon, it was largely rejected by Latin American elites who wished to overcome the perceived incivility of its populations and espoused more positivist ideals of rationality, order, and progress.

To the degree that surrealism is about sexuality and social norms, it is also about citizenship. Recent discussion of citizenship has focused on the cultural aspects that define the boundaries of belonging. Defined and demarcated by cultural values and

expectations, sex and sexuality clearly contribute to the cultural and legal boundaries of citizenship. In other words, citizenship is not defined exclusively by discourses of rights, legal obligations and duties. Rather, scholars have taken up the question of culture and sexuality, seeing these as key discourses on social and political inclusion and exclusion. In fact, these aspects of belonging have taken on increasing importance as more traditional definitions of citizenship based on national identity have been challenged by processes of globalization which have, in turn, challenged the authority of the traditionally demarcated nation-state.

Both female sexuality and citizenship were gaining attention in Brazil after the declaration of Amnesty in 1979. As mentioned earlier, open discussion of female sexuality prior to the early 1980s had not fully developed in the women's movement, which until then had focused more on material questions concerning women's experience. Although female sexuality was addressed in the works of literature in the 1970s by Clarice Lispector and Sonia Coutinho discussed above, representation of women's bodies in film at this time was still tied to the pornochanchada industry and other essentializing portrayals in men's films.

For some scholars, citizenship has always been about sex. Diane Richardson discusses the ways in which sexuality, and heterosexuality more specifically, has encoded dominant social and political participation. She calls for examining the relationship between the sexual and the social, "to raise questions about the relationship between ... the body and social membership."⁷² In his work on citizenship, David T. Evans takes a step further and asserts that the entire history of citizenship is "a history of fundamental

⁷² Diane Richardson, "Heterosexuality and Social Theory," in Theorising Heterosexuality: Telling it Straight, ed. Diane Richardson (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1996), 10-11.

formal heterosexist patriarchal principles and practices” that in practice have served “to effect unequal differentiation.”⁷³

Ana Carolina’s film engages with the female body and questions of inclusion. Here, madness is defined as the way women are positioned in a patriarchal social imaginary. What is more, in coming full circle with the federal administrator waking up and the spectator realizing that the narrative has been a dream, the film makes a bridge between the unconscious beliefs about the female body, sexuality and female identity and the material world. In other words, in Das Tripas Coração, a surrealist mode of representation deploys an unbridled female eroticism to call into question the patriarchal social imaginary that defines the boundaries of female belonging. As will be discussed below, this is a subject that Tizuka Yamasaki takes up in her films as well albeit with an entirely different aesthetic approach.

Sonho de Valsa

The third film of the series by Ana Carolina also follows a surrealist mode of representation. The female protagonist, Tereza, has visions of Prince Charming in full Medieval garb, lives out vivid dreams, and, with bright lights creating an ethereal quality in several scenes, the protagonist miraculously crosses through space and time. Relative to the other two films in the series, the film structure of Sonho de Valsa is equally disjointed. However, the approach is somewhat less successful in this instance. The film is driven more by dialogue that does not always make sense. This makes it more difficult for the spectator to empathize with the female protagonist particularly during the

⁷³ David T. Evans, Sexual Citizenship: The Material Construction of Sexualities (London: Routledge, 1993), 9.

sequences constituting the middle portion of the film. As a whole, however, the work still offers up a vital message on female subjectivity and belonging in the world.

While the male imaginary is the focus of the film Das Tripas Coração, in Sonho de Valsa consideration is given to how women contribute to their own undoing as they hold tight to romantic notions of heterosexual love. Sexuality, sexual pleasure and love were topics frequently addressed by the Surrealists. For André Breton, true liberation included the liberation of desire, thus his pronouncement in the Second Manifesto: “Il n’est pas de solution hors de l’amour” (“There is no solution outside of love”).⁷⁴ A fundamental political practice espoused by the Surrealists was inserting inner reality into the outer, material world. Johanna Malt observes the importance placed on love by André Breton who saw this aspect of Surrealist politics to most represent the insertion of the psychological into the political and vice versa.⁷⁵ Whitney Chadwick adds that for the Surrealists, eros was seen as having a subversive power and was a consistent leitmotif of Surrealism but it was a male language of eros that dominated:

The cultivation of eros in Surrealism made woman into an active sexual force in the world and in man’s creative life, but the language of love, whether expressed in the romantic visions of Breton and Eluard or in the perverse images of Dalí and Bellmer, was a male language. Its subject was woman, its object woman, and even while proclaiming woman’s liberty it defined her image in terms of man’s desires.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ André Breton, “Exposition X..., Y...,” in Point du jour, Nouv. éd. rev. et corr. (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 58; André Breton, What is Surrealism? Selected Writings, ed. and introduced by Franklin Rosemont (New York: Monad, 1978), 43, quoted in Johanna Malt, Obscure Objects of Desire: Surrealism, Fetishism, and Politics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 23.

⁷⁵ Malt, Obscure Objects of Desire, 21.

⁷⁶ Chadwick, Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement, 106.

It might seem difficult to see how love would be political but sometimes polemical issues appear in less obvious ways.⁷⁷ That said, there are moments in Sonho de Valsa when overt references are made to the power of the state. The most notable scene takes place in Rio de Janeiro where Tereza emerges from a drainage tube after diving in to follow her boyfriend, who has “chased” after a mermaid in the bathtub at their home. She emerges from the drainage tube to the beat of military drums and hundreds of military police marching through the streets of Rio de Janeiro. She then crawls past them and into the bar where she meets up with her boyfriend and the mermaid who has then transformed herself into a majorette. This is the extent of the overt references to political authority in this film.

What is of greater interest is the question of love and how romantic myths play a role in female subjectivity. Ana Carolina problematizes the question of love first by way of the relationships Tereza has to the key male figures in her life: her father and her brother. In the opening scene, she consults with both of them on whether or not she should go out that evening to a party. Tereza sits on her father’s lap and he caresses her knee, suggestive of an incestuous or at the least an inappropriate relationship between father and daughter. A similarly inappropriate scene takes place at the party that she does end up attending with her father and brother in tow. Both the brother and the father keep a close, possessive watch on Tereza as she mingles with other men at the party. After having danced with a few gentlemen, Tereza sits down. Her brother joins her and they end up kissing passionately.

⁷⁷ Johanna Malt acknowledges the difficulties in reading surrealist works as political. Beside the polemical positions taken up by the Surrealist artists themselves and their public pronouncements, she notes that the “revolutionary intentionality of the surrealist work ... is not always evident; indeed the works themselves often seem to express a rather different set of concerns.” See her Obscure Objects of Desire, 1.

Besides breaking social taboos against incest, the inordinate devotion that Tereza has for her father and brother represents an excessive commitment she has to patriarchy and a compulsive need for male approval. This desire for male affection is at the root of the protagonist's extremely anxious, neurotic demeanor. Throughout the majority of the film, Tereza fidgets constantly, frets about whether or not the men in her life are faithful to her, and yells hysterically on several occasions. Fortunately, Tereza's demeanor changes at the end of the film, indicating that she finally reaches a level of peace and harmony within herself. Yet, during this period of frustration prior to reaching a state of calmness, Tereza recognizes her wish to be free. Before kissing her brother at the party, she says she could be free if she wanted to and that she can no longer withstand the "dolorida ilusão" (painful illusion) that she will find a man who loves her unconditionally.

Tereza begins to encounter true liberation when she is able to cast off the desire for male approval and distance herself from the fairytale discourse that a Prince Charming will come to her proverbial rescue and sweep her off her feet. The evolution of the female protagonist in Sonho de Valsa indicates that personal liberation comes from casting off these myths. Curiously, André Breton spoke of the functioning of "un mythe collectif" and "le trésor collectif" and it was Walter Benjamin who saw this as being the very basis for the political potential for surrealist work of art in his essay, "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia."⁷⁸

In the last sequences, Tereza undergoes the final steps of giving up her illusions and assumed realities, which in turn leads to her liberation. The process Tereza goes through shows her walk barefoot over rocky terrain, sit down at a creek bed, pick up a frog, bite

⁷⁸ Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia," New Left Review Vol 1.108 (March-April 1978): 47-56.

into it and state purposefully that “é fundamental engolir sapos” (literally: it is necessary to eat frogs), another idiomatic expression similar to “grin and bear it.” She speaks to herself about finding your own “sonho de valsa” and facing up to the rigors of life while she makes a wooden cross from logs and twine. She then proceeds to drag the cross with her over the rough landscape before she falls into a cavernous pit. The visual images here – eating frogs, bearing a cross – are plays on metaphors reflecting commonly held beliefs. This verbal play serves less as a gesture to subvert language but more as casting a light on the illogical character of accepted beliefs.

It is the final images of the film that are particularly poetic. Inside the hole she has fallen into with her cross, Tereza confronts the images of all the men who have passed through her life, including her father, brother, lovers and the Prince Charming figures that have appeared to her along the way. In her closing words, Tereza is no longer a neurotic, anxious young woman. She is calm, resolute, and proceeds to climb out of the pit, using her cross as a ladder. Before reaching the opening at the top, there is an intercut image in slow motion of Tereza crashing the cross she has made into a mirror, breaking it to pieces and behind which a bright light shines. This act of destruction suggests her liberation from the image of herself that she believed she needed to fulfill. In the final shot, Tereza climbs out of the hole she had fallen into and smiles as she rests herself on the edge of the pit. Tereza has completed her process of psychological liberation.⁷⁹ She has shed accepted myths and unquestioned beliefs and emerges into open air as if being reborn. In addition to punctuating the film, this final scene in Sonho de Valsa completes the trajectory of escape from patriarchal oppression that began in the dark night along a highway in Mar

⁷⁹ Johanna Malt points out that the Surrealists believed that a revolution would not truly take place unless more than material gains were made. See her Obscure Objects of Desire, 16.

de Rosas. Here, the female protagonist emerges from the darkness and reengages with the world on new, unalienated terms.

The Melodramatic Imagination in the Films of Tizuka Yamasaki

Filmmaker Tizuka Yamasaki emerged as a feature-length film director shortly after Ana Carolina. While their filmmaking strategies differ greatly, they share a concern for the ways in which women are incorporated into Brazilian society and politics. In the case of Ana Carolina, her work seeks the undoing, destruction, fragmentation and a separation from the systems that oppress women with the goal of disrupting the systems of knowledge that contain female subjectivity. Tizuka Yamasaki shares with Ana Carolina an interest in the question of how women are imagined in Brazilian society and female subjectivity. But Tizuka's film practice is radically different from that of Ana Carolina. What was at stake for this Brazilian woman of Japanese descent was the intersection of multiple identities that were included in the national imaginary. In contrast to Ana Carolina, Yamasaki's films make gestures of construction, recuperation, solidarity and harmony. Her films, Gaijin: o caminho da liberdade (Gaijin: Paths to Freedom, 1980), Parahyba, Mulher Macho (Parahyba, Manly Woman, 1983), and Patriamada (Sing, the Beloved Country, 1984) seek the integration of ethnic minorities, diverse sexualities and gendered identities against the sociopolitical backdrop of the Abertura. If one of the first questions a political community asks itself regards inclusion, then Yamasaki's first three feature-length films investigate the body-based markers (i.e. ethnicity, gender, sexuality, race) used to define membership in a political community.

Tizuka Yamasaki's first film develops out of a cultural context that sought to elide social differences. As mentioned above, Yamasaki began her work in the Brazilian film industry in the mid-1970s working with Cinema Novo directors Nelson Pereira dos Santos and then Glauber Rocha. At this time, the State saw itself as the "guardião da memória nacional" (guardian of national memory).⁸⁰ This way of the State envisioning itself was translated into a cultural policy that promoted (by way of the PNC published in 1975) literal representations of Brazil ("textos retratos"), which, as Sussekind has noted, tended to hide fractures and divisions and construct identities and reinforce uncritical nationalisms.⁸¹ In focusing on ethnic, racial, gendered and sexual Others, Yamasaki's films intervene in State-sponsored homogeneity in order to expand social inclusion.

Similar to Ana Carolina, Tizuka Yamasaki broke away from an allegorical mode of representation to discuss the nation. By contrast, Yamasaki was interested in exploring subject matter that affected her personally as well as held ties to the political and social context of the time. Here, I wish to discuss a melodramatic mode to Yamasaki's first three feature-length films which expose and contest the boundaries of belonging in Brazil.

Melodrama holds great potential for sociopolitical critique and gained critical currency in Film Studies in the 1970s. Thomas Elsaesser is widely credited as the first critic to employ the term "family melodrama" which has played a key role in defining the generic limits of melodrama.⁸² Since then, melodrama has been associated with films in

⁸⁰ Ortiz, *Cultura Brasileira*, 100.

⁸¹ Sussekind, *Literatura e Vida Literária*, 27.

⁸² Examples of classic Hollywood family melodramas include *Broken Blossoms* (1919), *Stella Dallas* (1937), *Rebel without a Cause* (1955). Despite their differences in film production and time period, the basic model of the Hollywood family melodrama allows for studying these films in relation to one another. Regarding this, see Thomas Elsaesser, "Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama,"

which conflicts and tensions arise in a family setting, the presence of a (central) female protagonist, the use of music to punctuate dramatic moments and, lastly, the culmination of the film in a happy ending.⁸³ In his work on melodrama, Thomas Schatz notes a recurrence of certain characteristics: victimized heroes, conflicts between generations and camouflaged social criticism.⁸⁴

As a mode of cinematic representation, melodrama has held its own significance in feminist film theory, in Brazilian women's filmmaking and in the contemporary Brazilian context. Whereas Cinema Novo filmmakers rejected melodrama for its underlying bourgeois imperialist ideology, TV Globo began introducing telenovelas, or soap operas in the 1980s. Ana López observes an irony in this dynamic in that "at the moment when New Latin American Cinema rejected melodrama as the embodiment of cultural dependency, television used melodrama in order to establish a solid audience base and as a result created a nationalistic ... form with which to begin to challenge that very same cultural and economic dependence."⁸⁵ Feminist film scholars have taken an interest in the study of melodrama with its potential to expose the failings of capitalism and patriarchy.⁸⁶ For women engaged with the developing women's movements, a melodramatic mode allowed for making "the personal political." In the case of Tizuka

in Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film, ed., Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1987), 43-69.

⁸³ John Mercer and Martin Shingler, Melodrama: Genre, Style and Sensibility (New York: Wallflower, 2004).

⁸⁴ Thomas Schatz, Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking and the Studio System (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981).

⁸⁵ Ana López, "The Melodrama in Latin America: Films, Telenovelas, and the Currency of a Popular Form" in Imitations of Life: A Reader on Film & Television Melodrama, ed. Marcia Landy (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 596-606.

⁸⁶ Linda Williams asserts that a "quest for a hidden moral legibility is crucial to melodrama" in "Melodrama Revisited" in Refiguring American Film Genres: History and Theory ed. Nick Browne, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 52.

Yamasaki, she called on her own family's experience when she directed Gaijin: os caminhos da liberdade in 1980.

In June of 1908, a ship named the Kasatu-Marú completed a 51-day voyage from Japan. Aboard were the first 781 members of what would become the largest Japanese community living outside of Japan. This first wave of Japanese immigration took place at the behest of the Japanese government, which was eager to ease itself of the burden of economically impoverished rural regions. Japan had authorized contracted labor of its rural citizens to work on coffee plantations in Brazil where Brazilian landowners believed that Japanese workers would be more passive and less problematic than white European immigrants who increasingly demanded improved working conditions and higher wages.⁸⁷

The narrative, focalized through a young Japanese woman, Titoe, reflects on the process of transition and survival she and her fellow immigrants undergo and the final connection made with Brazil as her new home. Yamasaki's treatment of the Japanese-Brazilian experience in this film asks us to consider the role of the Japanese and Brazilian state in transnational migration, the relationship between ethnicity and race, definitions of Brazilianness and the location of women and Japanese immigrants in the history and development of the Brazilian nation. The film, Gaijin, draws on a melodramatic mode to challenge the founding fictions of the nation and brasilidade.

Yamasaki's film opens with a visual montage of contemporary urban São Paulo overlaid with an aural montage of samba music, the sounds of traffic, construction and the voices of people engaged in conversation. The visual montage consists of cars, trucks

⁸⁷ For a captivating history of Japanese and other immigrants to Brazil see Jeffrey Lesser, Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

and subway trains moving across the screen in opposing diagonal vectors which suggests forward movement, a celebration of Brazil's economic potential and the intersection of different forces that define and occupy a space. Abundant tropical fruits are piled for export and we cut to shots of the metro station Estação Liberdade (Liberty Station) in the heart of the Japanese neighborhood in São Paulo. By way of juxtaposition, Japanese-Brazilians are located in the middle of this economic and cultural wealth.

These scenes of 1980s São Paulo serve two key purposes. First, the opening scene questions notions of Brazilian cultural identity promoted during the authoritarian military regime. During the years of the dictatorship, the military called on positivist ideals of "order and progress" to support its plans for economic restructuring and developed the idea of "O Brasil Grande" (Big Brazil). Central to this notion rested an homogeneous concept of the nation and its people. Brazil was constructed as the country of the future, and an economic powerhouse where mulata women danced samba and the national soccer team was the best in the world.

Second, these scenes function as a framing device to connect the past narrative of early 20th century Japanese immigration and present-day Brazil. After the opening scene of São Paulo, there is a cut to Meiji Japan where we are introduced to Titoe, a young woman living in the Japanese countryside. There we see a banner posted in her village inviting families to work in Brazil. The female protagonist, Titoe, speaks in voiceover and a bridge is created between the present and the past. "So many things have happened" she says since she left Japan and she explains that this past now belongs to her memories. This voiceover narration, positions a female figure as an agent of action and a conveyer of historical knowledge.

In her essay, “The Melodramatic Field,” Christine Gledhill defines an excruciating moment of sympathy or pity as being at the core of a melodramatic mode, regardless of the specific form a film takes.⁸⁸ In this transitional sequence, the spectator is induced to sympathize with the central figure, Titoe. However, she is not the victim of the drama. She not only conveys historical knowledge but she successfully adapts to her new culture. The narrative arc shows her develop from being very submissive into an independent single woman who is the agent of social change who in fact motivates the escape of her fellow immigrants from the abusive fazenda. In other words, we see a central female character who transitions from being an object to a subject of representation.

As Titoe faces new challenges, gender and gendered relations are questioned. Titoe and a fellow Japanese woman immigrant complain about their additional domestic duties after a full day of hard labor and both reject the unwanted sexual advances of their husbands. In this, Yamasaki’s film brings forth tensions located within the domestic sphere. Although the narrative of Titoe is located in a distant past, these comments reference debates taking place in the women’s movement of the 1970s and 1980s concerning labor rights, sexual reproduction and domestic violence. Feminist critics have noted that feminist activism often springs from a “well of discontent.” This sequence I describe in the film creates an historical and interpersonal link with women who have not been satisfied with their defined social roles and sought change.

Most Japanese who immigrated to Brazil in the early 20th century did not expect to stay for long. They wanted to work hard, earn money and return wealthy, as promised, to their native Japan. If the founding fictions of Brazilian national identity from this time

⁸⁸ Christine Gledhill, “The Melodramatic Field: An Investigation,” in Home Is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman’s Film, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1987), 30.

period are any indication, few Brazilians (of European) descent believed the Japanese immigrants would stay either. Elite accounts of Brazilian identity from the period can be described as a harmonious blending of three races: white European, black African, and red Indigenous peoples – but no Asians.

Efforts were made to incorporate Japanese immigrants into this assimilationist equation. Strategic fictions were developed to define the Japanese as ‘white’ and a superior, model race. Other fictions defined the Japanese as the original Brazilians, which, based on physical appearance, identified the Japanese as the lost ancestors of native tribes in the Amazon basin. However, Japanese immigrants were ultimately declared unable to be naturalized, unable to intermarry and laws were eventually put in place to limit their settlement in Brazil.

Yamasaki’s film contests these beliefs and legal practices that served to exclude Japanese-Brazilians. Although the first shot of Titoe shows her as a reluctant but submissive young woman leaving her homeland, years later she is an empowered, now-single mother of a young daughter, living and working in São Paulo. As she walks through the street, she comes upon Antonio (Tonho), a sympathetic worker at the fazenda from which they both had escaped. She pauses for a moment to admire him speaking out for labor and immigrant rights in the midst of a public protest. Matching eyeline shots and smiles on their faces indicate they recognize one another. Expressing what the characters do not, music punctuates the moment when the two realize how much they care for one another.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ A melodramatic mode has been noted as drawing on an “aesthetic of muteness” in which the mise-en-scène and other elements communicate what the characters do not articulate verbally. This idea comes from Peter Brooks, The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James and the Mode of Excess (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976).

This final scene juxtaposes private romance and a public setting of civil disobedience. The suggested interracial romance defies the notion that Japanese immigrants were unable to join mainstream Brazilian society. Interracial romance becomes, then, a space in which Yamasaki's film intervenes in Brazil's foundational narrative.

The final scene repeats the opening voiceover of Titoe, making a full connection between the past and the present. In this, the struggles of the past are also those of the present. Shots of people protesting in the streets in the 1920s reflect an awakening of civil society in the 1980s. This idea carries over into the closing shots of contemporary São Paulo before the credits roll. Here the visual and aural montage focuses on people rather than machinery or products of Brazil's diverse economy, suggesting that the citizens of Brazil are once again the agents of order and progress. Both the opening and the closing sequences suggest not the melding of differences but, rather, the parallel existence of differences within a defined space.

Yamasaki's film Gaijin: os caminhos da liberdade played an instrumental role in narrating an unrecognized history of immigration to Brazil. Prior to its release, the general Brazilian public had little if any historical knowledge of ways in which Nipo-Brazilians contributed to the economic and social development of Brazil. The film served as a key platform from which Yamasaki fought to both demand the incorporation of Japanese-Brazilians into the social imaginary by the general populace as well as urge communities of Japanese-Brazilians in Brazil to break out of their self-imposed isolation.

In the process of bridging a gap in the history of Brazil, Yamasaki does not create another gap by eliding the roles women played in this period of Brazil. One of the practices of the women's movement in Brazil was to "rescue" female figures who

challenged the politics of their day. In women's cultural productions, notable efforts include Norma Bengell's 1987 film Eternamente Pagú (Pagú Forever) that treated the history of Patrícia Galvão, an early feminist who was relentlessly harassed by political authorities. Documentary filmmaker Tetê Moraes focuses on a young woman fighting for land reform in her 1987 work Terra para Rose (Land for Rose).

Parahyba: Mulher Macho

In her second feature-length film Parahyba: Mulher Macho (1983), Yamasaki engages with the history of Anayde Beriz, a brilliant, iconoclastic young poet who was greatly maligned and misunderstood in the traditional, patriarchal culture of the Brazilian Northeast.⁹⁰ Yamasaki's representation of Anayde Beriz configures her within Brazilian History as an agent of democratic change and progress. In the film, Anayde challenges gender and class limitations to her full participation in public life. She speaks out for women's suffrage, publishes her writing, and rebels against prevailing conventions of beauty and social correctness by cutting her hair short and wearing colorful clothes, particularly flowing red dresses.

Anayde Beriz is portrayed as a woman who not only overcomes but also defies numerous obstacles. We are introduced to her as a youth where, despite coming from a poor background, she studies on scholarship at an elite school. Her brilliance earns her an award at her graduation for being the best student. At this school, the best student traditionally earns a position as an instructor at the school but she is overlooked. Instead, a blonde woman from a presumably better family is selected. As a woman of mixed racial

⁹⁰ It is unfortunate to note that other than the film by Tizuka Yamasaki, Anayde has been largely forgotten in historical records. Nonetheless, her poetry is read today and schools and plazas have been named after her in her native state of Paraíba.

heritage, Anayde's not being chosen speaks to the institutionalization of racism and classism in the inner workings of power in Brazil.

But Anayde is dedicated to change, being particularly steadfast in challenging the culture of patriarchy found in the Northeast of Brazil. In another scene we see how she again rises above adversity. She decides to teach people to read in the rural regions of the Northeast. It is important to note that her decision to teach children and adults to read in rural areas of the Northeast seeks to politically enfranchise these populations. A vestige from a colonial, slave society, literacy was a requirement to vote until as late as 1985.⁹¹ On her way to the community where she will teach, she is attacked and raped by a young man as she walks alone along the beach. Crying, she then cleans herself in the ocean. The attack scene reveals the patriarchal, personally violent situation in which women lived.

When Anayde arrives at her new school, her attacker is one of her students. It would seem reasonable in today's context for Anayde to denounce her attacker but she continues to teach her students. Her silence suggests she understands, albeit painfully, the prevailing rules of patriarchy. As an unaccompanied woman, donning short hair and wearing a flowing red dress, she has defied social expectations and thus becomes a target of violence. Her poise and determination inspire compassion for her character and speak to a necessary forgiveness and nonconformism in order to lead a free, self-determined life. Only such individual perseverance and an understanding that horrible, thoughtless wrongs may be committed can lead ultimately to moving forward to make significant changes in society.

⁹¹ In the Northeast, two movements witnessed fervent activity starting in the early 1980s. These include the movement for land reform and the movement to increase educational opportunities. For more information on rural social movements and education, specifically in the state of Paraíba where Yamasaki's film is contextualized, see Alder Júlio Ferreira Calado, ed. Movimentos Sociais, Estado e Educação no Nordeste. Estudos de experiências no meio rural (João Pessoa: Idéia, 1996).

Just as she encourages her students to question assumed truths, Anayde challenges the disenfranchising of Brazilian women from full participation in political and cultural life. She defies the expectation that women are to be quiet and submissive. At a bar, she stands up and joins in on a corrida, demonstrating her lively spirit and quick wit. She writes and publishes an article where she calls for democratic reforms, including the use of secret ballots and granting women the right to vote. In spite of being belittled even by those closest to her, Anayde remains outspoken and holds firm to her vision of the future where greater liberty and happiness reign.

In a larger sense, the film is about past regimes and future possibilities. On the one hand, the film offers a critique of clientelistic politics and an exposé of the violent ways men have struggled for political supremacy, dedicated to bloodlines and past wrongs. On another hand, it delineates an exceedingly feminist agenda looking forward to personal freedoms.

Anayde's iconoclasm is portrayed against the backdrop of the breakdown in the established café-com-leite (coffee with milk) politics between the leaders of the cattle-raising state of Minas Gerais and politicians in the coffee-producing state of São Paulo. The social and political infighting that led up to the 1930 Revolution in Brazil, which in turn led to fifteen years of rule by the populist dictator Getúlio Vargas, is juxtaposed with Anayde's struggles with traditional society. In this, the film offers an important parallel between the struggles waged by women for greater political participation and civil rights and those of the nation as a whole. Although the past and the present are not bridged here as was evident in the film Gaijin, the political strife and breakdown of democracy that took place in the past before the institution of a different dictatorship some fifty years

earlier resonates with the key transitional moment through which Brazil and its citizens were passing in the early 1980s. In the middle of the Abertura, fundamental political questions were being raised regarding how politics would proceed, who would be able to participate and what concerns would be heeded. Yamasaki's Parahyba: Mulher Macho suggests that new understandings of female sexuality and gendered identities are of paramount concern in the shaping of the new State.

In keeping with her wish to develop a “cinema of emotion,” Yamasaki employs a melodramatic mode to urge the spectator to empathize with the female protagonist. The first scene of Parahyba: Mulher Macho opens with acts of violence, betrayal and repression. Men are protesting in the streets, declaring their allegiance to João Pessoa, the president of the state of Paraíba and the vice-presidential running mate of Getúlio Vargas. Several authorities have raided the home of João Dantas', Anayde's lover, who will go on to assassinate João Pessoa. In their search of his apartment for communist propaganda, ammunition and other materials that could incriminate him and eliminate his political influence, these authorities find a book of erotic poems written by Anayde to João Dantas as well as a book of erotic photographs taken of her and the couple together. The photos are placed in public view and crowds of men clamor to get a peek at the lovers. Anayde emerges from the chaos and faces those who belittle her. In the voiceover, Anayde calmly asks: “Why are you people doing this to us? What are we guilty of? Is it because I love João Dantas?” An extreme close up captures her face where a tear runs down her cheek and a sound bridge overlays a dissolve as the narrative then flashes back in time to discover how events have unfolded.

In this scene, we see key elements of a melodramatic mode. First, there is pathos. The close up of Anayde's face and the tear induce the spectator to "feel something" for her. Second, there is a misrecognition of the virtuous. Linda Williams, drawing on both the work of Peter Brooks' The Melodramatic Imagination as well as Christine Gledhill, argues that melodrama seeks to articulate moral values and "irrational truths" that are embodied by central protagonists whose virtue goes unnoticed until the climax of the narrative.⁹² As the film unfolds, it becomes clear that there are two revolutions taking place: the struggle for political leadership of Brazil and Anayde's fight for greater sexual freedom and individual (female) liberty.

In this, the film coincides with the Brazilian feminism of the time. A key debate in the women's movements of the 1970s and 1980s reflected on women's right to sexual pleasure. In literature, collections were published of erotic writing such as Márcia Denser's Muito Prazer (Pleased to Meet You) from 1980 and a second anthology entitled O Prazer é Tudo Meu (The Pleasure is Mine) from 1984. These works contrast greatly with the mainstream audiovisual landscape of Brazil in the 1970s and 1980s, where the erotic appeared more often as a way to objectify women. In the case of Tizuka Yamasaki's film Parahyba, Mulher Macho, the spectator eventually understands that expressions of eroticism are very much a part of Anayde's personhood, her subjectivity.

Similar to the narrative structure of Gaijin, Yamasaki's Parahyba, comes full circle to re-situate the female protagonist in the present moment. In this case, however, it is the present moment of the diegesis. In this second scene, Anayde realizes that João Dantas has been killed by the authorities before she was able to make it to his jail cell to give him the poison with which he was going to commit suicide. She drops the flask and

⁹² Linda Williams, "Melodrama Revisited," 42.

continues to walk forward. This movement suggests leaving the past way of doing politics behind and underscores Anayde's resilience.⁹³ Behind her, shots are fired and an armed revolution boils over into the streets. A freeze frame image punctuates this scene as if to ask: And what now?

In these final images, we understand what Anayde stood for. We come to appreciate her revolution against sexual oppression and we have a great deal of compassion for her. The final scene leaves the viewer with an important question: How will women's sexual freedom be constituted in the next phase of Brazilian politics?

Patriamada

Whereas Tizuka Yamasaki places the narratives of her first two feature-length films in the beginning of the 20th century, her third film, Patriamada (Sing, the Beloved Country, 1984), develops its narrative around the fight for direct free elections in the early 1980s (i.e. the Diretas Já movement) leading up to the end of the military regime. The struggles in the North represented in Parahyba, Mulher Macho are matched by those taking place in the South in Patriamada. Indeed, the masses of people who took to the streets in the early 1980s have as much a role in the film as Yamasaki's fictional characters. Together, these three films by Yamasaki demonstrate a desire to unite diverse individuals from different temporal moments and geographic spaces within Brazil. In the case of Patriamada, the process of redrawing the boundaries of belonging takes on a decidedly political tone where claims are made on the State to reinstall and redefine democratic institutions and social policy.

⁹³ However, this final image belies historical facts. Not long after João Dantas was brutally killed at the hands of the authorities, Anayde took her own life.

Belying the progress the military regime boasted it would bring to Brazil, several scenes in the film reflect on the country's dire socioeconomic situation. Rocha Queiroz, a wealthy, politically connected businessman and one of the main fictional characters, speaks about the external debt and the need for a government that works. The concerns of the middle-classes and the poor are also addressed. There are scenes of poor people who protest the environmental pollution that threatens the neglected communities where they live and workers demand better wages and working conditions. The cross-class, poly-vocal representation breaks an imposed silence and speaks to greater solidarity premised on a shared need to fix what is wrong with Brazil. In contrast to the discourses of fragmentation and alienation found in literature and film of the previous decade, here we see an image where individuals from diverse backgrounds are all included to recreate the nation.

As seen in the previous two films by Tizuka Yamasaki, Patriamada focalizes its narrative through a female protagonist and juxtaposes a progressive vision of gender and sexuality with a shifting political landscape. Here, the narrative revolves around Lina, a twenty-something journalist who embraces an androgynous side by wearing masculine clothing (ie. pants and neckties). Lina ambitiously pursues a career in the masculine world of the printed press and balances her affection for two men: Rocha, mentioned above, and Goiás a filmmaker with whom she collaborates. In terms of promoting non-traditional gendered roles, Patriamada takes a step further than that seen in Gaijin and Parahyba: Mulher Macho. Male impotence, single parenthood, divorce, male and female sexual desire and pleasure are all discussed or represented in a complex, open manner. Lina is shown as the one who initiates sexual encounters, she has more than one sexual

partner and sex scenes focus on her face and the pleasure she experiences. Her friend and partner Goiás cares for the child he fathered with his ex-wife, Elisa, who has left for Paris, where she lives with her lover.

In contrast to the representation of sexuality found in Parahyba: Mulher Macho, neither male nor female characters are the targets of violence or ridicule for leading sexually liberated lives. That said, the film does draw attention to the intersection of women's reproductive health and politics. An unplanned pregnancy functions as a source of narrative tension in the film. Lina is seen leaving a medical clinic where she learns she is pregnant. Rather than cry or become desperate as would be expected in a more traditional script, Lina smiles. She is happy about being pregnant – despite the apparent failure or lack of access to effective birth control. Her fortunes quickly change. She is fired from her job at the newspaper for offending people in power and her relationship with Rocha falls apart after he suffers a heart attack and his family discovers his marital infidelity with her. Following a scene in which she argues with Rocha, Lina is seen lying on a medical table, ostensibly to have an abortion. The dimly lit room in which she waits, clothed in a surgical gown, suggests the clandestine nature of abortion at the time. In the end, Lina yells out “no,” jumps off the medical table and abruptly leaves the clinic.⁹⁴ Given the highly polemical nature of abortion in Brazil, Lina's actions can be interpreted as either a sudden realization that what she was doing was wrong or that she, in fact, did not want to terminate the pregnancy. It is important to recognize the important facts regarding how Lina deals with her pregnancy. First, it is imperative to note that abortion was an option she considered but which was not legally or safely available to her. Second, for many days, Lina does not tell the two potential fathers, Goiás and Rocha, that

⁹⁴ The “facts” behind Lina's decision not to abort are not entirely clear in the diegesis.

she is pregnant. Nor does she pursue finding out which man is the father. Her actions, in sum, assert that her body is under her control and that her pregnancy is her choice.

In terms of filmic textuality, Yamasaki breaks new ground. She artfully weaves together the fictional narrative with realist strategies of representation more common to documentary filmmaking. For example, part of the diegesis of the film sees Goiás attempting to capture people in a variety of activities as part of the film he is making entitled, Patriamada. Segments of television-style reporting cut to images of Lina helping Goiás by conducting interviews with people protesting on the streets of Rio de Janeiro. It is important to note that Yamasaki and her crew shot actual footage of the Diretas Já street protests and then wove them into the film structure. Some of these interviews by Lina include well known figures in Brazilian society such as Milton Nascimento, Sonia Braga and Lula. In a particularly poignant blending of fictional and realist strategies, Rocha looks out the window of his business office high above the streets of Rio de Janeiro. Curious, Rocha looks out from his office down to the streets below where thousands of people are demonstrating. He decides to join the people in the streets where he bumps into Lina before returning to his office. Music by Milton Nascimento plays in the background and Rocha is visibly touched by the people's enthusiasm. It is important to note that to some degree, Yamasaki's film picks up where mainstream media had been sorely failing for some time. For example, TV Globo did not broadcast images of people protesting in the streets until it became clear that public opinion had swayed.⁹⁵

The narrative structure of a creating a film within a film has the effect of embedding a fictional moment in a perceived present moment and vice versa. In comparison with the film Gaijin, where a bridge was created to connect a fictional narrative of the early 1900s

⁹⁵ The shifting relationship between TV Globo and the military regime is discussed below.

with a perceived present moment of the 1980s, the effect of embedding the fictional and realist modes in Patriamada is that more overt claims are made about the way society is structured and the roles individuals have in bringing about substantial changes. The spatiotemporal approximation in Patriamada speaks to the renewed vigor of civil society, no longer needing to creatively disguise or distance its critiques.

In writing about this film, Julianne Burton has noted that the combination of realist and fictional strategies creates a “transitional state” that references the sociopolitical context of Brazil in the mid 1980s. Burton asserts that the film is a creation of “an intricate editing process which establishes multiple and contradictory resonances between fictional and documentary footage.”⁹⁶ I wish to add to Burton’s observations that the transitional state to which she refers in the film is a highly politicized one. And for Tizuka Yamasaki, politics is done with emotion. Thus, it is appropriate to consider how melodrama complements the political message in this film.

Recent thought in film studies suggests that we need to further evaluate how fictional and realist modes work together. Discussion has shifted towards melodrama, perceived as a mode that draws on both the rhetoric of realism as well as the rhetoric of fiction to make sense of the everyday.⁹⁷ In her work on melodrama, Christine Gledhill argues that melodrama “[takes] its stand in the material world of everyday lived reality and lived experience, and acknowledging the limitations of the conventions of language and representation, it proceeds to force into aesthetic presence, identity, value and plenitude

⁹⁶ Julianne Burton, “Transitional States: Creative Complicities with the Real in Cabra Marcado Para Morrer: Vinte Anos Depois [Man Marked to Die: Twenty Years Later] and Patriamada [Sing, the Beloved Country],” Studies in Latin American Popular Culture Vol. 7 (1988): 139-140.

⁹⁷ See, for example, Christine Gledhill, Linda Williams, Peter Brooks, et al. cited herein.

of meaning.”⁹⁸ In short, the fictional narrative segments and the documentary-like sequences function synergistically to effect a “melodramatic experience.” It is from a more emotion- and thought-provoking position that Yamasaki speaks to the audience. In a larger philosophical sense, Yamasaki’s film suggests a shift away from the Cartesian subject and towards the “thinking-feeling” individual suggested by Descartes’ contemporary Spinoza. Melodramatic experiences in the film inspire once-alienated individuals to care again about their country.

Ultimately, this film redefines what patriotism or “love of country” means in the context of the 1980s. Although the film is entitled Patriamada – which can be translated more literally into English as “beloved homeland,” the film does not promote a non-critical allegiance to an abstract idea or to traditional institutions. In fact, the film questions the degree to which the state is the “natural and preferred basis for determining a political community.”⁹⁹ This is best illustrated by the closing sequence in which Lina, Goiás and Rocha are at another demonstration. Both men place their hands on the abdomen of a pregnant Lina, neither knowing if he is the father but both wanting to take responsibility.¹⁰⁰ This last shot suggests a complete reformulation of society. Future generations should not bear allegiance to a State or a Father. Rather, non-traditional alliances such as this non-traditional family structure will give birth to a new democratic, civil society that is the responsibility of the collective.

Concluding Remarks

⁹⁸ Gledhill, “The Melodramatic,” 30.

⁹⁹ Deborah J. Yashar, “Citizenship Regimes, the State, and Ethnic Cleavages,” in Citizenship in Latin America, ed. Joseph S. Tulchin and Meg Ruthenburg (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), 31-53.

¹⁰⁰ Julianne Burton has argued that this is an allegory for a merging of class differences. See her article, “Transitional States.”

All three films by Tizuka Yamasaki make an important gesture to give the nation and the state back to the people. Each introduces emotional experiences to reveal and contest the effects of social, political and cultural marginalization. These films each address the practices and beliefs that shape the relationships between individuals and the larger communities to which they belong while contesting the body-based markers that define the boundaries of belonging.

The two filmmakers discussed in this chapter were not the first women to direct films in Brazil but they were the first Brazilian women in the contemporary era to develop long-term careers in filmmaking. Their success in the film industry was a harbinger of more women film directors in Brazil in the 1980s and into the 1990s. Overall the films by Ana Carolina and Tizuka Yamasaki discussed here illustrate a movement from isolation to social engagement. Tereza's "rebirth" and Lina's impending birth in a new society reflect a growing sense of belonging and a belief that women will become fully incorporated members of Brazilian society. The films by Ana Carolina and Tizuka Yamasaki from this period comment on a process of becoming, which Brenda Cossman sees as an aspect of citizenship that merits greater attention.¹⁰¹ In fact, the process of becoming is perhaps even more vital for those segments of the population who have been historically deprived of making claims to full legal, social and cultural citizenship.

The films by Ana Carolina and Tizuka Yamasaki discussed here pick up on questions regarding the boundaries of belonging for women that were posed in the literature by Clarice Lispector and Sonia Coutinho but, in their films, make female sexual pleasure, sexuality and subjectivity a less-disciplined, erotic, and public affair. Both filmmakers

¹⁰¹ Brenda Cossman, Sexual Citizens: The Legal and Cultural Regulation of Sex and Belonging (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 9.

take this important step towards women's greater liberty but, in their films, they do not make direct claims on the State or political process. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, an increasing demand for full inclusion evolves into individual women and women's groups using other technologies to place more direct claims on the State, asking the government of the people to fulfill its own duties and obligations.

Chapter 5

Reformulating Civitas in Brazil, 1980 to 1989

Art. 1º Os serviços de telecomunicações em todo o território do País, inclusive águas territoriais e espaço aéreo, assim como nos lugares em que princípios e convenções internacionais lhes reconheçam extraterritorialidade obedecerão aos preceitos da presente lei e aos regulamentos baixados para a sua execução.

Article 1 of the Brazilian Telecommunications Code, 27 August 1962

Art. 220. A manifestação do pensamento, a criação, a expressão e a informação, sob qualquer forma, processo ou veículo, não sofrerão qualquer restrição, observado o disposto nesta Constituição.

Article 220 of the 1988 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Brazil

In this chapter, I outline the social and political context of the 1980s to the transition to civilian rule in Brazil. In addition to charting the general increase in the mobilization of civil society, I discuss the key shifts in the women's movement(s) from 1979 to 1989. With improved technology and greater access, video became a tool for social organizing and was taken up by women working individually and with women's and feminist organizations. The use and development of video in social movements contrasts with the Brazilian media landscape of the 1980s. Two key transitions that take place in the culture industry at this time are increased privatization and the rise of television, namely, the solidification of TV Globo as a cultural monopoly.

In terms of political periods, the 1980s in Brazil can be divided into two key periods. The period of Abertura, or political opening, during the administration of General Figueiredo began with the declaration of political amnesty in 1979 and continued to the first direct free elections of 1984 in which Tancredo Neves was elected president and José Sarney was elected vice-president. The second period begins with José Sarney assuming the presidency in 1985 after the death of Tancredo Neves and continued to the ratification of the 1988 Constitution. The years from 1985 to 1988 represent the transition from military to civilian rule and are considered the period of redemocratização (redemocratization).

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, economic growth was uneven in Brazil and exacerbated pre-existing – and created new – social disparities. During the years of debt-led economic growth from 1974 to 1978, the South and Southeast saw increased industrialization while the Northeast was largely left out of economic development. By the end of the military regime in the mid 1980s, the poor in Brazil faced the erosion of the most basic social services – for example, health care, education, and urban sanitation. Euphoria and optimism for a new democratic future dissipated as Brazilians of all classes faced an enormous economic and social debt. Loans the military regime had taken out from foreign banks to fund their ambitious development programs were in repayment while inflation rates soared.

From the early 1970s to the drafting of the new Constitution in 1988, there were three moments of economic crisis that pushed civil society to demand political change. In the early 1970s and while still under the oppressive Medici regime (1970-1974), the OPEC oil crisis dramatically raised the costs of transportation and storage of goods, which

represent a large portion of the costs of production. Subsequently, the prices of everyday items rose dramatically while wages were strictly controlled. The second crisis occurred in the early 1980s during the Figueiredo administration (1979-1985) at which time Brazil was facing the most severe economic crisis of its history. Extremely high rates of inflation once again translated into a loss of real wages.¹ This crisis motivated people to make demands for change and the military government had to be more responsive in order to retain its control over the transition to civilian rule. When José Sarney took over as president of Brazil in 1985, the nation faced the largest foreign debt to that date in the world.² Although social groups had effectively participated in reformulating a new democratic government, when the economic crisis reached a breaking point and the government sought the assistance of international aid, structural adjustment policies curtailed democratic reforms. Funds that would have been directed towards social services were directed instead to servicing loans.

In terms of the culture industry, the 1980s marks another transition from public and private media to a media landscape that is increasingly privatized. The policies established by the military regime were slowly eroded away and a shift in the relationship between the state and television broadcasting took place. Openings for alternative media were established and “little media” took on greater importance. Concomitant advances in technology brought about the invention and proliferation of electronic media (video). In this, electronic media shared with traditional media (i.e. 16 and 35mm film) the ambitious goal to counter neocolonialist, transnational media practices that squeezed out the vast majority from participating in the definition of national culture. This would not last as

¹ Thomas Skidmore, The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964-85 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 230-232, 236-240.

² *Ibid.*, 274.

funding resources disappeared and what had seemed to be an opportunity for democratic access to media turned out to be a mirage. Producers of alternative media saw the possibility to redefine civic and cultural life apart from the onslaught of consumer-driven mainstream media disappear as media remained in the hands of a few elite families.

The Mobilization of Civil Society, 1980 to 1989

The Diretas Já campaign illustrates a significant step towards redemocratization that came after nearly a decade of Brazilians trying to reclaim their political rights. As discussed in Chapter 4, civil society began voicing their opposition to the military regime and its development plan shortly after General Geisel assumed the presidency in 1974 and declared the beginning of political decompression, known as distensão. Despite the small openings made in the political process during the Geisel regime, individuals were limited in their ability to enter the political process by publicizing their own concerns or making political demands. Under the protective umbrella of the Catholic Church several grassroots movements began organizing in the early 1970s.³ As discussed above, women protested the negative effects of the military's economic programs, the regime's general inattention to the needs of the poor and working classes, and participated in Comunidades Eclesiásticas de Base (ecclesiastical base communities, CEBs).⁴ Women's participation in these efforts was largely overlooked by the military as their activities were not deemed political in nature.

³ Other secular groups were able to oppose the military government, including the Brazilian Bar Association (Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil, OAB), and Brazilian corporate executives who disliked government incentives and controls. Clearly, both secular groups were traditional, elite institutions in which the vast majority of Brazilians could not voice their concerns. Albeit a source of protection from the military, the conservative ideology of the Church limited women's groups from addressing issues of sexuality, divorce, challenges to family structures and reproductive freedom.

⁴ CEBs began as unstructured Bible-study groups led by a priest, nun or layperson.

General Geisel kept to his declaration that the distensão would be slow, gradual and safe. In 1975, he lifted prior censorship for the newspaper O Estado de São Paulo. However, his efforts to move towards liberalization were opposed by the security forces which continued to detain and torture presumed political dissidents. As mentioned above, the reported deaths of prominent media leader Wladimir Herzog (1975) and metalworkers union leader Manoel Fiel Filho (1976) brought public outrage. Thousands occupied the Praça da Sé, a plaza in the heart of São Paulo, to attend a Catholic mass for Herzog. The public protest, which heralded fervent discussion of human rights in Brazil and future protests, was the first public act widely covered in the news media since the coup d'état of 1964.⁵

Civil society began taking ever greater advantage of the political opening created by Geisel. In 1977, students once again protested and organized labor strikes took place in 1978 and 1979 to protest the loss in real wages vis-à-vis the rates of inflation. Political opening continued and in late 1978, the AI-5, a key authoritarian instrument, was abolished. In 1979, general amnesty was declared and political parties were allowed to reform. In this year, union organizer Luiz Inácio (Lula) da Silva helped found the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Worker's Party, PT). These events were met with right-wing terrorist backlash that included beatings of high-profile figures, bombings of Rio Center, a downtown shopping center in Rio de Janeiro, a letter bomb to the headquarters of the Brazilian Press Association and vigilante threats to newsstand owners who sold progressive newspapers.⁶

⁵ Marcos Napolitano, Cultura e Poder no Brasil Contemporâneo (1977-1984) (Curitiba: Juruá, 2003), 59.

⁶ Skidmore, The Politics of Military Rule, 176-178, 183-188, 227-230.

Brazilian Women's Movements, 1979 to 1989

Transitions from authoritarian military regimes to civilian rule in Latin America have involved the reconfiguration of relationships between state and civil society.⁷ In the larger process of “engendering democracy,” to use Sonia Alvarez’s term, the women’s movement in Brazil faced new organizational challenges. The processes of distensão and Abertura meant that opposing the authoritarian regime was no longer the central focus and unifying factor for civil society. The political opportunities that opened up meant that conflicting interests and ideologies that had been eclipsed by the larger goal of opposing the dictatorship came into view again after the declaration of amnesty. By the early 1980s, what had been a relatively unified women’s movement, despite its internal heterogeneity, dispersed and diversified greatly.⁸ Women’s groups became increasingly focused on particular issues and their activities varied according to their strategic or practical gender (i.e. feminist or feminine) demands, class and race.⁹

Many women activists who had gone into exile returned to Brazil after the declaration of amnesty and brought with them ideas from the growing women’s movements in their respective countries of refuge.¹⁰ A key concept these women brought with them from their participation abroad was the notion of movement autonomy.¹¹ During the years of Abertura and the period of redemocratization, women’s groups negotiated with and against state-sanctioned political parties and the Church.

⁷ This is an issue discussed by Verónica Schild and by Maria Celia Paoli and Vera da Silva Telles in the edited text Cultures of Politics / Politics of Cultures: Re-visioning Latin American Social Movements, eds. Evelina Dagnino, Sonia E. Alvarez and Arturo Escobar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998).

⁸ Cynthia Sarti, “The Panorama of Feminism in Brazil,” New Left Review 173 (1989): 75-90.

⁹ Alvarez, Engendering Democracy, 110-136.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

The period from 1979 to 1985 represents a political opening for women's groups and newly reauthorized political parties became a channel through which women were able to voice their demands.¹² However, Sonia Alvarez notes several disadvantages with this strategy. Male-dominated political parties were willing to incorporate gender equity issues on their platforms but failed to endorse ideas that would challenge mainstream gender ideology.¹³ Second, political parties do not function as adequate substitutes for the positive consciousness-raising effects that local social movements can have on the lives of women.¹⁴ Lastly, mainstream political groups may apparently support those demands brought forth by women's organizations only to eventually subvert the initial and intended objectives.¹⁵

Despite the contradictions and difficulties of working with party politics, the period from 1979 to 1985 reveals that women's organizations successfully made claims on the State. Within the Ministry of Health, feminist-identified women were able to influence the content of the Programa de Assistência Integral à Saúde da Mulher (PAISM, Program for Integral Assistance to Women's Health). During the Sarney administration, the PAISM was largely overlooked and feminist-designed educational materials were replaced with those that were acceptable to the Catholic Church.¹⁶ In another move towards the mainstream, women's groups succeeded in creating the Conselhos Estaduais da Condição Feminina (CECF, State Councils on the Feminine Condition). By 1988, a

¹² The process of political opening was initially a slow and voluntary process overseen by the military. Under pressure from civil society going through one of the worst economic crisis of Brazilian history in the early 1980s, the process of political opening was made swifter.

¹³ Alvarez, Engendering Democracy, 167.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 157.

¹⁵ A case in point is the military government announcing a family planning program in the early 1980s that involved the distribution of birth control pills. Women's health organizations rightly noted that the program, established at the behest of the International Monetary Fund, was more about population control than addressing the healthcare needs of Brazilian women. *Ibid.*, 178-197.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 192-193, 249-250.

total of 24 states had CECFs, which served as a mechanism within the State apparatus to influence public policy and oversee State-sponsored family planning programs.¹⁷ In the first year of the return to civilian rule, police precincts opened that were staffed by women to attend to female-specific criminal cases.¹⁸ This same year a Conselho Nacional dos Direitos da Mulher (CNDM, National Council on Women's Rights) was established and shortly thereafter it developed a campaign to combat violence against women.¹⁹

The advances made by the women's movement during Abertura politics (1979 to 1985) were not sustained during the period of redemocratization (1985 to 1988). What had shown the possibility of being a transformation of politics from the bottom resulted in a transition guided and controlled from the top. Political parties paid attention to women's issues to garner electoral support but did not follow through on effecting change. A strong centrist bloc and new impositions from the IMF (International Monetary Fund) translated into little social and labor reform after 1986. Despite this, women's organizations continued to push for reforms and the new Brazilian Constitution of 1988 included a range of strategic and practical gender interests. This was a significant success for the women's movement but, once again, those proposals that promoted gender *change* were rejected.²⁰

Since the beginning of Abertura politics, women's organizations demanded the cultural as well as the political transformation of Brazilian society.²¹ As an extension of

¹⁷ Ibid., 198-204, 241.

¹⁸ These precincts, called delegacias da mulher, opened in order to deal with cases requiring sensitivity to handle cases of domestic violence and other criminal offenses against women. This training had been lacking in regularly staffed precincts.

¹⁹ Ibid., 218, 221, 243.

²⁰ Ibid., 252.

²¹ Alvarez notes this as becoming a clear goal after the 1979 Congress. Ibid., 115.

feminist and woman-centered activism, women took their message into the arts.²² I use the term “woman-centered activism” to refer to those individuals (and groups) whose efforts engaged with and promoted new understandings of female gender roles and gender ideology but who did not identify as feminist or directly participate in women’s or feminist groups. In general, woman-centered refers to practices that prioritize social, political and economic issues affecting women and the experiences of women. As discussed above, support mechanisms were established by Embrafilme that allowed independent women filmmakers working in 16 and 35mm film to produce, distribute and screen their works. The advent of and greater access to video technology in the early 1980s served as a powerful medium for social movements to spread information about their activities and mobilize others to join or collaborate in their efforts. Video quickly became a central component in popular struggles and played a vital role in expanding the discourses of citizenship. Women, as individuals and as members of organizations, took to the possibilities provided by film and video to articulate their particular vision of society and politics and for feminist consciousness-raising. Their works were largely positioned outside the mainstream channels of funding and production and sought to challenge prevailing gender ideologies.

In order to appreciate the efforts that went into the production of, the discourses developed by, and the strategic role of independent and alternative film and video during the transition to democracy, I’d like to juxtapose it with mainstream, consumer-oriented television. The purpose in doing so is to reveal the manipulation that took place in

²² For example, street theater groups promoted new understandings of gender and female sexuality. A particularly active group and one that continues its activism to this day is performance group As Loucas de Pedra Lilás in the state of Pernambuco. Information available at <http://www.loucas.org.br>; Internet; last accessed 23 June 2008.

mainstream media and underscore the importance of independent sectors of society putting forth their own counterhegemonic social and political agendas. What will become clear are the anti-democratic and anti-citizen structures in place involving the media in Brazil.

Before proceeding further, a few definitions are in order. Alternative and independent media are umbrella terms that refer to non-mainstream modes of media such as popular video, 'zines, community radio, etc. Alternative and independent media may overlap in spirit and function but they can differ greatly in terms of contexts of production, distribution and exhibition. Media scholars struggle to propose a singular concept of alternative media. Chris Atton proposes a model of alternative media based on content as well as the processes and relationships that surround alternative media production.²³ Generally speaking, alternative media is not interested in profits, it focuses on the exchange of ideas and knowledges not available elsewhere and it is not controlled by corporate or governmental entities. Independent media may secure funding from a corporate or government entity but are not controlled by either and may or may not earn a profit, depending on media distribution and consumption (or exhibition and reception).

Alternative does not automatically signify the same as “oppositional,” “counter-information” or “counter-hegemony.” Drawing on Raymond Williams’ distinction between alternative and oppositional practices, Atton asserts that alternative media strive to exist parallel to hegemony while oppositional media seek to replace it.²⁴ Notable in Atton’s typology of alternative media is the transformation of social relations, production

²³ Chris Atton, *Alternative Media* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2002).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

roles and communication processes, which develop horizontal linkages and break down the structures that inhibit the free flow of information.

The terms “grassroots” and “popular” are largely synonymous, referring to the production of media either by members participating in or by an individual or group closely affiliated with a given community group or non-governmental organization. Luiz Fernando Santoro prefers to be more specific regarding popular video, arguing that popular video refers to those forms of video that incorporate the characteristics of alternative communication but are focused on Brazilian reality.²⁵ In this, popular video takes on the important role of addressing issues that affected the poor and the disenfranchised. Thus, there are issues surrounding race, class, gender and regional differences that must be taken into account when we talk about alternative media.

An interest in alternative media had been growing throughout the 1970s but claimed international interest in the 1980s.²⁶ Support for alternative media came from a number of different directions including media scholars, activists and international agencies who saw communications as an integral part of democratic practice. The Catholic Church took a progressive stance after Vatican II and advocated for a more participatory model of communication.²⁷ Alternative media production received a (secular) ideological push after the UNESCO publication in 1980 of Many voices, one world: towards a new more just and more efficient world information and communication order (also known as the

²⁵ Luiz Fernando Santoro, A Imagem nas Mãos: O Vídeo Popular no Brasil (São Paulo: Summus Editorial, 1989), 61.

²⁶ This interest received an early spark with the introduction of the portapak onto the market in 1968. French filmmaker Jean Luc Godard is often cited for promoting his own notion of alternative media (or “militant cinema”) while lecturing at the University of Vincennes in 1969.

²⁷ In 1971, the Catholic Church published Progressio et Communio, which established that communication was a form of communion. The Catholic Church took efforts to increase access to information – to inform and be informed. For more on the role of the Catholic Church in communications, see Norman Tanner, The Church and the World: Gaudium et Spes, Inter mirifica (New York: Paulist Press, 2005).

“MacBride Report”). This document defended the fundamental right to communicate and declared that unequal relations in communications systems inhibit democratic process.²⁸

The “Harare Statement” published in 1989 by UNESCO continued to defend freedom of expression and placed greater emphasis on grassroots media.²⁹ In this context, audiovisual communication was seen as a tool in the process of increasing social inclusion, extending citizenship rights, and creating a more just society. This viewpoint continues to the present era with the belief, albeit a bit more tempered, in the possibilities new media technologies (i.e. digital video, the internet, etc.) can offer in the struggle for greater democratic process.³⁰

A number of significant experiments in alternative media developed. Notable examples were located in Canada (The “Challenge for Change” / “Société nouvelle” projects in Newfoundland and Québec). These projects were backed by the National Film Board of Canada and non-profit organizations that supported alternative media production. What is more, these projects had an international scope, collaborating as needed with women’s independent audiovisual production in Latin America. Patricia Aufderheide asserts that international liaisons such as those between Canada and Latin America (Vidéo Tiers-monde) and Italy (Centro Internazionale Crocevia) were vital

²⁸ The Report notes that the right to information and the freedom of expression have been defined as fundamental human rights since the 18th century, outlined in the Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776), the United States Bill of Rights (1789) and the Déclaration des droits de l’Homme et du citoyen (Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen, 1789).

²⁹ For a discussion of UNESCO and the period of the New World Information and Communications Order, see Marc Raboy, “Communication and the New World Order: Strategies for Democratization” in Video the Changing World, eds. Nancy Thede and Alain Ambrosi (Cheektowaga, NY: Black Rose Books, 1991), 160-175.

³⁰ See for example the essays in Henry Jenkins and David Thorburn, eds., Democracy and New Media (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003).

liaisons leading to the growth of alternative and independent media in Latin America during the 1980s.³¹

Current discussions of alternative media in Latin America focus on the democratic potential of digital media but the use and struggle to produce alternative media to create counter-hegemonic discourse has a respectable trajectory in Latin America. In the 1990s, the Zapatistas caught the attention of the world with their adept use of the media and community radio stations continue to be key sources of information for rural communities. In fact, alternative media in Latin America was part of a longer trajectory of media-making that contested alienation and sociopolitical development. References are often made to the principles guiding New Latin American Cinema (in Portuguese, Cinema Nôvo). The writings and manifestoes of such directors as Julio García Espinosa, Fernando Birri, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Glauber Rocha challenged the aesthetics and cultural values dominant in imported films (i.e. from Hollywood).³² Alternative media in Latin America was certainly influenced by events taking place on a global scale with regard to the “new world information and communication order” but it was also guided by its own political crises aggravated by neoliberalism and authoritarian regimes.

Audiovisual Space in Brazil in the 1980s: Privatization and the Rise of Television

Throughout the 1980s, civil society became increasingly active in voicing their demands for political reform. But social movements faced a number of challenges from

³¹ Patricia Aufderheide, “Grassroots Video in Latin America,” in Visible Nations: Latin American Cinema and Video, ed., Chon A. Noriega (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 221.

³² Cinema Nôvo cannot be considered alternative in the same sense as popular video or community radio programs. This is due to the production funding that Cinema Novo filmmakers were able to secure from elite channels as well as the more mainstream networks of distribution and exhibition in which these films circulated. This is an important distinction vis-à-vis popular video and community-based media projects.

established institutions and those in the making. Brazilian media scholar Joseph Straubhaar notes that owners of television stations and advertisers were at least as powerful as the government in setting political agendas.³³ Mass media and staged protests had been a key factor in paving the way for the military dictatorship and its control was central to maintaining the regime's hegemony.³⁴ From the coup d'état of 1964 until the period of transition, mainstream media – embodied mostly in the Globo Organization – went from official “mouthpiece” of the military to becoming a protagonist in its own right during the transition from military to civilian rule.³⁵ Given its increasing ability to pursue its own interests and shape the political debates of the day, I turn now to focus on television in Brazil and its role in Abertura politics (1979 – 1985) and during the period of redemocratization (1985 – 1988).

The 1970s were marked by increased privatization, increased advertising expenditures and decreased freedoms in mainstream media. By the time José Sarney entered office in 1985, civil society was reclaiming their right to speak out and demand their rights as full citizens of Brazil. One of the claims made by civil society was the redemocratization of the media. With the advent of video camcorders, relatively less expensive editing equipment and the introduction of video cassette recorders, the possibility of democratizing the media seemed plausible. While Brazilian filmmaking struggled against the corporate monopoly system of foreign films, broadcast television could support itself with advertising revenues from multinational corporations. Albeit a strong solidified

³³ Joseph D. Straubhaar, "Television and Video in the Transition from Military to Civilian Rule in Brazil," Latin American Research Review 24.1 (1989): 143.

³⁴ Recall the marches of women for “God, Liberty and Country” that were staged in the 1960s thus building middle and upper class support for the military takeover in 1964.

³⁵ Cesar Guimarães and Roberto Amaral, “Brazilian Television: A Rapid Conversion to the New Order,” in Media and Politics in Latin America: The Struggle for Democracy, ed. Elizabeth Fox (Beverly Hills: SAGE, 1988), 125-137.

outlet for “native” cultural production, broadcast television was politically limited, corporatist in structure and monopolized by TV Globo.

Mass media played an important role in the transition to democracy in Latin America during the 1980s. Any discussion of the media landscape in Brazil must include a reference to Brazilian television. As a medium of mass communication, television in Brazil possesses an exceedingly powerful role to inform. Approximately three-quarters of all Brazilian households have access to television, which is a remarkable statistic considering the levels of poverty in which the majority of Brazilians live. Given illiteracy rates, the low percentage of citizens that have access to higher education, long work days, and lack of spending money to purchase daily newspapers, television has become the primary medium of information. Thus, for the vast majority of Brazilians, television greatly contributes to shaping an understanding of the social and political issues affecting them. Media scholars have noted TV Globo’s key role during the transition from military to civilian rule in Brazil. In the era after the end of the authoritarian regime, television has had the ability to influence presidential elections and overshadow presidential impeachments.³⁶

Television in Brazil underwent rapid development during the military regime. This occurred in part as a result of the military giving priority to specific sectors of the economy, with telecommunications at the top of the list. Three years after the coup d’etat, a branch of the military drafted the Lei de Segurança Nacional (The National Security

³⁶ The role of television in the 1989 presidential elections has been well documented. For more contemporary cases, see Mauro Porto, “Framing Controversies: Television and the 2002 Presidential Election in Brazil,” Political Communication 24.1 (2007): 19-36; Taylor C. Boas, “Television and Neopopulism in Latin America: Media Effects in Brazil and Peru,” Latin American Research Review 40.2 (2005), 27-49. Esther Hamburger opens her book on the Brazilian telenovela describing the murder of the actress Daniela Perez, whose death overshadowed the official impeachment of democratically elected Fernando Collor de Mello. See her O Brasil Antenado: A Sociedade da Novela (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editora, 2005), 7-20.

Law), which concerned itself with fostering social peace, socioeconomic development, and the role of a modernized telecommunications system as key to integrating the nation. Within one month, the military also drafted the Lei da Imprensa (The Press Law). These documents along with a number of Atos Institucionais (Institutional Acts) were the key authoritarian documents for the regime and set the legal parameters under which mass media could operate. Driven by its goals for national development and security, the military established a sophisticated telecommunications network to connect the four corners of the country. This network of microwave transmission complemented by satellites and then fiber optic cables became the basis for national television networks.

With the assistance of the military regime and continued support by democratic civilian governments, mass media in Brazil has undergone a sustained monopolization. This elite monopoly of media outlets is similar to the United States and is unlike the context found in Europe where the state runs at least one or two channels. A marked asymmetry with regard to the flows of information and communication results from the military regime's development plan. Left to market forces, the general tendency has been the concentration of power and increased exclusion of the poor and less educated. This concentration also takes place on a geographic scale. The vast majority of media production is located in the Southeast in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.³⁷ Media groups in Brazil – as is the trend elsewhere in Latin America – are owned by elite, private entities with an absence of public control. Despite the fact that Article 220 of Section VIII in the 1988 Brazilian Constitution forbids the direct or indirect monopoly or oligopoly of mass

³⁷ A Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil, decreed on October 5, 1988; available at www6.senado.gov.br/con1988; Internet, accessed 8 June 2007.

media, a handful of wealthy families control media enterprises in Brazil.³⁸ Currently, the primary broadcast stations – TV Globo, TV Manchete, TV Record, and SBT – are joined by ventures in satellite and cable television. Patterns similar to those within broadcast media are being replicated in these new arenas.

The increased size of the audiovisual market has not translated into diversification in ownership. New concessions have been made to politicians and private enterprises. During the first administration of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1994-1998), the distribution of 1,848 television concessions were assigned to “friends” of the president.³⁹ TV Globo affiliates continue to be owned by or have links to politicians, ranging from a low of 25% in the State of Minas Gerais to an average of 100% in other states of Brazil.⁴⁰ From 1990 to 2005, 34% of main television transmitters have been owned by individuals who have held elected office.⁴¹ A closer look at the data reveals that this concentration of ownership is highest in the North and Northeast, areas noted for being less socially and economically developed in comparison with other regions of Brazil. This trend of elected politicians being involved in mass communications has continued in the new areas of pay television and direct-to-home satellite transmission. Reflecting on the context of communication in Brazil, media scholar Vinicius Ferreira Laner notes that the 1988 Brazilian Constitution does not allow for any measure on the part of political power to

³⁸ One of the goals of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution, as expressed in Article 221, was the regionalization of cultural production as part of a larger effort to decentralize communication. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, these efforts have had some minimal successes.

³⁹ Suzy dos Santos and Sérgio Capparelli, “Coronelismo, Radiodifusão e Voto: A Nova Face de um Velho Conceito,” *Rede Globo: 40 anos de poder e hegemonia*, eds. Valério Cruz Brittos and César Ricardo Siqueira Bolaño (São Paulo: Paulus, 2005), 89.

⁴⁰ Suzy dos Santos, *Banco de dados: Estrutura dos meios de comunicação no Brasil* (Salvador: FJA, 2005) quoted in Santos and Capparelli, *Ibid.*, 92. Cassiano Ferreira Simões and Fernando Mattos report that since the 1962 Código Brasileiro de Telecomunicações (Brazilian Telecommunications Code) and in the 1995 Lei do Cabo (Cable Law), little concern has been paid to the concentration of the ownership of media. See their “Elementos Histórico-Regulatórios, 35-55.

⁴¹ Santos and Capparelli, “Coronelismo,” 95.

impede the free circulation of ideas contrary to the interests of the holders of political power.⁴² In this situation, political thoughts may circulate but they are not likely to be contrary to the interests of those in power.

The current corporatist model of media in Brazil, which now includes cinema, holds particular implications for the role of the media in introducing ideological content.⁴³ Between state sponsored censorship during the military regime, corporate monopoly of mass media and the institutionalized potential for political manipulation, there is little space for dissenting voices and alternative messages. In short, this vertical, corporatist, politician-controlled media structure that has now existed in Brazil for almost half a century translates into programming content that makes invisible or distorts racial, class, gendered and regional differences and disparities.

Rede Globo

The Brazilian media landscape must include special mention of the TV Globo network and its relationship to the state. Among the culture industries, TV Globo has the “monopólio da fala” (monopoly of speech).⁴⁴ Robert Marinho started his network in 1962 with financial assistance from Time-Life, Inc. In 1965, TV Globo consolidated itself as a network that is now ranked only behind the three largest television stations in the United States. It was not only access to international capital in the form of multinational advertising revenues that launched TV Globo to the position it now holds, but also the

⁴² Vinicius Ferreira Laner, Comunicação, desenvolvimento e democracia: uma análise crítica da mídia brasileira à luz do direito a informação e à liberdade da imprensa (Santa Cruz do Sul: EDUNISC, 2004), 61.

⁴³ Straubhaar, “Television and Video,” 140.

⁴⁴ Muniz Sodré, O monopólio da fala (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1981).

carefully negotiated relationship with the authoritarian military regime of 1964.⁴⁵

Although facing competition from new networks and cable, TV Globo still regularly captures 60 to 80 percent of the Brazilian audience. Its programs are distributed throughout the world, including Spanish-speaking Latin America, the United States, Europe and Asia.

The first two decades of programming consisted of live shows and then imported foreign films and programs. By 1976, TV Globo was producing 75% of its own programming and was beginning to monopolize advertising expenses.⁴⁶ During the early years, TV Globo targeted its programs to the poor. But in the early 1970s, the station made a decisive shift to producing higher quality programs, raised its production standards, and targeted the small upper middle and elite classes in Brazil. This focus on the wealthier classes along with its structure as a highly influential private apparatus of hegemony has created a potent recipe for exclusion.⁴⁷ A small percentage of programming time open to outside producers and the famous “padrão de qualidade Globo” (Globo standard of quality) have made it such that it has been difficult for less-funded media producers to compete in the Brazilian audiovisual space. Entry into this space has now become even more difficult as the Globo Organization has continued to expand its activities. Since the mid 1990s, the network has taken advantage of new

⁴⁵ It is important to note that TV Globo was not a puppet in the hands of the government. By contrast, the Geisel and Figueiredo administrations were frustrated by the degree of influence Roberto Marinho’s Organizações Globo (Globo Organization) possessed in the 1970s. See Pedro Bial, *Roberto Marinho* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2004), 269; and Euclides Quandt de Oliveira, *A Televisão no Brasil* (Brasília: Ministério de Comunicações, 1975).

⁴⁶ It is important to note that, for commercial media, advertising revenues are vital to the existence and survival of other media outlets. This domination of advertising revenue clearly contributed to TV Globo’s monopoly on broadcast television. Figures cited in Mattos, *The Impact of the 1964 Revolution on Brazilian TV*, 20-21.

⁴⁷ Murilo César Ramos articulates this argument in “A força de um aparelho privado de hegemonia.” in *Rede Globo: 40 anos de poder e hegemonia*, eds. Valério Cruz Brittos and César Ricardo Siqueira Bolaño (São Paulo: Paulus, 2005), 57-76.

audiovisual laws and established its own (theoretically) independent cinema production company that competes with individual film producers for state production support. The Globo Organization created its cinema branch Globo Filmes in 1998 with the goal of increasing collaboration between cinema and television. Globo Filmes works alongside independent producers and has been involved in the biggest box-office successes of Brazilian cinema in recent years, including Cidade de Deus (City of God, 2002) and Carandiru (2004). In theory, Globo Filmes has contributed to the strengthening of the audiovisual industry in Brazil. In reality, it has taken advantage of loop holes in audiovisual laws intended for independent producers and imposed its own aesthetic on films, known as the “Globo standard of quality.” This situation has been critiqued by current filmmakers. This trend has occurred, as shall become evident in Chapter 6, in tandem with the reduction of state and nongovernmental funds for independent film and video producers in the 1980s.

The introduction and spread of television has, in general, been shown to have had substantial impact on how Brazilians understand the world in which they live.⁴⁸ It is not the nightly news, however, that has contributed mostly to this process. Rather, telenovelas⁴⁹ (soap operas) are the main product of the television industry.⁵⁰ A high percentage of the Brazilian population tunes in daily to view the latest installment of the ongoing novela, thus creating a community of viewers from eight to ten o’clock every evening. In the 1970s and 1980s, telenovelas framed the social and political issues that

⁴⁸ Conrad P. Kottak provides an intriguing account of television and viewing habits in Brazil in Prime-Time Society: An Anthropological Analysis of Television and Culture (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1990).

⁴⁹ Also referred to as a novela in Portuguese.

⁵⁰ Brazilian telenovelas differ from soap operas in the United States in several key ways. Brazilian telenovelas typically last for six to seven months and are aired in the evening during prime-time hours. American and British soap operas air during the daytime and may last for years or, in some cases, decades.

were debated such as tensions between region and nation, male and female gendered relationships, and conflicts among social classes.⁵¹ By the 1980s, novelas were an important space for discussing the nation and offered a critique of the New Republic.⁵² But one of the shortcomings of the novelas has been the censoring of women's sexuality and the absence of critical commentary on poverty and race and ethnic relations in Brazil.⁵³

Rede Globo and the Politics of Transition and Redemocratization

The end of the military dictatorship did not translate into significant shifts in the relationship between mass media and the government. Television continued to be a highly censored medium. The regime continued to practice an inconsistent and, to some extent for this reason, effective system of censorship. Despite its power and influence and for those very reasons, the government retained the power to censor television programs as outlined in the Press Law and the AI-5. Although censorship of journalism ended in 1980, telenovelas continued to be reviewed by the government until the ratification of the new Constitution in 1988.⁵⁴ This extended control can be attributed in part to the power of the medium as well as oversight by intellectuals who fought for easing censorship in films, literature, and theater but did not advocate for television as it was considered a less prestigious art form.⁵⁵ The Código Brasileiro de Telecomunicações (Brazilian Telecommunications Code, CBT) of 1962 established that television concessions would

⁵¹ Hamburger, O Brasil Antenado, 84-120.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 117-120.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 96-97, 99, 118.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵⁵ Kottak, Prime-Time, 21.

last for 15 years and could be revoked at any time for any reason.⁵⁶ The possibility of losing a concession motivated executives and creators to practice internal censorship.⁵⁷ Under political pressure, the Globo Network established its own internal censorship division that reviewed scripts before taping so as to avoid problems in advance.⁵⁸ This situation created a multi-layered censorship. At the top level, the transmission of information and ideas was overseen by the military government. At the second level, one corporate entity, Rede Globo, retained the most power to inform and entertain. And within that agency, self-censorship was practiced.

Prior to the ratification of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution, progressives sought to reformulate communications policies. A number of measures were included in the final draft of the 1988 Constitution to effect the decentralization and democratization of the media.⁵⁹ The administration of José Sarney had the opportunity to change the structure of Brazilian television and redirect its development but it did not.⁶⁰ After taking office, Sarney appointed Antônio Carlos Magalhães who initially suggested revising the system of concessions but promptly changed his mind. Instead, Magalhães benefited from concessions of radio and television stations and by the late 1990s, he, along with family

⁵⁶ The CBT is still in effect. See Cassiano Ferreira Simões and Fernando Mattos, “Elementos Históricos-Regulatórios da Televisão Brasileira,” in *Rede Globo: 40 anos de poder e hegemonia*, eds., Valério Cruz Brittos and César Ricardo Siqueira Bolaño (São Paulo: Paulus, 2005), 39-41, 52-53.

⁵⁷ In addition to self-censorship, Conrad Kottak reports that telenovelas were required to submit a synopsis and the first 15 chapters to government censors for approval. Kottak, *Prime Time*, 22.

⁵⁸ Hamburger, *O Brasil Antenado*, 34-35

⁵⁹ Vinicius Ferreira Laner observes that in the 1980s these groups did not offer organized proposals, which was their key mistake. By 1991, a National Forum for the Democratization of Communications took place and a number of non-governmental organizations became associated with the struggle for freedom of expression and the democratization of communication; Laner, *Comunicação*, 82-83.

⁶⁰ The role Roberto Marinho and/or the Globo Organization played in transition politics during the Sarney administration is legendary. Statements from various social and political figures supporting this can be found in Pedro Bial, *Roberto Marinho* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2004).

members and associates, were the owners of Rede Bahia, which dominates all segments of communication in the state of Bahia.⁶¹

The TV Globo group has continued its artful negotiations with politicians to prevent changes in government policy in the area of mass media. The Associação Brasileira de Emissoras de Rádio e Televisão (The Brazilian Association for Radio and Television Broadcasters, ABERT) has successfully lobbied since its creation in 1962 to keep television outside government regulations. Two contemporary cases are illustrative of this fact. ABERT, which included many members of the Globo Group, successfully lobbied to keep television outside the 1995 Lei do Cabo (Cable Law). When the Grupo Executivo de Desenvolvimento da Indústria Cinematográfica (Executive Group for the Development of the Cinema Industry, GEDIC) proposed in 2000 a new regulatory agency, the Agência Nacional do Cinema e do Audiovisual (The National Agency of Cinema and Audiovisual Media, ANCINAV), the Globo Organization, along with several members in GEDIC, was able to ensure that no new norms applied to television. The final proposal from GEDIC was the formation of ANCINE (Agência Nacional do Cinema, The National Cinema Agency).⁶²

What distinguishes TV Globo is its history of influencing and sometimes obstructing the political process from the beginning of the authoritarian military regime to the contemporary era. The Rede Globo da Televisão has an impressive list of accomplishments in terms of interfering with politics in Brazil, most notable among these events are the elections of 1982 in the State of Rio de Janeiro, the campaign to ratify an amendment allowing for direct free presidential elections – known as the Diretas Já

⁶¹ Santos and Capparelli, “Coronelismo,” 87-89.

⁶² For a discussion of both cases, see Ramos, “A Força de um Aparelho,” 65-72.

movement – in 1984 and the manipulation of the first direct elections in 1989. Specifically, TV Globo participated in a fraudulent scheme that mis-reported polling data during Lionel Brizola’s campaign for the governorship of the state of Rio de Janeiro in 1982. The assumed intention was to make the public less surprised when Brizola lost the campaign to the Globo-supported candidate Wellington Moreira Franco. During the massive civilian demonstrations in 1984 that supported the proposed 22nd Constitutional Amendment allowing for direct free presidential elections, TV Globo failed to transmit reports of the events taking place around the country or misrepresented the public gatherings as non-political public celebrations. Two weeks before the vote was to take place, TV Globo finally acceded and transmitted full coverage of the massive public demonstration in Rio de Janeiro where approximately one million people filled the streets in April of 1984. Having “defected” to support the public’s call for direct elections, TV Globo’s constant televised coverage prevented a return to military rule when Tancredo Neves fell ill and was hospitalized before the presidential inaugurations of 1985. TV Globo subsequently created a consensus for its chosen candidate, José Sarney, to succeed Neves after his death.⁶³ Lastly, the case of the manipulation of the 1989 run-off election between PT candidate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Fernando Collor de Mello has been well documented.⁶⁴ In this instance, TV Globo manipulated a final debate, making Lula look unprepared and unprofessional. Fernando Collor de Mello won the election and was then impeached in 1992. Notably, Lúcia Murat’s 1997 film Doces poderes reflects on the

⁶³ Guimarães and Amaral, “Brazilian Television,” 134-135.

⁶⁴ See, for example, Thomas Skidmore, ed. Television, Politics, and the Transition to Democracy in Latin America (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press ; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

power of the media to distort politics. Her film stands out as one of the few audiovisual productions to critique the use and abuse of mass media for political gain in Brazil.

Despite the manipulation of Lula's image, the PT candidate's access to television represents a positive step in the process of redemocratization. The use of television and radio in the 1989 elections is a far cry from the 1976 Lei Falcão (Falcão Law) that strictly limited election candidates' access to radio or television. The intent in 1976 was to prevent the election of oppositional candidates during the period of distensão, the period of political decompression during the General Geisel administration.

Alternative and Independent Media in Brazil in the 1980s

The campaign for direct elections in 1984 marked a watershed point for social movements and the role of media in society and politics. More cynical – but perhaps more accurate – voices would assert that TV Globo responded for the first time to public opinion not out of a benevolent interest in democratization but, rather, made the shift to retain mass appeal and secure its future audience ratings.⁶⁵ What was clear from the coverage of the Diretas Já protests was that media had played a key role in the push for democratic reform and, in a response to public opinion, dramatically shifted the relationships of power within Brazilian society. Unfortunately, it was not the last egregious example of media bias and deception. The audiovisual context described above presents a problem with the right to free expression: it is an entirely anti-citizen, anti-democratic, pro-consumer structure. The success of media to shape the debate surrounding the Diretas Já campaign suggests we need to think seriously about the power of alternative media to expand political participation.

⁶⁵ Guimarães and Amaral, "Brazilian Television," 130.

After years of political repression, the freedom to voice one's thoughts and make claims on the state took on vital importance. In theory, broadcast space is public space but the channels available for civil society to express its concerns were limited. Under the control of the elite and censored by the government until as late as 1988, there was little freedom of expression within the mainstream media apparatus. In her assessment of media, politics and the struggle for democracy in Latin America, Elizabeth Fox concludes that due to social rigidities and the concentration of social and political power that characterize Latin American societies, "[m]edia policy in Latin America has largely ignored most social responsibility goals of equality and participation. The centralization and often authoritarian nature of the Latin American state has not permitted independent, participatory and representative communication structures to develop."⁶⁶ In addition to its role in popular organization and education, alternative media functioned as an "alternative to government-controlled, alienating mass media and a form of democratic and participatory communication" and as filters that "decoded, interpreted and helped people resist the monolithic messages of the mass media."⁶⁷ In fact, the revolution was not televised.⁶⁸ It was on 16mm and Betacam.

Popular Video in Brazil, 1980s

Much like film, video technology has been available in Brazil since its invention. But several factors led to the surge of popular video in Brazil in the 1980s. The ease of

⁶⁶ Elizabeth Fox, Media and Politics in Latin America: The Struggle for Democracy (Beverly Hills: SAGE, 1988), 186.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶⁸ The "revolution" is a co-opted term the military used to refer to the coup d'état of 1964 and it did, in fact, use television to support its goals. Alternatively, the expression, "The revolution will not be televised," is attributed to the song written and first performed in 1970 by Gil Scott-Heron.

government restrictions on media, financial support from foreign institutions and an interest in democratizing media in schools of communication contributed to a shift in political structures favoring alternative media. In addition to the political openings created during the General Figueiredo administration, political parties favoring democratic process won elections in 1982 and thereby contributed to greater easing of controls on the media. Among the institutions that supported independent film and video work are included the MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Croce Via of Italy, and the Catholic Church.⁶⁹ In terms of industry, the production of VCRs in Brazil also facilitated the viewing of alternative media. The rigid vertical structure of television, which made little space for local news, coincided with an interest in democratizing media in community-based organizations.⁷⁰ These local groups, which had become increasingly disenfranchised during the military regime, were highly motivated to decentralize information and produce their own counterhegemonic information.

Subsequently, a number of significant projects were established throughout Brazil.⁷¹ Training courses were offered throughout the 1980s to individuals that acted alongside popular movements.⁷² Groups met to discuss the production and use of video in popular movements at the I Encontro Nacional de Grupos de Produtores de Vídeo no Movimento Popular (The First National Meeting of Groups of Producers of Video in Popular

⁶⁹ For additional information, see Luiz Fernando Santoro, *A Imagem Nas Mãos*, 61-64.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Some of these projects include: Projeto Audiovisual (Bahia), TV dos Trabalhadores (São Paulo), Centro de Documentação e Memória Popular (Rio Grande do Norte), TV Bixiga (São Paulo), TV dos Bancários (São Paulo), Enúgbárijó Comunicações (Rio de Janeiro), TV Viva (Pernambuco), Centro de Criação de Imagem Popular, CECIP (Rio de Janeiro), Vídeo Memória (Paraná), CEMI (São Paulo), Lilith Video Collective (São Paulo), TV Macambombo (Rio de Janeiro), TV Mocoronogo (Pará). Waiting Room TV (Minas Gerais), ECO-TV (São Paulo) and Video in the Villages. For more information on these groups see Santoro, *A Imagem Nas Mãos*, and Patricia Aufderheide, "Grassroots Video in Latin America," *Visible Nations: Latin American Cinema and Video*, ed., Chon Noriega (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 219-238.

⁷² Santoro, *A Imagem Nas Mãos*, 64, 71-73.

Movements) in September of 1984.⁷³ Shortly thereafter, the Brazilian Association of Video in Popular Movements (ABVMP, Associação Brasileira de Vídeo no Movimento Popular) was formed.⁷⁴ International film festivals throughout Latin America began including sections dedicated to video.⁷⁵ A notable video festival that did not take place was the I Mostra Brasileira de Vídeo Militante in São Paulo in early 1984. Federal Police blocked the festival, claiming that the proper censorship authorizations had not been attained.⁷⁶ Despite the political openings, there was little tolerance for popular voices of dissent until the end of the military regime.

Initially, video projects in Brazil emerged with the proposal to contest mainstream mass media. Left to this goal, popular video would have certainly failed given the nearly impenetrable structures surrounding mainstream channels of media transmission. Rather, video projects were born within social movements which gave them a specific goal and an independent network within which to circulate.⁷⁷ As they reflected on their lived realities, community-based video projects developed their own sense of national culture and identity.⁷⁸ People were drawn to video on the belief that it was an accessible mode of communication that could challenge the vertical structures of media and could have an equalizing function between viewers and producers of media. Ultimately, popular (or grassroots) video is much less a matter of competing with global, mainstream media and

⁷³ Ibid., 67.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 68.

⁷⁵ These festivals include the VIII International Film Festival of New Latin American Cinema in Havana, Cuba, the Gramado Film Festival in Brazil and festivals in Colombia, Chile, and Venezuela.

⁷⁶ Santoro, *A Imagem Nas Mãos*, 65.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 23-29, 31.

⁷⁸ Brian Goldfarb, "Local Television and Community Politics in Brazil," in *Visible Nations: Latin American Cinema and Video*, ed. Chon Noriega (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 263-284; Karen Ranucci, "On the Trail of Independent Video," in *The Social Documentary in Latin America*, ed. Julianne Burton (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990), 193-208.

more a question of establishing local resistance to power. Video did not fully contest mass media but managed to democratize its own space.⁷⁹

Although a significant body of scholarship exists on television and its role in politics, little information has been published on alternative media activities and there is a dearth of scholarship on women's alternative media in Brazil as a component in the struggle to redefine citizenship and democracy in Brazil in the 1980s. In the next chapter, I turn to consider Brazilian women's independent and alternative audiovisual works produced, distributed and (largely) exhibited outside mainstream channels during the 1980s.

⁷⁹ Santoro, *A Imagem Nas Mãos*, 109.

Chapter 6

Technologies of Citizenship: Brazilian Women's Independent and Alternative Film and Video, 1983 to 1988

Freedom is fostered when the means of communication are dispersed, decentralized, and easily available, as are printing presses or microcomputers. Central control is more likely when the means of communication are concentrated, monopolized, scarce, as are great networks. But the relationship between technology and institutions is not simple or unidirectional, nor are the effects immediate.

Ithiel de Sola Pool, Technologies of Freedom, 1983.

This chapter has two central goals. The first is to chart a historiography of a select group of Brazilian women's independent, alternative film and video production during the 1980s. The second is to discuss women's independent, alternative film and video as it contributed to the politicization of gender, race, class, and sexuality at a new political and social crossroads during the final days of the military regime and during the period of redemocratization from 1985 to 1988.

The audiovisual works treated here differ from those 35mm feature-length fiction films in the ways they politicized gender and female sexuality. This results both from the political opening brought about by distensão and Abertura, as described above, as well as the communicative possibilities brought about by different media formats. While feature-length film depends on distribution companies and (mostly commercial) theaters

equipped with 35 mm projectors to view their works, works in 16 mm film and video can enter alternative distribution networks and sites for viewing. Thus, I wish to draw attention to a significant yet understudied area of women's media production that has greatly contributed to debates on citizenship, yet has existed outside the mainstream channels of distribution and exhibition.

As it celebrates the diversity of women's audiovisual production, this chapter historicizes the use of alternative media in emerging political processes. It is my contention that much like today's new media, these women sought to change a sense of community and become less dependent on official voices of authority. In other words, these women's works contributed to a new culture of democracy.

By opening the discussion to women's alternative and independent audiovisual production, my discussion moves out of the Rio-São Paulo axis to include women media producers outside the traditional mainstream channels of production, distribution and exhibition. Thus, my discussion here draws attention to alternative media practices employed by individual women working in 16 and 35 mm film, analog video, women's video collectives, and audiovisual works produced by women's non-governmental organizations. In the metropolitan region of Rio de Janeiro, I discuss works by film and video maker Eunice Gutman, a long-time, self-defined feminist whose work has evolved from 35mm to video over the decades. While she may have changed visual formats, the trajectory of her career shows consistent commitment to women's issues and the politically disenfranchised. In the metropolitan region of São Paulo, I include work by the Lilith Video Collective, a group of three women who, like Eunice, dedicated themselves to bringing greater awareness to women's issues. The case of the Lilith Video Collective

illustrates a unique collaboration between the state, broadcast television and independent women media producers.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the development of and greater access to video technology in the 1980s resulted in the proliferation of the use of video in popular social movements in Brazil. In addition, popular video was seen as possessing a liberating potential vis-à-vis government- and capitalist-controlled mass media. Owing largely to lower production and distribution costs, video allowed for the proliferation of audiovisual production outside the South and Southeast. In the Northeastern state of Pernambuco, the feminist non-governmental organization SOS-Corpo drew on the communicative possibilities afforded by video to contribute to the developing feminist discourse in the metropolitan region of Recife, the state capital and one of Brazil's largest cities. In the case of SOS-Corpo, my discussion considers women's audiovisual production within an internationally funded women's group and how video became a vital avenue to address the most pressing concerns for feminist activism in the region.

The return to civilian rule in 1985 and the beginning of the period of redemocratization in Brazil involved a dual process of coming to terms with the past and looking forward to reconstruct a democratic present and future. On February 1, 1987, the Assambléia Nacional Constituinte (National Constitutional Assembly) opened session. The Assembly was seen officially as the end of a period of transition which, by way of conciliation, would finish "o ciclo revolucionário" (the revolutionary cycle) in Brazil.¹ What was particularly notable about this process in Brazil was that Brazilians elected representatives to the Assambléia Nacional Constituinte. In other words, the citizens of

¹ Evaldo Vieira, "Brasil: Do Golpe de 1964 à Redemocratização," in Viagem Incompleta: A Experiência Brasileira (1500-2000). A Grande Transação, ed. Carlos Guilherme Mota (São Paulo: Editora SENAC, 2000), 214.

Brazil would have the unprecedented role of having a say in the drafting of their own Constitution.² Given that a Constitution regulates the organization of the state and the branches of government as well as oversees areas of social, economic, familial, educational cultural and political interaction, the stakes were high for women (as individuals and working together in groups) to have their concerns incorporated into the new Constitution. Some of the areas where women sought reform included family life and structure, work, access to healthcare, access to education and cultural opportunities and violence against women.³

When José Sarney took office as the first civilian president in twenty years, he immediately faced the economic chaos brought about by years of misguided economic development. Thus, the inauguration of Sarney also meant the inauguration of policies of an ajuste estrutural (structural adjustment) intended to promote economic stability and development. After 1987, multilateral financial institutions framed the structural adjustment as “development with a human face” and sought to protect the poorest of the poor. Brazil began its adherence to Sarney’s economic policies in 1989, which quickly reversed the gains social movements had made in the 1988 Constitution.

A key success during the period of redemocratization occurred in the area of healthcare reform. With great effort and perseverance, the popular movement to reform healthcare in Brazil succeeded in incorporating their demands into the 1988 Constitution. As defined in this document, the Sistema Único de Saúde (SUS, Universal Healthcare System) was proposed to oversee the State’s constitutionally defined commitment to providing healthcare to its population. The SUS was designed to provide complete,

² Silvia Pimentel, A Mulher e a Constituinte (São Paulo: Cortez, EDUC, 1987), 11.

³ *Ibid.*, 65-72.

quality medical care, which would be managed by municipal, regional, state and national councils on healthcare. Prior to this point in time, uneven economic development – particularly acute in northern and northeastern regions of the country – had made access to healthcare difficult.

The SUS measure followed a highly progressive program launched by the Ministry of Health in 1983: the Programa de Assistência Integral à Saúde da Mulher (PAISM, the Program for Integrated Women’s Health Care). The PAISM, launched before the return to civilian rule, was a watershed program for women in Brazil as well as a point of reference for international agencies.⁴ The program was the first in which the Brazilian state proposed a (partial) program for fertility and it pioneered in proposing an integrated view of women’s healthcare as opposed to offering isolated family planning measures.⁵ As regards the position of women vis-à-vis the Brazilian state, the concept of women’s integrated health care “redimensiona o significado do corpo feminino no contexto social, expressando uma mudança de posição social das mulheres.”⁶ Women’s healthcare gained greater attention given that women were an increasingly important presence in the labor force and within the nuclear family. What is more, the PAISM revealed a break from the logic that had previously guided the state’s control of women’s bodies.⁷ Prior to the introduction of the PAISM, women’s healthcare in state-run health programs was limited to pregnancy and childbirth.

⁴ According to Maria José Martins Duarte Osis, the program included the definition of reproductive health that was later adopted by the World Health Organization in 1988, expanded in Cairo in 1994 and in Beijing in 1995. See her “PAISM: um marco na abordagem da saúde reprodutiva no Brasil,” Cadernos Saúde Pública 14.1 (1998): 25-32.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶ “...gave new dimension to the meaning of the female body in the social context, expressing a change in the social position of women.” *Ibid.*, 31.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Women's Movements and Public Policy

Maxine Molyneux notes that an important debate, particularly acute in the case of Latin America, is the degree to which interaction with the state is desirable or necessary.⁸ What Molyneux addresses here falls within a larger issue of “exclusionary tensions” defined by Ruth Lister as a complex negotiation of identifying citizenship with the community or the nation-state, how a politics of difference and diversity will be articulated, and the degree to which there is active, autonomous participation in the political process.⁹

In the early 1990s, women's groups were initially apprehensive about the NGO-ization of feminism due, in part, to past experiences with bureaucratic, international agencies that had failed to address local cultural values and beliefs. The reticence was also due to concerns that women's groups would lose their autonomy and that their voices would not be heard. But history has shown that NGOs have become key participants in political and social transformation in Brazil and have allowed for the development of autonomous groups that pressure the State.¹⁰ What is key to understand is that these groups did not simply develop into a political lobby. Sonia Alvarez notes advantages with autonomous social movements in that they have “cultural and social, as well as political and policy, goals” and they seek “normative as well as structural transformations of society more actively than do traditional interest groups or political

⁸ Maxine Molyneux, Women's Movements in International Perspective: Latin America and Beyond (London: Institute of Latin American Studies; Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 3.

⁹ Ruth Lister, “Dilemmas in Engendering Citizenship,” Gender and Citizenship in Transition, ed. Barbara Hobson (New York: Routledge, 2000), 33-83.

¹⁰ Sonia Alvarez, “Latin American Feminisms “Go Global”: Trends of the 1990s and Challenges for the New Millennium,” in Cultures of Politics / Politics of Cultures: Re-visioning Latin American Social Movements, eds., Sonia E. Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 306-308.

parties.”¹¹ What is more, Alvarez underscores the importance of a radical core that provides a dynamic tension between civil society and the State.¹²

Fears that the NGO-ization of women’s groups in Brazil would limit the development of feminism are unfounded. Alvarez observes that:

“the recent profusion of feminist video collectives, alternative publications, bookstores, a feminist publishing house ... the yearly national feminist ‘encounters,’ or conferences; the regular issue or group-specific gatherings of Afro-Brazilian women, feminist ecologists, lesbians and popular feminists ... all attest to the vitality of autonomous society-centered feminist thought and action in postauthoritarian Brazil.”¹³

As shall become evident, non-governmental organizations not only made possible women’s independent, alternative media but these media went on to function as a key element in creating and sustaining a productive tension between civil society and the State.

Women’s Independent, Alternative Film and Video and Feminist Film Studies

Women’s independent, alternative film and video in Latin America (and Brazil specifically) requires an approach that considers the larger picture or as Claire Johnston has suggested, an “interventionist conception of textual practice seen within specific historical conjunctures.”¹⁴ Far too often, women’s video production has been a neglected area within women’s audiovisual production. This stems in part from a schism that

¹¹ Alvarez, *Engendering Democracy*, 216.

¹² *Ibid.*, 217.

¹³ Alvarez, “(Trans)formation of Feminism(s) in Brazil,” in *The Women’s Movement in Latin America: Participation and Democracy*, ed. Jane S. Jaquette (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 49-50.

¹⁴ Claire Johnston, “Maeve,” in *Films for Women*, ed., Charlotte Brunsdon (London: British Film Institute, 1986), 92.

developed in the area of Film Studies and women's cinema in the 1970s. Teresa de Lauretis defines this as a division between:

...two types of film work that seemed to be at odds with each other: one called for immediate documentation for purposes of political activism, consciousness-raising, self-expression, or the search for 'positive images' of women; the other insisted on rigorous, formal work on the medium – or, better, the cinematic apparatus, understood as a social technology – in order to analyze and disengage the ideological codes embedded in representation.¹⁵

The schism de Lauretis describes has resulted in a focus on film formats and a critical undervaluation of less “aesthetically challenging” video productions by women media makers. Yet works that employ more accessible language and foreground their political motives deserve critical and theoretical attention. By addressing works produced in 16 or 35 mm film as well as U-Matic video, despite clear differences in production, distribution and exhibition, and illustrating how these works all contribute vitally to discussions of citizenship in pre- and post-authoritarian Brazil, my work here bridges the unproductive divides that have existed in approaches to women's audiovisual production.

This move also allows for evaluating women's alternative media as part of a larger social practice and not just as an audiovisual product. Scholars of independent media, including popular video, argue for appreciating audiovisual process over product.¹⁶

Considering that the majority of women's independent, alternative audiovisual production has evolved out of relationships with social movements, it is important to

¹⁵ Lauretis, “Rethinking Women's Cinema,” 128.

¹⁶ See for example P. Valdeavellano “América Latina está construyendo su propia imagen,” in El vídeo en la educación popular, ed. P. Valdeavellano, (Lima, Peru: IPAL, 1989), 73-130; Rafael Roncagliolo, “The Growth of the Audiovisual Imagescape in Latin America,” in Video the Changing World, eds. Nancy Thede and Alain Ambrosi (Cheektowaga, NY: Black Rose Books, 1991), 26-27; and Ilene Goldman, “Latin American Women's Alternative Film and Video,” in Visible Nations: Latin American Cinema and Video, ed. Chon Noriega (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 241.

reflect on women's audiovisual practices. In this, I take a cue from Christine Gledhill's notion of women's discourse that allows for contestation and negotiation.¹⁷ Among the works discussed here we do not find a unified voice of opposition. Rather, the perspectives of different social actors coexist in parallel struggles for democracy.¹⁸

In terms of production, Julia Lesage notes that there are primarily three different processes found in women's independent media. The first mode involves independent women directors and producers working in film. But rare are the cases of independent women directors and producers who have been able to acquire the training to work in 16 or 35 mm filmmaking. Even more rare for these women film directors is establishing access to funding channels that would facilitate their works coming to fruition. By contrast, the vast majority of women have entered audiovisual production as part of a larger collective effort. In her evaluation of women's media production, Julia Lesage observes that these women's collective media organizations center around common political issues and make documentaries supported by feminist goals.¹⁹ A third mode Lesage mentions is mixed-sex organizations, which tend to be leftist in orientation and dedicated to acute social problems facing poor and rural communities.²⁰ In an effort to address each mode of women's media production, I include Eunice Gutman, the Lilith Video Collective, and SOS-Corpo whose work represents each of these three different modes of women's audiovisual production.

¹⁷ Christine Gledhill, "Image and Voice: Approaches to Marxist Feminist Criticism," in Multiple Voices in Feminist Film Criticism, eds. Diane Carson, Linda Dittmar, and Janice R. Welsch (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 109-123.

¹⁸ Regarding the notion of democratic struggles and a plurality of political spaces, see Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics (London: Verso, 1985).

¹⁹ Lesage, "Women Make Media," 316.

²⁰ Ibid.

Generally, Brazilian women's independent film and video participated within or alongside social movements. When we talk about social movements and assess the relationships between individuals and the larger communities to which they belong and in which they participate, we need to consider how everyday life is redefined. In his work on social movements in Latin America, Arturo Escobar asserts that just as it is important to identify economic factors and how they structure society it is equally important to appreciate steps to reconstitute meanings of life from the micro to the macro level. In his assessment, social movements should be seen "equally and inseparably as struggles over meanings as well as material conditions, that is, as cultural struggles."²¹

Media scholars have asserted that mainstream television contributed to the liberalization of gender roles in the 1980s.²² Although it is possible that mainstream television promoted a more progressive outlook on gender, programming was still under elite and governmental control. Thus, there are several key questions to ask here. To what degree were ideologically challenging messages regarding gender transmitted in these programs? To what degree were those represented also participants in the construction of their own image? Who has access to producing these programs? How much space was dedicated to programming made by independent producers and directors?²³ Given that the audiovisual context of Brazil, which takes into consideration both the film and television industries, squeezed out independent producers and directors and consistently practiced indirect and direct censorship, the efforts made by women and members of

²¹ Arturo Escobar, "Culture, Economics, and Politics in Latin American Social Movements Theory and Research" in The Making of Social Movements in Latin America: Identity, Strategy, and Democracy, eds. Arturo Escobar and Sonia E. Alvarez, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 69.

²² Hamburger, O Brasil Antenado, 84-120.

²³ Patricia Aufderheide notes that there was little intersection among independent video and mainstream broadcast television. See her essay, "Grassroots Video in Latin America," 219.

social movements who took up audiovisual production to expand the discourses of citizenship were ever more vital. In short, their works provided a space for critical discourse that was otherwise not available and served as steps towards reconstituting meanings of life.

The political changes brought about by distensão and Abertura had allowed for social movements to be more vocal in their demands. As indicated above, by the late 1970s, the women's movements sought cultural as well as political transformation.²⁴ Central to the efforts of many women's organizations was a new understanding of gender and making gender-specific and gender-related demands part of the new Brazilian democracy. Women's independent film and video production from the early 1980s strategically revealed the cultural bases of women's oppression with the intent to then effect social and political change.

Eunice Gutman, Independent Film and Video Director

As an independent film and video maker, Eunice Gutman has been firmly committed to fighting for greater civil, social and political rights for women and the underprivileged. Gutman studied social sciences for two years at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro before pursuing her long-held interest in the expressive power of the visual image. In 1965, she moved to Belgium where she attended INSAS (Institut National Supérieur des Arts du Spectacle), the prestigious government-sponsored Belgian academy for the performing arts and broadcasting. There she learned the techniques of filmmaking as well as the production of shows for television, which was quickly developing.²⁵

²⁴ Alvarez, Engendering Democracy, 115.

²⁵ Eunice Gutman, interview with author, tape recording, August 28, 2005. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Her experience abroad shed light on the culturally-defined relationship between gender and the practice of a technical profession. She explains that while in Europe and as one of the few women studying film and television production, she was encouraged to learn film editing as this was considered a technical profession acceptable for a woman. It was made clear to her that directing was for men. When she returned to Brazil after graduating from the INSAS, she discovered that editing there was considered the purview of male professionals and not women. Gutman is not shy in noting the sexist behaviors against women in the audiovisual field but she is pleased to observe that much has changed since she started her career.²⁶

Eunice explains that her interest in audiovisual media stemmed from a belief that it was a way of transforming the world and yourself along with it. This desire to effect structural and personal change was supported by her being witness to the 1968 student uprisings in Europe. When she returned to Brazil in the early 1970s, she states that questions that had been raised in Europe at the time regarding the structure of the family and sexuality were at a very incipient stage in Brazil. The country had palpably fewer freedoms and was more conservative.²⁷ While other Brazilian women filmmakers who began their careers around the same time avoided calling themselves feminists partly out of a disdain for being categorized and partly out of a disdain for what they considered to be a male-hating view of the world defined from a First World perspective, Eunice does not hesitate to define herself as a feminist. Perhaps this is due in part to her experiences living and studying abroad.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

Upon her return to Brazil, Eunice found varied work in the audiovisual field. She edited films, produced photonovelas for magazines, taught screenwriting and directing at an experimental school in Niterói. She also worked in television, including the public station TV Educativa and for a brief time worked at TV Globo.²⁸ Despite the work she has done in more mainstream venues, Gutman has remained independent when producing and directing her own works. While she did benefit from programs in place in Embrafilme in the early 1980s, the vast majority of her production funding has come from non-governmental sources, such as the Ford Foundation, UNICEF, UNESCO, Frauen Anstiftung, The Pathfinder Fund, ISER (Instituto de Estudos da Religião, Institute for Religious Studies), MOBRAL (Movimento de Alfabetização de Adultos, Movement for Adult Literacy), Espíritu da Coisa, Negritude Brasileira among others.²⁹ Eunice's first documentary film, E o Mundo Era Muito Maior Que a Minha Casa (And the World Was Much Bigger Than My House, 1976, 35mm, color), in conjunction with MOBRAL, treated a literacy program located in rural Rio de Janeiro.³⁰ Shortly thereafter, Eunice established her own production company, Cine Qua Non, Ltd. through which she continues to produce and direct her own media. The rising costs of production in 16 and 35mm film combined with the absence of or insufficient state support for independent filmmaking and advances in video technology prompted Eunice to start working in Betacam video in the early 1990s.

²⁸ When asked why she worked for such a short time at TV Globo, Gutman holds back and does not wish to provide additional information other than stating that she “didn’t like it.” Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ The title of the film refers to a comment made by a 77-year old woman who, having learned to read and realizing that there was so much to learn about the world, says: “O mundo é tão maior que a minha casa!” (The world is so much larger than my home!). Ibid.

In her next three self-produced 35mm films, Eunice focused on cultural expression. Her second film Com Choro e Tudo na Penha (Choro and Everything in Penha, 1978, 35mm, color), registers a community group of musicians who gather regularly to play Brazilian music, specifically a samba form called choro and the performances attended by a varied public in the northern sector of Rio de Janeiro.³¹ The third short film, Anna Letycia (1979, 35mm, color) treated the metal work by the artist of the same name. These first two self-produced films and her first collaborative work with MOBREAL, reveal an interest in the disenfranchised, in popular cultural practices and the role of women in society.

Only during Carnaval?

It is in the fourth film produced and directed by Eunice Gutman in which she combines an investigation of cultural practice with a challenge to traditional notions of gender and gender identity. It is important to note that her work here does not directly address a particular political position. Final credits indicate that she began filming in 1980, just after the declaration of Amnesty and at an early stage of Abertura politics. Notwithstanding the political opening, it was too soon to make political waves. Her short film Só No Carnaval (Only During Carnaval, 1982, 35mm, color) returns to Penha to register the thoughts and feelings of men and women during a time-honored practice of

³¹ Northern areas of Rio de Janeiro, also known as the Zona Norte, are inhabited by the less economically advantaged and stand in contrast to the wealthy Zona Sul (Southern Neighborhoods). As regards this popular form of music, choro arrangements generally include a flute, guitar and cavaquinho – a four-string instrument – and occasionally include a clarinet, saxophone and mandolin. From the 1920s to the 1940s, choro was a very popular music form. During the 1970s and early 1980s, the musical form had a surge in popularity.

men dressing as women which takes place annually, as the title suggests critically, only during Carnival.

The film registers a group of men, who for many years have dressed up as women to form the bloco das piranhas and records their celebratory antics as they pass through streets of their neighborhood, Penha. A bloco here refers to a dancing group or a group that parades together through the streets during Carnival and piranha is a slang term meaning whore or prostitute. Unlike the more artistic practices of transvestite performers or the subtleties employed by men who regularly cross-dress as women, there is no attempt here in this case to approximate any sort of more authentic representation of women or traditional femininity. Their makeup is exaggerated, they wear prosthetic breasts and use pads in their undergarments to give the impression of a well-endowed (and therefore highly desirable) *derrière*.³²

The men are dressed in outlandish outfits and are obviously uncomfortable with their Carnival accoutrements. Although this is all done in good jest, humor transforms into skepticism as the film develops. Situated in the context of Carnival, a time when quotidian hierarchies are reversed, social norms are challenged and the disenfranchised rise to the top for a few hot, sweaty days before Lent, this short documentary film reveals the underlying misogyny of the normal gendered social order and, in doing so, ultimately questions the degree to which there will be a reversal of this gendered order in the re-conceptualization of the nation-state undergoing redemocratization.

The film opens with a traditional choro tune playing in the background while close-up shots capture women helping their husbands put on false eyelashes, lipstick, wigs and shift dresses they have sewn for them. As we watch, the song's lyrics comment on this

³² In Brazilian culture, large buttocks on a woman are highly admired.

tradition of men dressing as women during Carnival and cavorting with their male buddies all night.³³

The men seem to truly enjoy themselves. The camera focuses on a man sporting a bushy moustache, wearing a black dress and a black wig. As he bounces joyfully from side to side, a hand-held camera shot closes in on him and a microphone appears in the frame. Several elements in this scene make clear that a film recording is being made, including the microphone (momentarily visible within the frame), questions asked off screen to which he responds, and his being positioned squarely facing the camera while directly addressing it. As such, the film comments on its own production and eschews filmic practices that seek to make seamless the modes of representation. The man adds that the dress belonged to his great-grandmother, then his grandmother and then his mother. But he claims proudly, “Now I wear the dress!” before he lifts the hem and asks that the camera get a shot of his perninha (little leg). What is curious here are the generations of women who have worn this dress that he now dons and the joy he takes in being objectified while wanting to maintain a degree of subjective control over his own representation. In short, what is at stake here is the definition of female gender identity over time and how women are currently defined in society.

A second man, wearing a red dress, large wig and sunglasses, pauses as he leaves his house to join his comrades. Speaking to the camera, he explains that he is a police officer and professor during the year but all this gets turned upside down during Carnival. His recorded comments continue as a voiceover to images of other men getting dressed, riding on the tops of cars down the street, shaking their fake pregnant bellies and

³³ For those familiar with Jorge Amado’s novel *Dona Flor e Seus Dois Maridos* or the 1976 film adaptation directed by Bruno Barreto, they will recall that Dona Flor’s first husband, Vadinho (Valdomiro), died after a long night carousing in the streets of Salvador dressed as a woman.

grabbing their prosthetic bosoms. He explains that it is easy to make yourself a woman. All one needs is some courage, a dress, some makeup and a wig. His voiceover fades out as the camera focuses on the bloco of men singing a song “Olé, Olá. Long live the whores.” But dressing as a woman is not all fun and games. The police officer/professor’s voice fades in again to confess that he greatly dislikes wearing makeup and a wig. He never uses high heels. Then he admits, “It must be horrible to be a woman, this stuff of wearing false eyelashes. If I return in another incarnation, I want to be a dog but not a woman!” The playful practice reveals more deep-seated prejudices against women that likely exist not only during the days of Carnival but throughout the year and, as becomes clear in the final scenes of the film, are historically rooted in Brazilian culture.

The non-diegetic space of the man’s voiceover contrasts sharply with the men jumping around and having fun. Within this homosocial practice, one finds a love-hate experience. In one sense, the man’s comments can be interpreted as being acutely misogynist. But these words also reveal displeasure with an idea of womanhood that he himself has absorbed and accepted. What is key here is to see how the men have undermined their own understanding of femininity and what it means to be a woman. The hyperbole of their performance here takes a 180 degree turn towards denouncing the very representation in which they participate.

A group of women onlookers punctuate the men’s performance and make it clear that what is at stake is defining what it means to be a woman. The camera turns to the women and they give voice to their displeasure:

Woman 1: “They think to be a woman is to have breasts, hip-shaking and squeals. It is not! Women as sex symbols only ... that’s out!”

Woman 2: “I feel ashamed!”

Woman 3: “It must be hard to spend all year repressing all this. Poor dears!”

Woman 4: “Women are not like this! This is mockery, a caricature.”³⁴

These women look directly at the camera to critique the practice and challenge the values upon which such practices are based. They make clear how this cultural practice makes them feel and, thus, hold the men accountable for their actions. This is one of the few moments where sound and image are synchronized. Thus, these women challenge how women are defined and how female gender identity is understood.

The history of this cultural practice is made clearer at the closing of the documentary when there is a cut to still shots of aged sepia-colored photographs of men dressed as women during past celebrations of Carnival. The photographs regress backwards from a still photograph taken in approximately the 1960s, then the 1940s before the camera focuses on the last still shot from 1913. In the non-diegetic sound space, a contemporary samba rhythm can be heard. This sound bridge connects the past with the present and illustrates the historical trajectory of this humorous but mostly demeaning, patriarchal practice. The contrast of image and sound here underscores that cultural practices of this type, which reveal underlying misogynist beliefs that do not likely exist “only during Carnival,” belong to the past and are out of place in present society.

Regarding Motherhood

³⁴ Translations are from the subtitles of the film.

When Gutman produced and directed the film Só no Carnaval it was still early in the process of moving towards greater democratic freedoms to candidly challenge the direction and failures of the state. General Amnesty had been declared just one year earlier and the government was still very much in the hands of the military regime. But, by 1983, the sociopolitical context had changed. As mentioned above, direct challenges to the government and demands were voiced on a daily basis. Civil society was reawakening and demanding political, economic and social change.

In this revitalized context, Gutman's film Vida de Mãe É Assim Mesmo? (Can This Really Be Motherhood?), 1983, 35mm, color) more clearly politicizes the intersection of sex, class and gendered female social roles. Specifically, the film takes on the question of abortion, a woman's control of her own reproductive cycle and the responsibilities of the state to provide adequate health care. Myths surrounding motherhood are directly challenged and the state is called to take on actions that would allow women an equal opportunity to participate as full members of society regardless of their gender, class, race or geographic origin. Access to safe, legal abortions as well as effective birth control methods is linked to larger programmatic questions of inclusion. For example, unwanted pregnancies lock women out of gainful employment and educational opportunities.

At the cutting edge of the issues being discussed in the contemporary women's movements, Gutman's film situates itself in the larger debates surrounding the struggle to decriminalize abortion in the 1980s. Women's groups chose to argue for the decriminalization of the practice of abortion in light of several public opinion polls taken in Rio de Janeiro in 1980. These surveys revealed that the majority of Brazilians opposed abortion on moral, ethical or religious grounds but did not believe that the State should

penalize those who seek or perform an abortion.³⁵ From 1983 to 1987, abortion was hotly debated in the mainstream press, medical journals, government press bulletins and publications by the women's movements. Several key events relevant to the struggle to decriminalize abortion took place in the early 1980s. In March of 1983, a national meeting was held in Rio de Janeiro at which Eunice Gutman's film Vida de Mãe É Assim Mesmo? was screened and discussed.³⁶ Thus, Gutman's film participated alongside other channels of communication to shape the debate on abortion.

A few words regarding the abortion debate in Brazil warrant further discussion. Unlike the debates in developed capitalist countries, the abortion issue in Brazil emerged in the 1970s in a context flanked by a repressive military regime on one side and the Catholic Church on the other. Because of the more pressing goal to oppose the dictatorship, women's groups sought broad-based support, including alliances with the Catholic Church. This pushed women's groups to prioritize less problematic issues such as labor rights and access to daycare centers rather than politicize more feminist-oriented issues such as female sexuality, abortion, contraception and critiques of gendered roles within the traditional family structure.

The beginning of Abertura politics resulted in less reliance on established oppositional voices and, by 1980, the feminist movement began shaping its approach to the abortion debate. First, the right to individual autonomy and the need to protect women's health were foregrounded. Emphasis was placed on the experiences of poor women, who could not afford to seek abortions in more expensive abortion clinics with higher standards of care. And proponents for the decriminalization of abortion also referred to scientific

³⁵ Leila de Andrade Linhares Barsted, "Legalização e descriminalização do aborto no Brasil: dez anos de luta feminista," Estudos Feministas 0.0 (1992): 111.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 117.

advances in the early detection of genetic defects in support of their claims. But, overall, access to safe, legal abortions was seen as part of a larger demand for the right to healthcare for women. In 1986, this became a reality when the INAMPS (Instituto Nacional de Assistência Médica da Previdência Social, National Institute of Medical Assistance of the Social Security Administration), the Ministry of Health, the National Council for the Rights of Women, and numerous feminist groups established the PAISM (Programa de Assistência Integral a Saúde da Mulher, Program for Integral Health Care for Women). A main objective of this program was avoiding abortions through education about and access to contraceptive methods. As will be discussed below, nongovernmental organizations such as SOS-Corpo in Recife, Pernambuco took it upon themselves to oversee some of these educational campaigns where the State failed to fulfill its social responsibilities. By the end of the decade, however, the debate shifted away from the practice of abortion towards the widespread practice of female sterilizations.³⁷

As a whole, Gutman's documentary Vida de Mãe É Assim Mesmo? undermines romantic notions of motherhood divorced from lived reality. The opening shots show round, carved stone statues of smiling female figures in public parks and plazas. These frozen images of women caught in eternal maternal bliss are the only references in the entire film to a culture that holds idealistic views of women and mothers. The discourse of this documentary distances itself from moral lectures and religious hierarchies. Rather, the pragmatic, secular approach to the film becomes clear with a quick cut from the stone figures to a shot of a woman in labor lying on a gurney in a hospital delivery room. A

³⁷ With regard to the Brazilian context, the practice of female sterilization has been treated in the film Ventre Livre (Free Womb, 1994) by Ana Luiza Azevedo. The issue continues to be taken up by women filmmakers in Brazil as evidenced by the 2002 film Born in Brazil by director Cara Biasucci. The issue is one that has affected women in other regions of Latin America. For example, the 1985 film La Operación (The Operation), directed by Ana María García, focuses on the mass sterilization of women in Puerto Rico.

baby's head has crowned from the woman's vagina and the doctor helps pull the torso out. The woman giving birth cries out in pain as the baby is fully delivered and amniotic fluid gushes out. The graphic nature of these images of childbirth makes them difficult to watch but this is the reality of motherhood that the film wishes to portray. Motherhood is not an immortal ideal. It is a lived experience.

Three women figure centrally in the film Vida de Mãe É Assim Mesmo?: a teenager living in the Zona Norte, a sociologist in her 30s residing in an upper-class neighborhood in Rio (most likely the Zona Sul), and an older woman who works as a maid and lives in a favela. These women represent three different stages in life and civil status: a single, unmarried teenager, a young married woman, and an older, separated woman with perspective on her life. Husbands and father figures are mostly absent, save the brief mention of husbands from whom the women are separated or the sociologist who states that she is married. In this way, bearing and rearing children are represented as the responsibility of women. With each woman speaking about her own experience with pregnancy and motherhood, the documentary provides cross-class viewpoints that support the proposal for safe, legal access to abortions – wealthier women can pay for abortion procedures in private clinics while poor women are forced to bear a double burden of female poverty in a patriarchal system.

Collectively, the women who speak on camera reveal the difficulties they have experienced and the choices they have had to make as well as those they have not been allowed to make. Their reflections relate their “maternal status” to the degree to which they are incorporated into and able to participate as full members of society. In their interviews, these women speak directly to the camera, which personalizes the statements

they make. Their spoken words then overlay images of the places in which they live and work, thus making clear that these women speak from specific, lived contexts.

A quick cut shifts from the woman giving birth in the hospital to a truck driving down a road. The camera pans up and a small white church on the top of a hill comes into the frame. For those familiar with the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, the location is easily recognizable as the Zona Norte. Moving from the macro to the microsphere, there is another cut to a woman standing outside a concrete-block home washing dishes. A very young woman of slight build passes by with a bucket in her hand as she heads towards a well. Attention becomes focused on this young woman as she works to lift water from the well. There is a cut and the camera, repositioned in front of her, captures her squarely in a tight-framed close-up shot. The young woman speaks:

I had been studying for one month, I was in high school. then I was expecting Jailton. I had to leave school. Then, afterwards, I had to stay indoors all the time because, if I were to go out, the others would think I was a bad woman because I was too young to be pregnant. Then I would stay locked up at home all the time. And, afterwards, when Jailton was born, I stayed home taking care of him, taking care of the child. I had to start working to support him. Then I had to leave school. I can't study. I can't take the course I was going to. I can't go out and have fun because I have to take care of the child. That's a mother's life. She has to stay home all the time inside the house taking care of him. I can't do the things I want. I'm not free anymore.³⁸

After a few moments of direct address to the camera, her spoken words overlay images of her as she works at a textile factory. An unwanted pregnancy has directly affected this young woman's individual autonomy. In a very intimate manner, she clearly explains her situation and thus reveals how her maternal status relates to several socioeconomic

³⁸ Translation of the original Portuguese taken from the subtitles in the film.

factors – general lifestyle, ability to pursue or even establish personal goals, level of educational attainment and, subsequently, prospects for employment and her current and future economic status. In short, motherhood is tied to a nexus of factors that have the potential to define a woman's socioeconomic position in Brazil.

But there is more to the history of this teenage woman. In the next scene, shot inside their home, the mother of the teenager reveals that her daughter was the victim of rape at the age of twelve. Despite her efforts to find a medical doctor to perform an abortion as legally allowed in cases of rape, no doctors would perform the procedure for fear of being labeled an abortionist. The mother relates the channels through which they sought recourse but, by the time the legal system had resolved the issue, her daughter was too far along in the pregnancy. She was 13 years old when the baby was born. An unwanted pregnancy in the life of this young woman places direct limitations on her individual autonomy and her ability participate in society as she wishes or should be allowed. But this was not her decision. Her situation is what society, medical practitioners, and the State have decided for her.

The next two interviewees elaborate on the socioeconomic issues involved in access to abortion. There is a cut to a new location in Rio de Janeiro and the camera tilts down from a high-angle shot of abundant trees surrounding a well-kept house. A woman and two children are seated outside eating breakfast. Similar to the first interview, the camera is repositioned and the woman raises her head to speak directly to the camera in a tight-framed shot. She explains that she is 32, a sociologist by profession, married with two daughters and does not wish to have any more children. Panning shots of her house and the surrounding area are accompanied by a voiceover of the woman as she further

explains that she has always used birth control but that she would seek an abortion if her chosen contraceptive method failed. Having accompanied two friends who had abortions, she states that she finds the practice of clandestine abortions to be humiliating to women and dangerous as the conditions of these clinics are not always ideal. What is key in the interview with this woman is that it shows how the issue of access to contraception as well as legal, safe abortions crosses class lines. Yet, as an educated, economically advantaged woman, she has been able to make choices that have allowed her the freedoms that the young woman from the Zona Norte will not likely ever have.

The third interview focuses on a 52-year old woman who works as a maid and lives in a favela. Based on the angle and view of the camera shots from the favela, it is likely that this woman lives in Vidigal, a favela located at the southern end of the Zona Sul and a location in which Eunice Gutman has filmed on several occasions. The camera pans over the horizon and captures a high angle shot of the Zona Sul below. As in the previous two interviews, the camera is repositioned and the woman, in her kitchen stirring a pot, raises her head and speaks directly to the camera. She states that she has always worked as a maid. When she was married, she got pregnant 17 times; she had 6 children and had 11 abortions. She further explains that her last abortion was 15 years ago and she has been separated from her husband for the past 11 years. As the woman explains the progress of her marriage and the worsening financial situation in which she found herself, her words overlay images of her cooking, cleaning, and washing clothes. What becomes clear as she describes her life, is that these are the very tasks that she did for months in addition to her full-time job as a domestic worker in order to save enough money to have a clandestine abortion. Her husband, who would not allow her take the Pill and did not want her to

have an abortion, provided no economic assistance. She states that her last abortion was botched and she ended up in the hospital. This woman's life has been clearly affected by lack of access to effective birth control methods and her life has been put in danger because of a patriarchal state that would not allow her to take birth control without her husband's permission and that has refused to provide safe abortions that would avoid risks to women's health.

The personal segues into the political in the final scenes of the documentary. Women in positions of power call for the legalization of abortion and state-funded access to safe abortions. A medical doctor and head of an infertility clinic in Rio de Janeiro, Elza Puretz Hersjenhut explains that improperly performed clandestine abortions scar women's reproductive organs. To protect women's reproductive health, she calls for access to abortion procedures in safe, government-run hospitals. The long-time advocate for women's rights, Romy Medeiros da Fonseca, argues that the Brazilian Penal Code is out of date. She calls for the decriminalization of abortion and access to abortion procedures as part of the national Social Security Program. In both cases, these women define maternity in its political dimensions.

As a whole, the film reveals how the intersection of gender, class and state policy affect the degree to which, and ways in which, women are positioned in society. The final message is clear: that access to women's healthcare holds the potential to radically transform the structure of society, allowing women of all economic classes and social backgrounds greater self-determination in the roles they take on and the modes in which they participate in society.

Redefining People and Places

In early 1985, civilian rule officially returned to Brazil. The unexpected death of Tancredo Neves resulted in the vice-presidential candidate, José Sarney, taking office. Although this was not the result many had hoped for, civil society and democratic norms now eclipsed the authoritarian military regime and the country entered a period of addressing the effects of the dictatorship and reconstructing society. A significant result from the years of military-defined development was a massive demographic shift. The rapid process of urbanization in Brazil during the 1960s and 1970s led to internal migration from poor regions of Central, Northern and Northeastern Brazil to metropolitan areas primarily in and around Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Lacking affordable housing, these internal migrants established themselves in squatter communities, or favelas. In the case of Rio de Janeiro, people built homes on the hillsides that bordered the wealthier, middle and upper middle class neighborhoods. Brazil has a history of neighborhood associations.³⁹ In the 1960s, favela communities began organizing to seek improved urban infrastructure and greater distribution of municipal resources.

Faced with the neglect of the poor by local, state and federal governments, increasing numbers of women got involved in their communities to provide needed services such as schools, health clinics, and to lobby for basic services like post offices and running water. In 1985, Eunice directed two films that cast light on the effects of social mobilization on women living in favelas and the ongoing redefinition of their roles in society. Both A Rocinha Tem Histórias and Duas Vezes Mulher center on underrepresented people telling their own histories and, ultimately, reveal the forging of new sociopolitical identities

³⁹ Regarding the political push of neighborhood associations during the transition to democracy, see Robert Gay, "Neighborhood Associations and Political Change in Rio de Janeiro," Latin American Research Review 25.1 (1990): 102-118.

during the transition to democracy and the requisite solidarity to bring about social change. In the case of the first film, children and adults of a favela, Rocinha, share their stories and reflect on their development as a community. In the second film, two women from the Northeast, who have relocated to Vidigal – also a favela in Rio de Janeiro, reflect on their lives as mothers, wives, workers and members of their community. Both documentaries provide a space for people to reflect on their lived realities and, as they speak, the relationship between personal development and community development becomes clear. The dictatorship may have exacerbated social inequalities but these films reveal in the end that grossly underprivileged sectors of society have survived and persevered in the face of numerous obstacles.

Stories from Rocinha

Women's alternative media evolved primarily out of relationships with social movements and, as such, often juxtaposes questions of the local against issues within a larger regional, national (and sometimes international) framework. In the documentary A Rocinha Tem Histórias (Rocinha Has Stories; 1985, 16mm) Eunice returns to a concern for education and literacy that she developed in her first film E o Mundo Era Muito Maior do que a Minha Casa.⁴⁰ As mentioned above, this first film, E o Mundo Era Muito Maior do que a Minha Casa was made with the organization MOBREAL (Movimento Brasileiro de Alfabetização, Brazilian Movement for Literacy). But Eunice's involvement in education and literacy began before her work with MOBREAL. After she finished her university studies in Brazil, she taught for a short time in an elementary school in the Zona Norte of Rio de Janeiro. In the documentary A Rocinha Tem Histórias, Eunice

⁴⁰ Eunice Gutman, interview by author, tape recording, Rio de Janeiro, 28 August 2005.

combines a concern for education with an interest in the social mobilization of a favela community. The film shows the transformation of Rocinha into a community where individuals work together to improve their physical and social environment. In this, the documentary illustrates a model for the rest of Brazil faced with the larger transformation to a democratic culture. This film is not about a decidedly feminist issue such as abortion or challenging female gender identity. It stems, rather, from feminine concerns that had developed in the women's movement regarding basic services and community needs.

The film opens with images of drawings made by children and a samba song being sung in non-diegetic space. Similar to the use of music in Só no Carnaval, the song tells the story of what has been taking place in Rocinha: it got organized and improved. There is a quick cut to a young child carefully reading a story that she has written and illustrated. We learn that this story is included along with other stories by children from Rocinha in a book sponsored by FUNARTE (Fundação Nacional de Arte, National Art Foundation).

The film develops a testimonial style of documentary techniques, including interviews with key community members and handheld camera shots of the favela and its surroundings. The interviewees include different child authors, from whom we learn about their daily chores and their dreams for the future. Each child is positioned in a schoolroom setting, in the home where she or he lives, or in the makeshift streets and areas where they play. The stories these children share regarding their experiences in the favela are supported visually by the physical and social environment in which they live. As they read their stories out loud and talk about going to school, their words overlay images of individuals carrying water in buckets up the hill, a designated hillside area

where people dump their garbage, raw sewage running down channels in the walkways of the favela. These images add stark visual impact to the stories they tell and make their expressions of hope and determination extraordinary. They will not be victims of their environment.

The film also includes women who work as educators in the community schools. Three women, originally from the Northeast, talk about the importance of the community schools built by the residents of Rocinha, and the illustrated book. These women also share their experiences of living and working in the community and how this has empowered them to see themselves as political actors. Thus, the film segues from the National Art Foundation project to investigate the larger questions of education for the poorest, most disadvantaged sectors of Brazilian society and strategies for effecting positive social change.

Much has been said about popular cultural forms as modes of resistance. Indeed, a fundamental question to ask here is how to relate cultural form to political action. In the case of A Rocinha Tem Histórias, what is at stake is establishing a collective identity among the residents of the favela, redefining the favela community and its residents as part of a larger metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro and, in the process, making claims on the rest of society to incorporate them as full members.

Any discussion of this film must keep in mind the published book of stories. As cultural forms, they work in concert to effect social change. Together, the film and the book show the solidarity among residents of the favela and build a bridge between themselves and the rest of Rio de Janeiro. The children, who share their stories with others in the favela, contribute to building a sense of community identity. For those who

reside outside the favela, the stories they can read from Rocinha are instructive of the possibilities of social renewal and reconstruction when members of society are committed to improving their community. It is important to acknowledge that books are relatively expensive in Brazil and are not generally marketed to the poor. Rather, purchasing books and reading books are diversions primarily for the middle and upper classes. These two forms – book and film – challenge discrimination against the favelados by validating the people of the favela, showing that they are creative, proactive people with dreams of a better life. Indeed, the film and the book offer the possibility for a rare opportunity for cross-class dialogue regarding social reconstruction.

But the film accomplishes what the book alone cannot. Specifically, the handheld camera work reveals the vital, complex relationships between and among people to effect change. This is achieved visually in two key ways. As mentioned above, the handheld camera work captures images of people working to improve their community. Women and children are seen fetching water and washing clothes. Although running water would be an improvement, the fact that the community has managed to bring water closer to their homes is, in fact, a significant improvement since the first people settled in the area. Also, there are shots of a newly constructed community center and men working to build additional community schools. Over these images, the women discuss how the community desperately needed formal schools in order to educate their children, which were not offered to them by the government.⁴¹ The voiceover and images, then, capture what led to the stories, how the narrative of the FUNARTE-sponsored book actually became possible. Collective, autonomous effort led to significant social change. This

⁴¹ According to a woman interviewed in the documentary, there had been only two schools for over 200,000 people living in Rocinha. They have continued to build a total of 7 community schools without the assistance of the local, state or federal government.

work that has gone into making change would otherwise remain invisible. But the film also makes visible the community and the effort that is required to effect improvements.

What is revealed here is that the power to make significant change has shifted to civil society. And people outside the favela are also called on to effect social change. High-angle shots from within the favela capture images of the nearby beach and adjacent high-rise apartment buildings where the upper middle class resides in luxury. These images underscore the dramatic difference between the haves and the have-nots in Brazil. The proximity of the beach and these buildings serve to locate the favela as a part of the metropolitan area. The community, like the work that goes on within the favela, should not remain invisible to outsiders.

What is more, those living outside the favela should be aware of the role they play in the life of the favelados. In this, the film does not shy away from issues of class and unspoken racial discrimination. The women educators reveal that children from their community were not welcome in the public schools below (i.e. in mainstream Rio de Janeiro). They were treated unfairly because they were poor migrants from the Northeast living in a favela and no attention was paid to the economic factors that prevented these children from succeeding in mainstream, public schools. Dilma, the director and teaching coordinator of one of the community schools in Rocinha, underscores the need for an educational system that recognizes the lived differences of these children. Reflecting on the discrimination she experienced when she left Rocinha to go to high school, Dilma further explains, “[t]he objective is not to raise children to live in a ghetto but to make them full members of society. Education is a right for all people.” The comments made by Dilma bring to light an important facet in the redemocratization process. Different

groups will define their most pressing needs, which will in turn define the social and political rights to which they are entitled.⁴² Thus, the push for democratic reform and expanded citizenship is not a homogeneous struggle. The needs of the community in Rocinha are not likely those of the wealthy that live below them. Nonetheless, the two communities need to realize that their lives are connected in a larger democratic, public sphere. It is important to observe that both efforts were made possible, in part, by assistance from the State (i.e. FUNARTE). Thus, the two works imply a joint line of action between the State and the community efforts in Rocinha to bring about change.⁴³

Twice a Woman

The documentary on the efforts to establish schools in Rocinha makes a connection between women's developing roles in society and the urban development of their respective communities. The documentary film Duas Vezes Mulher (Twice A Woman, 1985, 16mm, black and white) continues this line of investigation and focuses on two women from two different generations, Jovina, a woman in her 70s, and Marlene, a younger, middle-aged woman. Despite the difference in age, they share several experiences. Both are originally from rural areas of the Northeast and have moved to Rio de Janeiro where they have found jobs as domestic workers. Both live as single women in the favela Vidigal (on the south side of the Zona Sul) where they have built their own homes and raised their children. In the case of Jovina, she also built the homes of her family members and the street on which she lives.

⁴² Ruth Corrêa Leite Cardoso discusses this briefly in "Popular Movements in the Context of the Consolidation of Democracy," in The Making of Social Movements In Latin America, eds. Arturo Escobar and Sonia E. Alvarez (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 300.

⁴³ Thanks to Catherine Benamou for drawing out this point.

Issues surrounding the production and exhibition of this film tie into a significant juncture in the women's movement in Brazil. First, the closing titles indicate that the film was based on a research project entitled "O impacto da urbanização sobre a participação da mulher de baixa renda" (The impact of urbanization on the participation of poor women) by the Núcleo de Estudos sobre a Mulher (Women's Studies Department) of the Pontifícia Universidade Católica (Pontifical Catholic University) in Rio de Janeiro (NEM-PUC-RJ). Thus, this film does not develop out of direct interaction with a grass-roots community. Rather, it emerges from an institutional base within the women's movement.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the women's movement had become institutionalized and professionalized by the mid 1980s, owing to political openings in the Brazilian government as well as funding from international organizations to women's groups. In terms of production funding, the closing credits state that support to make the film came from UNESCO-Paris, UNICEF and NEM-PUC-RJ. Lastly, the film was shown outside Brazil at the World Conference on Women held in Nairobi in 1985. This year marks the beginning of the redemocratization period in Brazil and the end of the UN-declared "Decade of the Woman" (1975-1985).

Similar to her other films, Eunice employs straightforward documentary film techniques. In this case, her film is reminiscent of the cinema vérité documentary form and, as such, brings forth three key questions regarding the ability of realist codes to change consciousness, the construction of the pro-filmic event, and the notion of a unified self.⁴⁴ The film opens with shots of Arpoador and the favela, Vidigal, situated at the end of the upper class neighborhoods of Leblon and Gávea. The camera pans over the landscape and, again, the geographically marked class structure of Rio de Janeiro is

⁴⁴ See E. Ann Kaplan, Women & Film, 125-128.

revealed. The poor live in shelters clinging to the hillsides and the middle and upper classes live in well-built homes on stable ground. Different from her other films, Eunice includes herself. There is a cut to the interior of Vidigal and her words overlay handheld camera shots of the humble dwellings and narrow streets of the favela. She congratulates the people on the improvements the community has made with their courage, their own toil, and perseverance. As the handheld camera continues to focus on images of the tidy, narrow streets and concrete block houses built closely together, Eunice introduces the two women she will speak with, Jovina and Marlene. This opening sequence sets the stage for the interviews to follow.

There is a cut to an older woman sitting in front of a sewing machine. The camera is positioned directly in front of her and captures her in a medium one-shot. Jovina begins to tell her life story. Married at the age of 13, mother to 10 children, separated from her drunken husband, she migrated from the state of Bahia to Rio de Janeiro where she found work as a maid. The interview with Jovina celebrates the resourcefulness of this matriarch and, like the previous documentary, respects her having taken control of her destiny and defined the space in which she lives. This becomes most apparent when she relates her experience defending her home from foreign investors who wanted to evict her. While she speaks, images are shown of her neighborhood.

Towards the end of the interview with Jovina, there is a break between the space and time represented visually and the asynchronous aural space of Jovina talking. Images of Jovina looking out a window of her home and images of her with her family have been shot at a time different from the moment of speaking. This subtle gesture holds two key effects. First, it visually underscores that Jovina is rooted in her community but not

determined by it. By contrast, the spatiotemporal break gives visual impact to her assertion that “[s]ocial roles should change ... women must have a sense of their own value.” The sense of self-worth that women have for themselves and the roles they undertake should be defined by themselves as individuals engaged in autonomous interaction with their social environment. One of the key structuralist, semiological critiques of realism was this filmic mode’s inability to draw attention to its representation as a representation.⁴⁵ The aural and visual breaks in the representation of Jovina draw attention to the film as a film. Thus, Jovina is positioned within the social and economic context but she is not constructed by the social institutions that surround her. Rather, her life is a practice that signifies the possibility for some other institution, some other way of constructing the world around her.

In many respects, Marlene’s experience parallels that of Jovina. With the camera positioned at the end of a hallway and slightly overexposed, the first image of Marlene is a profile shot while she sits on a sofa in her living room. While Marlene continues to speak, there is a cut and the camera is repositioned in front of her, filming her in a medium one-shot. Originally from the Northeast, separated from her husband of 18 years, mother to 4 children, Marlene shares a great deal with Jovina. She, too, fought to prevent the destruction of her home from land developers and observes positive changes in women’s roles. Marlene associates arriving in Rio de Janeiro with becoming a more independent woman:

⁴⁵ As mentioned previously, regarding the realist debates in feminist film theory, see E. Ann Kaplan, “The Realist Debate in the Feminist Film: A Historical Overview of the Theories and Strategies in Realism and the Avant-Garde Theory Film (1971-81),” in Women & Film: Both Sides of the Camera, 125-141.

Aí, eu sentí que eu estava chegando na minha vez, chegando na minha hora de assumir como mulher. Que aí eu passei a trabalhar, ter meu dinheiro e fazer as coisas que eu queria. Eu passei a ser uma mulher mais independente porque eu acho que era muito presa do meu marido⁴⁶

Indeed, Marlene's increased participation in her community, stemming from the fight to save her home from developers, precipitated the separation from her husband. She states that her husband did not like the fact that she was participating in community organizing. Marlene explains that he thought community activism was no place for a woman, who should just work and come home. Her activism was a bittersweet success. While it led to the dissolution of her marriage, it also led to an increased sense of self-worth and self-empowerment. This change has made her more aware and critical of society. Marlene's final words reveal an awareness of discrimination against women and especially black women like herself. What is important, she affirms, is to continue fighting to contest poor treatment until she is recognized as an equal member of society.

With the exception of the use of a close-up shot of Marlene when she was greatly saddened while talking about the death of her mother, tight framing is avoided in this documentary. By avoiding a tightly-framed "talking head," Jovina and Marlene's words are not isolated from the contexts in which they speak. Rather, a regular pattern of intercutting between a medium one-shot of the women speaking and handheld camera shots of the favela and their homes serves to combine subjective and "objective" perspectives. In this way, the film contributes to the forging of embodied, sociopolitical

⁴⁶ "In that moment, I felt that I was coming into my own, coming to assume my own position as a woman. So, then I started working, having my own money and doing the things I wanted to. I became a more independent woman because I think that I had become too confined by my husband" My translation from the Portuguese.

identities as it combines the subjective knowledge of personal testimony with “objective” information from handheld shots of the communities in which the people live.

Whereas the film A Rocinha Tem Histórias focused on collective action and the development of collective identity, the film Duas Vezes Mulher considers individual women and the development of their social and political identities as an outgrowth of their relationships with their environment. This process is one that Alberto Melucci has observed in his work on social movements and the development of collective and individual identity. Specifically, he asserts that “[t]he social construction of collective action and identity ... involves complex interactions along three axes: ends, means, and relationships with the environment.”⁴⁷ But both documentaries also provide a space for negotiating political and cultural identity. In a country where the government promoted a logo “Brazil, Love it or Leave It,” there was little space for negotiating political or cultural identity. Political and cultural subjectivity were givens as opposed to discursive processes. Eunice’s films offer a gender-inflected interrogation of women’s experience and cultural differentiation. One of the goals of feminist film is to resist populist cultural history that avoids unreflective representations of the social collective.⁴⁸ Both films discussed here by Eunice Gutman accomplish this objective.

The Lilith Video Collective

⁴⁷ Alberto Melucci, “Getting Involved: Identity and Mobilization in Social Movements,” in International Social Movement Research: From Structure to Action-Comparing Social Movements Research Across Cultures, Vol. 1, eds., Hanspeter Kriesi, Sidney Tarrow, and Bert Klendermans (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 342; quoted in Arturo Escobar, “Culture, Economics, and Politics in Latin American Social Movements Theory and Research,” in The Making of Social Movements in Latin America: Identity, Strategy, and Democracy, eds., Arturo Escobar and Sonia E. Alvarez (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), 72.

⁴⁸ E. Ann Kaplan, Women & Film, 132.

Rare are the cases of women like Eunice Gutman who have developed the skills to work in both film and video production. More common are women's independent media groups in which members contribute their specific skills. Indeed, this is the case of the next area of women's audiovisual production in Brazil I wish to discuss.

With a history of involvement in audiovisual production and participation in SOS-Mulher (SOS-Woman), an organization formed to combat violence against women, three women, Jacira de Melo, Marcia Meireles and Silvana Afram, founded the Lilith Video Collective in São Paulo in 1983. By 1985, they had established an intense work schedule.⁴⁹ Lilith Video, one of the first two women's video groups founded in Brazil,⁵⁰ joined the ranks of many women's media collectives in Latin America, including Cine Mujer (Colombia), Cine Mujer (Mexico), and Grupo Miércoles (Venezuela).⁵¹ The Lilith Video differed from these other groups in terms of technology. Organizations such as Cine Mujer in Colombia and Cine Mujer in México were able to secure funding from government sources and work with 16 and 35mm film while Lilith had more limited access to funding and worked with video, a less expensive format. These organizations shared common goals and production methods. Goldman, who focuses on Cine Mujer (Colombia), notes that the organization sought to create counter-hegemonic representations of women, re-envision women in the national imagination, and establish direct mediation between community groups, the state and NGOs.⁵² In terms of production practices, women's media groups generally eschewed hierarchical production

⁴⁹ Jacira de Melo, "Trabalho de Formiga em Terra de Tamanduá: A Experiência Feminista com Vídeo" (M.A. Thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 1993), 77.

⁵⁰ The Lilith Video Collective formed around the same time as the group Mulher Dá Vida, which was founded by a group of women studying social communication at the Instituto Metodista de Ensino Superior in São Paulo. *Ibid.*, 75.

⁵¹ Ilene Goldman, "Latin American Women's Alternative Film and Video," 240.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 241-244.

methods in which tasks are parsed out to individuals. Historically, this process has served to keep women out of key production roles. Rather, women's media groups cultivated a work process in which directing, script writing, and editing were collective endeavors. There are important differences with regard to the issues taken up by these different women's media organizations and funding resources. In part because it worked with 35mm and 16mm film, Cine Mujer in Colombia was able to secure some production funding from FOCINE, the Colombian state film agency (1978-1993). However, Lilith Video received no funds from Embrafilme.⁵³ They did, however, produce federally commissioned videos.⁵⁴

Indeed, government institutions in the state of São Paulo played a key role in the development of women's independent video production in the region. After 1985, the Conselho Estadual da Condição Feminina (State Council on Women's Condition, CECF) and the group Saúde da Mulher do Instituto de Saúde (Women's Health Group of the São Paulo Health Institute) developed projects for the production of audiovisual programs that treated a variety of issues concerning women and women's health.⁵⁵ In 1987, Lilith Video received funds from the CECF to produce a 5-hour television series called "Feminino Plural" (Feminine Plural). The work of the Lilith Video Collective and this project specifically illustrate a unique collaboration between the local state, broadcast television, and independent women media producers. The program "Feminino Plural" is

⁵³ Goldman does not indicate if Cine Mujer or Grupo Miércoles received production funds from the Mexican or Venezuelan state-led film agencies. *Ibid.*, 242.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 244; Julianne Burton and Julia Lesage, "Broadcast Feminism in Brazil: An Interview with the Lilith Video Collective," *Global Television*, ed. Cynthia Schneider and Brian Wallis (New York: Wedge Press; Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 225-229.

⁵⁵ Jacira de Melo, "Trabalho de Formiga," 77.

noted for being the first feminist series broadcast on television in Brazil.⁵⁶ What is more, the program was funded by the state of São Paulo but not federally supported.

State funding was essential to the success of women's independent video production. In 1986, approximately 50% of women's video production in the state of São Paulo was made possible from the support of the CECF and the Saúde da Mulher section.⁵⁷ In 1987, these two institutions supported 70% of video production treating women's issues.⁵⁸ The year marks a high point for women's video production in São Paulo, which can be attributed to three key factors. First, there was general enthusiasm surrounding the democratizing potential attributed to the new video technology combined with financial support from the indicated state agencies in São Paulo to facilitate production. In addition, increased interest in showing video programs motivated increased production. These new venues include an increase in the use of video in women's movements for didactic purposes as well as the organization of video festivals dedicated exclusively to videos produced by or about women. Notable is the I Vídeo Mulher (Video Woman Festival) organized by Maria Angélica Lemos in 1987.⁵⁹ However, 1987 was also the beginning of a decline. From 1988 to 1991, there was a significant decrease in video production largely due to eliminated or decreased support from the CECF and the Grupo de Saúde section,⁶⁰ but this did not mark the end of women's alternative video production. In 1992, the Associação Brasileira do Vídeo Popular (ABVP, The Brazilian

⁵⁶ Julianne Burton and Julia Lesage, "Broadcast Feminism," 225.

⁵⁷ Jacira de Melo, "Trabalho de Formiga," 77.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 65-66; Julianne Burton and Julia Lesage, "Broadcast Feminism," 225; Maria Angélica Lemos, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 12 October 2001.

⁶⁰ Jacira de Melo, "Trabalho de Formiga," 79.

Association of Popular Video) with support from the Ford Foundation, sponsored a national contest for popular video.⁶¹

After nearly a decade of working together, the original members of the Lilith Video Collective decided to go in different directions to pursue individual goals.⁶² Silvana Afram enrolled at the University of São Paulo.⁶³ Jacira de Melo completed additional university studies and more recently has directed the Instituto Patrícia Galvão – Comunicação e Mídia (Patricia Galvão Institute – Communication and Media).⁶⁴ Marcia Meireles and Maria Angélica Lemos founded a new organization to house the Lilith Video archive and to continue working in audiovisual production. This new organization, Co-Mulher (Comunicação Mulher, Women’s Communication) has gone on to produce videos treating such issues as women and HIV/AIDS, violence against women, and environmental feminism.⁶⁵

Race and Gender at a New Crossroads

A multitude of women’s groups organized in the mid-1970s under a generic umbrella to fight for women’s rights (i.e. making divorce legal, punishing crimes of domestic violence, etc.) and gender-related issues (i.e. daycare centers, price increases, etc.). What had taken on a unified front vis-à-vis the military regime began to diversify after 1979.⁶⁶ Conflicts arose within and among women’s groups to define the most appropriate

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Marcia Meireles, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 16, October 2001.

⁶³ Silvana Afram, interview by author, tape recording, São Paulo, Brazil, 15 October 2001.

⁶⁴ For additional information about this media organization, see <http://www.patriciagalvao.org.br/>; Internet; accessed 18 July 2007.

⁶⁵ For a videography of their works, including those made during the period of the Lilith Video Collective, consult the organization’s website <http://comulher.sites.uol.com.br/>; Internet, accessed 18 July 2007.

⁶⁶ Regarding the “rise and fall” of a united Brazilian women’s movement, see Alvarez, Engendering Democracy in Brazil, 110-136.

strategies to effect social and political change as well as what issues should be placed at the forefront. At this time, Alvarez observes that ‘generic’ activities “gave way to more ‘genderic,’ issue-focused ones.”⁶⁷ Part of this greater specificity involved addressing race. In the early 1980s, black feminist organizations emerged to articulate the specific needs and concerns of black Brazilian women.⁶⁸ Black women activists brought a new visibility to the question of race in Brazilian society that had been visible via class relations.

Subsequently, few audiovisual works in Brazil confront race as a factor that shapes socioeconomic relations. Common in the trajectory of Brazilian cinema are representations of black Brazilians as archetypes and/or caricatures: the slave, the sambista, the sultry mulata, etc.⁶⁹ From the introduction of cinema to the late 1980s, very few black Brazilians have directed feature-length films.⁷⁰ Fortunately, the film movement Dogme, initiated by Danish directors Lars Von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg, has inspired the young black Brazilian director Jefferson De to formulate a Brazilian version in 1999, calling it Dogma Feijoadá.⁷¹ In this, De has called for an authentically black Brazilian cinema that follows 7 fundamental rules: the film should be by a black director, have a black protagonist, treat issues related to the realities of black Brazilians, have a viable production schedule, have no stereotyped characters (black or otherwise); the

⁶⁷ Ibid., 134.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 232-234.

⁶⁹ João Carlos Rodrigues, *O Negro Brasileiro e o Cinema* (Rio de Janeiro: Pallas, 2001), 27-55. See also Robert Stam, *Brazilian Cinema: Reflections on Race and Representation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁷⁰ Cajado Filho is recognized as the first black Brazilian director with five feature-length fiction films to his credit, Rodrigues, *O Negro Brasileiro e o Cinema*, 135.

⁷¹ To date, Jefferson De has directed several short films, having won awards and praise at Brazilian film festivals.

script should privilege the life of the average black Brazilian; and, lastly, superhero and bandit characters should be avoided.⁷²

The Dogma Feijoada movement brought attention to the problems of racial representation in Brazil and defied common denominators. A firm belief in a racial democracy, fostered over the years, has left most Brazilians loath to admit the existence of racism in their country. Rather, racial prejudice is perceived as a problem elsewhere, notably in the United States. And while a few black men have been able to gain the skills necessary to direct audiovisual works in Brazil, no black Brazilian women directors have been able to do so.⁷³

Since the formulation of Dogma Feijoada, interest regarding race and audiovisual production in Brazil has grown. At the 5th Annual Festival of Cinema in Recife (Festival de Cinema no Recife, 2001), the representation of black Brazilians in front of and behind the cameras defined the theme of the festival, “Cinema Brasileiro – Uma Arte de Raça” (Brazilian Cinema – An Art of Race). During the festival an open letter was read demanding increased participation of black Brazilians and condemning discrimination against Brazilians of African ancestry.⁷⁴ These efforts in the area of audiovisual representation reflect debates regarding race in other areas of Brazilian life in the contemporary era.

Black Women

⁷² Rodrigues, *O Negro Brasileiro e o Cinema*, 141.

⁷³ This is, to my knowledge, based on my research, and at the time of this writing.

⁷⁴ For additional information, see: http://www2.uol.com.br/JC/especial/cinema/no2404_1.htm; Internet, accessed 17 July 2007. See also: <http://www.cinemando.com.br/200301/iniciativas/manifestorecife.htm>; Internet, accessed 17 July 2007.

This level of race-consciousness certainly did not define the sociopolitical context when Silvana Afram and Marcia Meireles co-directed the film Mulheres Negras (Black Women of Brazil).⁷⁵ This video was one of the first videos produced by Lilith Video under the sponsorship of the CECF and is one of first (and few) videos that directly address the intersection of race and gender in Brazil.⁷⁶ Equal parts celebration of Afro-Brazilian culture and open denunciation of racial discrimination, the video documentary includes personal statements from a range of Brazilian women to encourage the development of national identity in a new direction.

No time is wasted in this documentary. Within the first minute, a number of black women face the camera in close-up to declare what they know: black women are a force, a race, and work with dignity. There is a cut to a young woman who states frankly, “there is racism in Brazil.” She elaborates, explaining that there is racism in music, there is racism everywhere. The declarations by these first women set a tone. There is recognition of the rich history of black Brazilians and a critique of the disrespect that has accompanied this history. If people can be wronged by acts of commission or omission, then the juxtapositioning of women who speak with great pride about the vitality of black culture critiques the omissive mode of racism in which blackness is not celebrated in Brazilian society.

As if to address persistent doubts, numerous women are interviewed in close up to confirm that racism does, indeed, exist in Brazil. Here, an array of interviews with

⁷⁵ Women Make Movies (New York City), the distributor of Mulheres Negras (Black Women of Brazil), only credits Silvana Afram as directing this documentary video. However, the credits on the video indicate that both Silvana Afram and Marcia Meireles directed the piece. I have opted to credit both women.

⁷⁶ Other titles that address race and gender include, Dandara Mulher Negra (Fundação João Pinheiro, Rio de Janeiro, 1986), De Olho no Preconceito (Fulvia Rosemberg, São Paulo, 1985), and As Divas Negras do Cinema Brasileiro (Enugbarijo Comunicações, Rio de Janeiro, 1989), Melo, “Trabalho de Formiga,” 59. Only Mulheres Negras, however, has distribution in the United States through Women Make Movies.

different women of different ages adds contour to the debate and outlines a number of ways in which racism has affected their lives. In terms of the labor force, one woman states that black women always earn less. Another woman describes being suspiciously rejected for a position she applied for after the potential employer saw that she was black. A hairdresser states that she perceives there is less confidence in her because she is black. And, a schoolteacher reveals she has had problems in the classroom because formal, dominant education does not accept authority from black people. Some of the interviews take place on the street with women who have been stopped randomly. Their unrehearsed affirmative responses to the existence of racism makes patent that the issue is one of sincere and common concern. What is more, these women effectively address the practice of racism in their everyday experiences in the public sphere. These are women who position themselves as able to contribute to society, but they are not allowed to fully participate in society.

The documentary makes a statement about how racism permeates Brazilian culture, specifically in terms of how black women are (not) represented. The camera slowly pans by images of a very fair-skinned, blonde woman and white man in an outdoor advertisement while a woman's voice overlays these images, critiquing the fact that whiteness is the model for beauty. A black woman who works as a model asserts that the only time images of black women circulate in Brazil is during Carnival and other events of that type. This, she firmly states, is racism. Her words contradict the widely held notion that the black or mulata woman dancing in scintillating garb is a celebration of Afro-Brazilian identity. In effect, the woman critiques a form of racism in which black women are not represented within a full range of human activity. Rather, they are

acknowledged as members of society in a very limited fashion – as sexualized dancers during celebrations such as Carnival. In other words, black women are portrayed as objects within and not subjects that shape Brazilian society.

A television actress relates a similar experience playing the part of a maid in a telenovela, a centerpiece of Brazilian popular culture. One of her lines was to tell a white character that she knew her place in this world. She chose to ignore the line during shooting, was confronted by the director, and fired the next day. Apparently, her place in this world was not to fight for the dignity of women and those of African descent. Lastly, a middle-aged woman confesses that she grew up thinking she was ugly because she was never asked out on dates. But, she came to an important revelation: “Eu comecei a perceber que o que era considerado a minha feiura eram os traços de negritude que eu carregava no meu corpo” (Then I began to realize that what had been considered my ugliness were the marks of blackness that I carried on my body). Rather than be crushed by false images and prejudices, these women have decided to come to new terms with their blackness. They demand recognition of their blackness and of their exclusion. And this must change. These women instrumentalize their experiences to denounce racism. Zezé Mota appears briefly, encouraging black women to be proud of their heritage and persist in calling for change. As a well known and respected actress, her appearance in the film carries a great deal of influence.

The documentary could very well have ended by making a claim against racism and supporting its argument. But the documentary is about the black women of Brazil. And, in this, the video moves beyond denunciation and provides a parallel space to illustrate how these women will not be oppressed by the color of their skin, the shape of their noses

or the texture of their hair. A woman who plays tam-tams argues that there is a force, a vitality in the rhythms of her drums. Music, she says, is a way for her to transmit her blackness and energy. Several women are interviewed wearing headwraps indicative of African hairstyles and loose-fitting shift-style dresses also evoking African dress. A woman argues that black spaces, where black people don't have to whiten themselves, are important. Over images of women dressed in white garb and preparing for a candomblé⁷⁷ ritual, another woman says that she has taken to candomblé to develop her black identity. These women reference African traditions – clothing, music, religion – that have been suppressed in mainstream Brazilian culture.⁷⁸ This is partly due to a sociopolitical situation that one interviewee poetically describes as “blackhood, in exile, without any reference points in its own country.” This is a central problem posed by the documentary: the lack of attention paid to how race intersects with other facets of everyday life in Brazil. What are the larger consequences of this? The last interviewee explains: “until people accept blacks and other people that coexist in Brazil, nobody can talk about national identity.” This final statement and the documentary as a whole, position race as a key factor in redefining the people of Brazil and national identity. The politics of whitening will no longer be accepted. The new Brazilian democracy must be racially aware and inclusive.

Rethinking Gender, Sex and Society

⁷⁷ Candomblé is an Afro-Brazilian religion practiced primarily in Brazil and draws from West-African Yoruban orishá veneration.

⁷⁸ This is not the current situation. Adepts of candomblé have increased, capoeira is widely practiced throughout Brazil, and a strong black movement has developed in Salvador, Bahia.

Shortly after the declaration of Amnesty in 1979, social organizations no longer had to rely on protections from established institutions such as the Catholic Church. For women's groups, this meant no longer having to sideline feminist discourse in the name of general, social welfare. While non-governmental organizations had played a decisive role in the process leading up to the end of the military regime, during the period of redemocratization (1985-1988) these non-governmental organizations served as increasingly important channels of dialogue between civil society and the State.⁷⁹ The goal of these organizations was to shift the relations of power.⁸⁰

An important group in the Northeastern state of Pernambuco is SOS-Corpo. For SOS-Corpo one way to shift the relationships of power was to provide information on women's health and reproduction to the citizens of the greater metropolitan area of Recife. Their efforts made women's health an issue of public interest. One of the key tools developed and employed by SOS-Corpo were videos on women's health issues. The videos produced by SOS-Corpo provided information that local, regional and federal governments failed to provide as well as countered incorrect or culturally insensitive material put forth by international agencies. In order to appreciate SOS-Corpo's work in the area of audiovisual production, it is necessary to contextualize their videos in the trajectory of film and video production in the Northeast.

Recent Audiovisual History of Pernambuco

⁷⁹ In her work on popular movements in Brazil, Ruth Cardoso observes that in the early 1980s, as part of Abertura politics, some sectors of the state apparatus instituted policies that promoted direct dialogue with popular movements. See Ruth Corrêa Leite Cardoso, "Popular Movements in the Context of the Consolidation of Democracy in Brazil," 291-302.

⁸⁰ Regarding this, see Arturo Escobar, "Culture, Economics, and Politics," 80-81.

The history of filmmaking in the Northeast is characterized less by widely distributed feature-length fiction film productions than by the more frequent case of unfunded scripts and incomplete, bankrupted film projects.⁸¹ Several factors explain this situation. Film production requires capital investment and trained technicians. Until recently, both were largely absent in the North and Northeast of Brazil. Film production, distribution, and exhibition demand government support to offset cut-throat international competition (i.e. from Hollywood, Europe). But the military state focused its efforts more on repressing the production of images of the Northeast.⁸² This repression is likely due to the fact that the Northeast was considered a center of communist organization, and popular protest of the extreme levels of poverty found in the Northeast would contradict the military's ambitious economic development plan.

One area of audiovisual production that did thrive in Pernambuco was that on Super-8mm. This format was more economically viable in part because it did not require sending undeveloped film stock to (the only film lab in the country in) the Southeast. The relatively affordable Super-8mm became the format of choice for middle and upper-middle classes who chose to produce documentaries of people and places of the North and Northeast. From 1973 to 1983, approximately 200 short and feature-length films were produced by amateur filmmakers on the streets of Recife and in the rural regions of Pernambuco.⁸³ This film format did not cause a revolution in Brazilian cinema but it did

⁸¹ In the pre-sound era of the 1920s, Recife was an important site of film production. During this period, 13 feature-length fiction films and dozens of documentaries were produced. This period has been referred to as the "Ciclo do Recife" (The Recife Cycle) in Brazilian Film History, see Alexandre Figueirôa, O Cinema Super-8 em Pernambuco: Do Lazer Doméstico à Resistência Cultural (Recife: FUNDARPE, 1994), 25.

⁸² A famous case from 1964 is the documentary film Cabra Marcado para Morrer directed by Eduardo Coutinho. Filming of this documentary was finally completed in 1984.

⁸³ Figueirôa, O Cinema Super-8 em Pernambuco, 19.

serve as a “poetic register of ... [the] quotidian imaginary” in the state.⁸⁴ The format was also an important form of cultural resistance against the authoritarian military regime and government-sponsored “official culture.”⁸⁵ Super-8 productions were included in film festivals in the Northeast open to the public and received praise from agents of the National Cinema Institute but projects were not funded as promised.⁸⁶

In more recent history, efforts have been made to foster audiovisual production in the Northeast. An annual film festival in Recife has grown in recent years to become an important showcase in Brazil and Latin America.⁸⁷ Local media producers have sought to establish an Audiovisual Production Center (um Pólo do Audiovisual) in the Northeast. Business consultants have been hired to develop more effective strategies for bolstering the film industry in the Northeast.⁸⁸

But local film and videomakers find themselves isolated from the prime centers of funding in the Southeast. Recife-based videomaker Tarciana Portella notes that the Northeast has been hit by several factors. The funds that were captured by the Lei Rouanet were directed largely to filmmakers in Rio and São Paulo with the entire Northeast taking in a minimal amount.⁸⁹ She critiques a system of incentive laws that

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 179.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 36.

⁸⁷ The film festival was known as the Festival de Cinema do Recife from 1997 to 2002. In 2003, the name was changed to Recife Cine PE – Festival do Audiovisual. The name change reflects a vital shift to include a variety of audiovisual formats alongside more traditional 16 and 35 mm film. See the official website for the film festival <http://www.cine-pe.com.br/historico/historico.php>; Internet, accessed on 2 July 2007.

⁸⁸ At the 2002 edition of the Film Festival in Recife, I attended a symposium where strategies were discussed for increasing film production in the Northeast. This presentation was a synopsis of the findings published by Valença & Associados, Cinema em Pernambuco e no Brasil: Pesquisa Qualitativa Sobre os Fatores Favoráveis e Desfavoráveis (Recife: Fundação de Cultura Cidade do Recife, Prefeitura do Recife, Secretaria de Cultura, 2002).

⁸⁹ Tarciana asserts that the Northeast takes in 2% of the funds captured by the Lei Rouanet, which was at the time of the interview still the key method for securing production funds, Tarciana Portella, interview by author, tape recording, Recife, Brazil, 10 May 2002.

have effectively freed the State from defining any public policy in the area of cultural production and a system that has become extraordinarily bureaucratic and inefficient.⁹⁰

In addition to alternative production, the Northeast has a rich history of alternative exhibition projects. TV VIVA, a non-profit alternative media organization in Olinda, Pernambuco, established a street TV program in 1984. According to Eduardo Homem, TV VIVA's director, the street TV project grew out of the interests of three people with different backgrounds in communications who were also linked to social movements. With a goal to combat the concentrated dominance of mass media, TV VIVA developed the idea of using video shown in public places as an alternative way to circulate information by and about the community.⁹¹ Despite financial difficulties in the early 2000s, TV VIVA continued to drive to public locations in neighborhoods in Recife and Olinda where a group of technicians set up a large screen on which they projected video programs that discussed local culture and society. The number of people attending the street TV showings varies greatly from neighborhood to neighborhood. In some locations, TV VIVA set up its screens in high foot traffic areas where people would stop and watch the shows. In other locations, people would watch TV VIVA's programs while sitting at tables outside bars and restaurants. As will be discussed below, SOS-Corpo joined with TV VIVA in the 1980s to produce and show its videotaped programs in the metropolitan region of Recife and Olinda.

During an extended research trip to Pernambuco in 2002, I attended several outdoor, public showings of Brazilian feature-length films, short films and video programs as part of the Prefecture of Olinda's "Cinema na Praça" (Cinema in the Square) program. Olinda

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Eduardo Homem, interview by author, tape recording, Olinda, Pernambuco, Brazil, 18 May 2002.

mayor Luciana Santos explained that the program had several key goals. The priority was to democratize access to media for those citizens who are excluded from mainstream commercial theaters. It is important to understand how people are excluded. Movie theaters have largely been relocated to large shopping centers. In the case of Recife and Olinda, shopping malls are surrounded by fences, entrances are watched by security guards to oversee who enters, and closed-circuit cameras keep an eye on hallways. On several visits to these malls, I witnessed individuals prevented from entering due to their aspect of poverty.⁹² In short, malls are not public plazas. They are private commercial venues that pick and choose who they allow to enter. The Cinema in the Square program also provided projection spaces to a variety of nationally produced media that would otherwise not find distribution. And, third, the program responded to the decreasing number of cinemas in the region.⁹³

SOS-Corpo – Gender, Health and Citizenship

SOS-Corpo is a middle-class, urban feminist organization situated in Recife, one of the largest cities in Brazil. The organization was originally structured as a feminist entity supported by the work of voluntary feminist activists who were concerned with the feminine condition. Specifically, they focused on questions related to women's reproductive health and sexuality. The organization came into being in 1980 and officially formed as a non-governmental organization in early 1982. Soon after, SOS-Corpo began receiving funding from international aid organizations such as the Ford

⁹² Modestly dressed American academics are not free from control either. Despite obtaining authorization from the theater manager, I was stopped by security guards in the Recife shopping mall for what appeared to be "suspicious interviewing activity" outside the cinemaplex.

⁹³ Luciana Santos, interview by author, tape recording, Olinda, Brazil, 15 May 2002.

Foundation, SACTES, NOVIB (the Netherlands), OXFAM, and the MacArthur Foundation. Originally known as SOS-Corpo – Grupo de Saúde da Mulher (SOS-Corpo – Women’s Health Group), the organization changed its name to SOS-Corpo – Gênero e Cidadania (SOS-Corpo – Gender and Citizenship) in 1991.⁹⁴ This change reflects a revised perspective on gender and women’s health care as they relate to larger questions of social inclusion and individual autonomy.

SOS-Corpo has become a point of reference for women’s organizations at the local, regional and national level. At the international level, SOS-Corpo has developed contacts with institutions aligned with women’s movements throughout Latin America, Europe and North America.⁹⁵ Representatives from SOS-Corpo have attended numerous national and international conferences and symposia on women’s health. During the 1980s, SOS-Corpo sought to intervene in the drafting of the PAISM and the new Brazilian Constitution. In the state of Pernambuco, SOS-Corpo has developed working relationships with a number of local NGOs. Despite its institutional links, SOS-Corpo has maintained and developed strong alliances with local neighborhood women’s organizations.

⁹⁴ Internal historical documents at SOS-Corpo indicate that the group’s first financed project began in June of 1982. SOS-Corpo, Relatório de Atividades do Período de Janeiro à Outubro de 1983 (Recife: SOS-Corpo, 1983), 4.

⁹⁵ Internal institutional documents show that SOS-Corpo’s relationships with NGOs began in the early 1980s but became solidified in the late 1980s. These organizations included international funding agencies such as the MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Pathfinder Fund, SACTES (Germany), NOVIB (the Netherlands), OXFAM (the United Kingdom) as well as contacts established with Video Tiers Monde (Canada), International Planned Parenthood Foundation (IPPF), the Rede Alternativa dos Grupos de Saúde da Mulher (Latin American Network of Alternative Groups for Women’s Health), Centro de Información y Recursos para la Mujer (Bogotá, Colombia), OMM (Organização das Mulheres Moçambicanas), CIDHAL (México), FEMPRESS / ILET (Chile), Women’s Reproductive Rights Information Center (London), ISIS International (Chile), Women’s International Public Health Network (USA) and many women’s groups throughout Brazil.

SOS-Corpo has consistently developed and maintained educational and political practices grounded in feminism.⁹⁶ Notable among their projects are educational outreach programs working with middle class women, women residing in impoverished areas of the urban periphery, and male and female youth. Their programs have also targeted the specific needs of women such as pregnant women and domestic workers. Women educators have conducted classes on female anatomy, physiology, sexuality, contraception, and held open conversations on the feminine condition. These classes have been conducted at SOS-Corpo's institutional space, at community centers in the greater metropolitan area of Recife, and in the rural areas of Pernambuco. Lacking adequate educational materials, the organization has dedicated itself to extensive research, publications, and mass informational campaigns. SOS-Corpo has produced numerous resources including print (brochures, pamphlets, posters, longer reports) and audiovisual materials (slides, videos) for use in their own organization as well as to lend and/or sell to other women's groups in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America.

Communication has been a key component of SOS-Corpo's activities since its founding. In the early 1980s, the group developed radio programs to reach women in rural, isolated areas of the state. By the middle of 1984, the organization realized their work had been greatly reinforced by the use of radio, which they saw as not only a way to spread information about women's health but also a method of pedagogical outreach to a wider audience they would not otherwise be able to reach.⁹⁷ A second key communicative method employed by the organization was the development of community-based theater. According to institutional documents, the experience working

⁹⁶ SOS-Corpo worked with a number of entities to help with its print and audiovisual projects, including the Casa Luiz Freire (Olinda, PE), ETAPAS video (Recife), ECOS (São Paulo), and Grupo Origem (Olinda).

⁹⁷ SOS-Corpo. Relatório de Atividades do Período Janeiro à Junho de 1984 (Recife: SOS-Corpo, 1984), 1.

with theater was a fruitful exchange between the feminist activists and the women of the respective communities in which they were working. Theater served as an outlet for women to express their reflections on issues affecting them in their respective communities. For the feminist activists working with SOS-Corpo, the experiences working in community theater were an important factor in shaping the language, work methods and concepts later used by SOS-Corpo.⁹⁸ Specifically, internal institutional reports reveal that their approach shifted towards a more integrative approach to the female body, which brought about new understandings of sexuality and a greater awareness on their part of the heterogeneity between and among different women despite their apparently similar life conditions.⁹⁹

Working with women in the urban periphery led SOS-Corpo to realize it needed to improve their teaching instruments. Against a backdrop of general optimism about the democratizing potential of new video technology and an increasing demand from new and established women's groups for presentations on women's health and sexuality, SOS-Corpo developed an alliance with TV VIVA in 1985¹⁰⁰ to produce a series of 13 short documentary segments called "Transas do Corpo"¹⁰¹ that would discuss issues related to women's health and human sexuality. The series was included in TV VIVA's Community TV program. An audiovisual sector had been established within SOS-Corpo

⁹⁸ SOS-Corpo. Relatório de Atividades do Período de Janeiro à Outubro de 1983 (Recife: SOS-Corpo, 1983), 12-14.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ SOS-Corpo also established connections with the internationally-active group Video Tiérs Monde (Montréal, Canada) but this relationship was not as key to their video work as that with TV VIVA.

¹⁰¹ Transas do Corpo is a difficult expression to render in English. The verb transar has two main meanings. The first means to plot or to scheme. The second meaning is common in colloquial speech and means to have sexual intercourse. Literally, the phrase could be translated as "Body Strategies."

in 1983 but its activities had focused on producing visual documentation of their work.¹⁰² Internal documents indicate that the production process of SOS-Corpo – the definition of topics, the development of scripts, etc. – was a collective process.¹⁰³

SOS-Corpo's production, use, distribution and exhibition of video documentaries were highly successful. During the 1985 to 1988 period of redemocratization, SOS-Corpo produced 19 videos of which 490 copies were sold to various resource centers, other non-governmental organizations and entities working with women in the movement for healthcare.¹⁰⁴ In 1986 alone, SOS-Corpo's videos were sold to 104 different associations and institutions. From January of 1986 to December of 1988, these videos were shown at 211 separate events in urban and rural areas of Pernambuco. This figure does not include the number of showings these videos had in TV VIVA's Community TV program. While the actual number of people attending these exhibitions in public plazas is impossible to determine, internal documents estimate that videos by SOS-Corpo were seen an additional 75 times in these free, open-air, public venues.¹⁰⁵

The growth in video production during the 1980s led to the creation of festivals dedicated to alternative and women's video as well as spaces for video within mainstream film festivals. SOS-Corpo's videos were shown in national and international festivals, including Fest-Rio, the Festival de Vídeo Sobre a Mulher promoted by the CNDM in Brasília, special screenings organized by the Brazilian Association of Popular Video (ABVP, Associação Brasileira do Vídeo Popular), the Latin American Women's

¹⁰² SOS-Corpo, Relatório de Atividades do Período de Janeiro à Outubro de 1985 (Recife: SOS-Corpo, 1985), 9

¹⁰³ SOS-Corpo, Relatório de Atividades do Período de Julho à Dezembro de 1986 (Recife: SOS-Corpo, Fevereiro, 1987), 7.

¹⁰⁴ SOS-Corpo, Relatório de Atividades do Período de Julho à Dezembro de 1988 (Recife: SOS-Corpo, 1988), Anexo I and Anexo III.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Video Festival in Peru, Videofest/Medien Operative in Berlin, and the Festival of New Latin American Cinema in Havana.¹⁰⁶

This area of women's audiovisual production has gone largely overlooked in media studies yet it represents a significant component in the struggles waged by social movements in Brazil prior to and during the period of redemocratization. Video made it possible to extend feminist-based discourse to segments of the population that otherwise would have not been educated about vital healthcare issues. Women's independent community-based video contributed to the empowerment of women specifically, and civil society in general.

The information transmitted in SOS-Corpo's programs was vital in the Northeast. Like other activists in the women's movement, SOS-Corpo remained vigilant that the state would not largely disregard the PAISM and simply promote a program of birth control. Their suspicions were well founded. As mentioned above, the military regime shifted its population policy from a pronatalist position during the economic boom years of the late 1960s and early 1970s to propose a national family-planning program in the early 1980s under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). A privately funded branch of International Planned Parenthood, BEMFAM (Sociedade Civil Bem Estar Familiar no Brasil), established clinics to distribute birth control pills. These clinics were concentrated in the impoverished Northeast where population control was promoted in lieu of industrial or agricultural development.¹⁰⁷ In Malthusian fashion, controlling poor women's fertility was seen as one solution to widespread poverty. The distribution

¹⁰⁶ SOS-Corpo, Relatório de Atividades do Período de Julho a Dezembro de 1988 (Recife: SOS-Corpo, 1989), 14; SOS-Corpo, Relatório de Atividades do Período de Janeiro à Dezembro de 1991 (Recife: SOS-Corpo, 1992), 10-11.

¹⁰⁷ Alvarez, Engendering Democracy, 180.

of birth control pills from these clinics went largely unregulated. Women would receive free packets of pills without proper medical attention and advice regarding the side effects of the daily doses of hormones.

Although access to contraception was, in fact, one of the goals of the women's movement, the measures taken by the State did not coincide with the feminist goal of teaching women that their bodies belong to them and that they should have control over their reproductive cycle. Rather, the state failed to fulfill its social obligations. In the mid 1980s, there were 614 healthcare posts in the state of Pernambuco. Of these, only 144 had gynecologists and, at only 25 of these clinics, women could be screened for cervical cancer.¹⁰⁸ In this northeastern Brazilian state with the highest rates of cervical cancer in the world, this is evidence of gross negligence on the part of the local, state and federal government.¹⁰⁹ Rather, the state indirectly promoted "voluntary" female sterilization as a birth control method by not questioning the abnormally high number of Cesarean sections being performed and paid for by the National Healthcare System (INAMPS). During these unnecessary C-sections, women paid out-of-pocket (and under the table) to have doctors perform tubal ligations. Throughout the 1980s, the women's movement dedicated a significant amount of energy and resources to address women's healthcare – making sure legally ratified programs were implemented, protecting these hard-won programs from retrograde politics and educating women (and men) about reproductive healthcare.

SOS-Corpo Presents "Transas do Corpo"

¹⁰⁸ It is also important to note that none of the health clinics in Pernambuco screened for breast cancer. SOS-Corpo, *Atendimento Médico* (Recife: SOS-Corpo, 1986).

¹⁰⁹ SOS-Corpo, "Prevenção do Câncer do Colo," (Recife: SOS-Corpo, 1986).

The first series of videos produced by SOS-Corpo took the body politics of the time into the street and questioned the relationship between society and the politics of gender. What is more, the videos produced by SOS-Corpo served as a mechanism for political development that did not rely on traditional mechanisms of political action such as clientelistic controls and political cooptation.¹¹⁰ This results from the particular mode of production, exhibition and distribution of these works.

With technical assistance from TV VIVA and financial support from NOVIB, SOS-Corpo was able to produce its first four videos in 1985: O Quê Faço Com Essa T¹¹¹ (What Do I Do With This T), Tá Ligada Nessa? (Are You Clued In On This?), Atendimento Médico (Medical Care), and Atreve-te a Saber (Dare to Know).¹¹² Ranging in length from 7 to 15 minutes, each video was included in TV VIVA's street TV program. Thus, they were seen by an untold number of individuals in the greater metropolitan areas of Recife and Olinda. Internal documents state that these four videos greatly expanded the organization's outreach efforts.¹¹³

As part of an outdoor television project, the videos produced by SOS-Corpo included strategies of representation more common to television than feature-length film production. And, clearly, the media organization assisting SOS-Corpo, TV VIVA, was well versed in televisual aesthetics. Indeed, members of TV VIVA shot and edited the videos for SOS-Corpo at their center. This televisual aesthetic, developed in the first

¹¹⁰ Much has been written about clientelistic relations in Brazil. As regards social movements, see Ruth Côrrea Leite Cardoso's essay "Popular Movements in the Context of the Consolidation of Democracy in Brazil," 291-302; regarding clientelism during the transition to democracy, see Frances Hagopian, "'Democracy by Undemocratic Means'? Elites, Political Pacts, and Regime Transition in Brazil," *Comparative Political Studies* 23.2 (1990): 147-70.

¹¹¹ Here, the "T" refers to the word in Portuguese *tesão*, meaning sexual desire. The target audience for the video are adolescents and young adults.

¹¹² SOS-Corpo, Relatório de Atividades do Período de Janeiro à Outubro de 1985 (Recife: SOS-Corpo, 1985), 17.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 19.

videos produced by SOS-Corpo, continued to be employed in those videos produced in 1986 for the “Transas do Corpo” series. As discussed below, video documentaries produced in 1988 and 1989 employ representational strategies similar to those used in documentary filmmaking. This represents a shift in exhibition strategies as well as the role video played in SOS-Corpo’s programs.

Because they were intended to be viewed by diverse groups in the urban periphery, these video segments employ an accessible language and style. Each segment opens and closes with the same audiovisual “wrapper” – a woman’s voice announcing “transas do corpo” against a blue backdrop on which the spoken words appear. This “wrapper” provides continuity between the different video segments. At the end of every video, a presenter would encourage further deliberation about a given issue and announce the phone number at which SOS-Corpo could be reached in case viewers had questions. When included, mpb (música popular brasileira, popular Brazilian music) or frevo play in the non-diegetic space during transitions between sequences.¹¹⁴

All videos include a woman working with SOS-Corpo who introduces the topic to be discussed in the segment. Using clear, down-to-earth vocabulary, she speaks into a handheld microphone, similar to in-the-field news reporters (before improvements in wireless technology and lavalier microphones). The majority of these video segments include Ângela Freitas, a journalist by training who worked with SOS-Corpo for many years.

Issues regarding women and women’s healthcare rarely receive one-sided treatment. Rather, the complexity of the issue is explored and presented for further consideration. In

¹¹⁴ On one occasion a Mozart piece plays in the background and, on another, a Brazilian cover of a Def Leopard song, “Love Bites” (1987), is used.

an effort to address the nuances of a presented topic, the SOS-Corpo representative asks individuals – men and women – questions on the streets of Recife. The locations are easily identifiable as the bridges over the numerous waterways that dissect the center of Recife, pharmacies, open-air markets, and neighborhoods in Recife. The faces of people interviewed on the street are generally done in close-up. This personalizes the statements made by people and facilitates viewing. Larger images of faces are easier to see than long or panoramic shots especially if the images are projected on a large screen outdoors or on a collectively viewed TV set indoors. Larger images within the frame also compensate for any potential loss of image quality during broadcasting. In sum, these video segments employ easily accessible language and aesthetics that situate people, places and ideas in a familiar context and encourage collective concern and further inquiry.

The first series of videos produced in 1985 introduced a range of healthcare problems women faced in Pernambuco. The videos, mentioned above, tended to be longer than those produced in 1986, which ranged from 2 to 6 minutes. One notable exception, discussed below, is a 14-minute video on abortion entitled Por quê Não? (Why not?). The videos produced in 1985 also tend to address more global questions regarding women's reproductive health and sexuality while the videos produced in 1986 tended to offer information regarding specific questions. The change in duration of the videos relates to the new exhibition format as well as a change in the purpose of the videos. The shorter videos were shown in open, public spaces where the objective was to catch the attention of onlookers, motivate discussion and inform viewers of the existence of the organization. In contrast, the slightly longer videos were part of workshops sponsored by

SOS-Corpo as well as other women's groups. These videos were also used for didactic purposes but in closed environments with fewer distractions.

The segments Tá Ligada Nessa? and Atendimento Médico highlight the inadequate healthcare system in Pernambuco while the segment Atreve-te a Saber encourages women to get involved in local women's groups to learn more about ways to protect their health. Tá Ligada Nessa? opens with a medium shot of Ângela Freitas stopping people on the streets of Recife and asking: "Qual é a melhor maneira de evitar filhos" (What is the best way to avoid having children?). Presenting the issue of contraception as a question opens the issue up to a number of people with different points of view. It also allows for sharing what people feel is scientific or factual information with personal experience and belief. Thus, again, objective and subjective knowledge are allowed to coincide.

Individual women say they take the Pill, use an IUD, follow the rhythm method, or have had a tubal ligation procedure. These answers are then followed by women who talk about problems they have had using these methods, including getting pregnant with an IUD and developing severe varicose veins from taking the Pill. One woman shares that she received a spermicidal cream and condoms from a BEMFAM clinic. Not knowing how to use the two together, she tried to read the instructions inside the box but they were in English and another language she didn't recognize. The video then shifts to critique the irresponsible actions of the international, privately-funded BEMFAM clinics, which hand out contraceptive methods but do not provide orientation on their use or side effects.

A second critique is launched at the under-the-table practice of tubal ligations. By the mid 1980s, tubal ligations had become the most popular form of birth control with more women in Pernambuco having their Fallopian tubes severed than numbers of women

taking birth control pills. The interviewer asks several men on the street if they would be sterilized. The answer is, of course, that they would not. The reason given is that this would take away from their manhood and that birth control is the responsibility of women. Additional interviews with women who have had tubal ligations asks them to reflect on their feelings about having done so. Their reactions are mixed – some are very satisfied, others regret having had the operation. Ângela Freitas states that opting for a tubal ligation is opting to modify your body for survival and then asks: What happens to a woman who has been raised to be a mother and then can no longer be one? Asking men and women on the street about the best contraceptive methods reveals the cultural beliefs regarding gender and sexuality as well as touches on the politics behind determining the best birth control method. The video presents information and asks more questions than it answers. Thus, the power to make decisions is in the hands of the people.

The next two videos by SOS-Corpo develop a similar goal to inform a wide audience about healthcare problems and motivate them to take action. The principal goal of the video Atendimento Médico (Medical Care) is to bring awareness to the problems with the healthcare system in the state of Pernambuco. The SOS-Corpo interviewer speaks with several women waiting outside a hospital and a group of women sitting on benches just outside their homes. This image of people sitting outside chatting is a familiar scene and creates a sense that the SOS-Corpo interviewer has casually joined in on an outdoor conversation. In other words, the issues being discussed in the video are of shared concern and interest. They and others complain about how long they have waited at health clinics, the poor treatment they have received or the lack of treatment they received after waiting for long periods.

The video then shifts gear. The SOS-Corpo interviewer speaks with a woman who encourages other women to be empowered to demand their rights. The women bring up the question of class differences and access to healthcare. Rich people can afford to pay for efficient, accurate, private care while poor people must rely on an under funded system. The women themselves assert that access to good healthcare is a right. The SOS-Corpo interviewer then provides numerical information of the inadequate healthcare system for women in the state of Pernambuco over images of local clinics. The significant gesture this video makes is in how it effectively shares audiovisual space. The local women speak on-camera and define what they see as problems with the healthcare system. SOS-Corpo, as an institution and represented by the interviewer, provides more precise data on the extent and shape of the problem that these women define. The content and shape of the video is then a collaborative effort between the people and the larger organization.

An under funded, inadequate healthcare system created a dire need for the citizens of Pernambuco to take action. But, asking women to learn about their bodies, raise consciousness about the political and economic issues that affected their health and encourage them to explore and question their gender-defined social roles and sexuality was not an easy endeavor. Fear, embarrassment and socially defined female gender identity complicated making changes that would impact women's health. SOS-Corpo chose to produce a video, Atreve-te a Saber (Dare to Know) that judiciously invites women to come to their headquarters to attend informational meetings and events.

It is important at this point to recall that these video segments are being watched by women and men in the open-air settings as part of TV VIVA's street TV program. Thus,

these videos are as much for women who are shy about attending a meeting at a local women's group as much as they are for men who question allowing their wives, girlfriends or daughters to attend such "subversive" gatherings. As much as SOS-Corpo needed to encourage women to learn vital information about their healthcare and to give them the tools that would empower them to make their own decisions about their reproductive health, the organization also had to confront traditional, patriarchal views that argued that women belonged at home and in the kitchen – certainly not at a consciousness-raising meeting of a community women's group. For many women in rural and more impoverished areas, getting involved in the women's movement required overcoming certain fears about participating in public organizations and convincing their husbands or male partners to allow them to be active members of society.

For these reasons, the video segment Atreve-te a Saber puts fears about participating in women's groups to rest. The video opens with pleasant music over an image of a group of women sitting in a circle talking. There is a quick shot outside a building with a sign that identifies it as the women's group of Casa Amarela, a neighborhood in central Recife. The SOS-Corpo interviewer speaks with several women. It is important to note that they are dressed and speak like average women in the region. There are no pretensions and they speak openly on camera about issues related to human sexuality that they have learned at the meetings. There are images of women performing in skits, eating good food, and learning. Clearly, they are having fun. The video closes with a close-up of a woman who says she is in her 60s. She states that she wishes she had learned – what she has learned – when she was in her 30s or 40s so that her life would have been more enjoyable. This last interview with this gray-haired woman seeks to convince younger

women not to wait until it is too late to enjoy their lives. As an older matriarch, liberated by her age, she can challenge patriarchal values that would keep her at home.

Media scholars have noted the importance of process in the study of popular video.¹¹⁵ In his work, Rafael Roncagliolo marks a distinction between video product and video process. Video product is created as an object to be "broadcast, transmitted, received and consumed."¹¹⁶ In contrast, video process uses video equipment differently, placing greater emphasis on using it as "tools for oral history, collective memories, group consciousness and the process of self-education and popular self-organization."¹¹⁷ Unfortunately, one of the reasons (among several) that both André Gerard, director of the Recife-based alternative video producer ETAPAS Video, and Ângela Freitas gave for discontinued development of popular video in the 1990s was that alternative, popular video simply could not compete with the TV Globo standard of quality to which the masses had become accustomed.

While others concede that popular video served as a strategic tool in social organizing, it is also critiqued for not playing the liberating role that was expected.¹¹⁸ But, as the opening quote by Ithiel de Sola Pool suggests, the effects of media are not simple, unidirectional or immediate. Similarly, Solanas and Getino assert that revolutionary cinema does not mean providing a push for immediate action. Rather, the didactic

¹¹⁵ See Patricia Aufderheide, "Grassroots Video in Latin America," in Visible Nations: Latin American Film and Video, ed. Chon Noriega (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 226.

¹¹⁶ Rafael Roncagliolo, "The Growth of the Audio-Visual Imagescape in Latin America," 26.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

¹¹⁸ Aufderheide, "Grassroots Video in Latin America," 219.

element underlying much of Latin American documentary is to provide for the acquisition of knowledge on which action can be taken.¹¹⁹

But liberation, expanding citizenship and democracy were, in fact, goals underlying popular video. Michael Chanan suggests a number of different types of documentary that have been employed in Latin American cinema since the 1960s. Chanan's typology includes, for example, the combat film, the protest film, investigative documentaries, film essays, film reports, and testimonial film.¹²⁰ At the crux of his discussion is the notion of intentionality, which he describes as a distinctive feature pertaining to particular modes of documentary. In short, a style of documentary possesses an intentional character, or purpose: to teach, to denounce, to report, etc.¹²¹

With this, it is imperative to recognize that the videos by SOS-Corpo were engaged in a particular process – to motivate reflection on gender, human sexuality and to advocate for improvements in women's health. While the series of video documentaries produced in 1985 for the "Transas do Corpo" series encouraged awareness and explained the dire healthcare situation found in the state of Pernambuco, those videos produced in 1986 provided information about a number of birth control methods (e.g. Norplant, hormonal injections, the diaphragm, condoms, birth control pills) as well as broader treatment for the prevention of cervical cancer, sexual games that small children play, and the relationship between family planning and women in the paid labor force.

¹¹⁹ Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, "Towards a Third Cinema," in Twenty-Five Years of the New Latin American Cinema, ed. Michael Chanan, (London: British Film Institute and Channel Four Television, 1983), 17-27.

¹²⁰ Michael Chanan, "Rediscovering Documentary: Cultural Context and Intentionality," in The Social Documentary in Latin America (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990), 35-36.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

In addition to being didactic, the video segments that discussed different birth control methods were radical in concept and in ideological implication. Each segment in this series addresses a given birth control method, discusses its advantages and disadvantages, provides information on how to use the method, and offers additional information such as important side-effects associated with a particular method. This information counteracts the lack of information offered at healthcare clinics, fears associated with certain methods, and corrects common misconceptions of women's reproductive health. In the case of condoms, special attention is paid to the cultural taboos and prejudices surrounding the use of condoms. Specifically, the video on birth control methods addresses the notion that a man's sexual energy will be inhibited and that condoms are only to be used during heterosexual relations with sex workers outside the home; a veil of presumed fidelity usually means that a condom is not used with a man's wife. In terms of radical potential, it is once again important to realize that these videos, which discussed women's menstrual periods, condoms, coitus and Fallopian tubes, were being watched in public spaces like plazas and parks. These videos literally took sex into the streets, raised consciousness about sex and sexuality, and made reproductive health a matter of public concern.

One video produced apart from the other videos in 1986 creates a connection between the public sphere and the state apparatus. The 14-minute documentary Por Quê Não? (Why Not?) takes on the highly sensitive issue of abortion. Notably, this video was produced three years after the short documentary film Vida de Mãe É Assim Mesmo? by Eunice Gutman. The difference in year of production along with the slightly more tentative nature with which the subject is approached in the SOS-Corpo documentary

illustrates that open, frank discussion of abortion was still in an incipient stage in the Northeast. Despite shifts in the South and Southeast, traditional values have maintained a strong hold on women's bodies in this region of Brazil. Thus, the video by SOS-Corpo represents an endeavor to change public opinion and influence state policy. But the abortion debate did not end in the 1980s. In 1995, SOS-Corpo produced a second 26-minute documentary on abortion entitled Aborto: Desafio da Legalidade (Abortion: Challenge of Legality). However, legal access to abortion is still only permitted to this day in cases of rape and when a pregnancy presents a grave risk to a woman.

If the videos produced for the "Transas do Corpo" series bear the urgency of the moment, the documentary Por Quê Não? takes a step back and asks people to reflect on this issue that affects all of society. Several people are stopped on the street to offer their thoughts regarding abortion. One woman explains that she is opposed to abortion because when a woman is married, the fetus is a life, it is a child sanctioned by holy matrimony.¹²² A younger man on the street says that he would take his wife to court if she had an abortion without his permission. Another woman on the street matter-of-factly states that abortion is a crime and that whoever gets pregnant has to "arcar com a conseqüências" (take responsibility for the consequences).

The SOS-Corpo interviewer then speaks with an older man on the street. He explains that a woman with some class and education does not get pregnant. Rather, he explains that pregnancy results from an error of the specific quality of the woman. He claims that a woman with some logic, a woman of quality with some basic scientific knowledge, this type of woman does not get pregnant. By contrast, he argues, "a mulher cadela, a mulher

¹²² The connection between marriage and the fetus being a child is not fully explained.

do povo, ela, ela entra no ciu e, aí, acontece isso” (the dog-woman / slut,¹²³ the common woman, she, she enters into heat and, then, she gets pregnant). This last man’s statement reveals the patriarchal, classist, often illogical discourse that permeates discussions of women’s sexuality and abortion. As if it were a rock to be mined, the interview here taps into this vein of thought and indicates just how complicated it will be to excavate and extract these retrograde ideas.

With these stereotypes and potential for legal backlash, it is no wonder that the women who speak about abortion on camera do so in a timid fashion or with their full identities disguised. The statements made by these women are not like the tight-framed close-ups in which women directly faced the camera when speaking in Eunice Gutman’s 1983 documentary. The SOS-Corpo interviewer quietly asks a woman if she thinks abortion is a sin. The woman, shot in profile, in the dark, circumspectly states that she does not know. Another woman is shot in her kitchen preparing an herbal infusion that she hopes will provoke an abortion. This small-framed woman explains that she already has four children and can’t have any more. The representative from SOS-Corpo asks her what else she will try if the infusion does not work. The woman mentions having heard of some drops that she might try. With her head tilted downward, glancing away from the camera, the woman defends herself by explaining “não é que eu não quero, é que não posso. Não posso” (It isn’t that I don’t want to (have a baby), it’s that I cannot. I cannot). If she could respond to the woman who interviewed in the street, the reality is that she is taking responsibility for what has happened. As a poor woman, she cannot afford to raise

¹²³ This is a difficult expression to render in English. Cadela refers to a female dog, or bitch. In this case, the expression is a dehumanizing critique of a woman.

another child; it would be irresponsible personally and economically to bring another child into her family.

The statements by the men and women on the street are intercalated with facts from the SOS-Corpo interviewer and the opinions of doctors and lawyers well-versed in the public health and legal concerns surrounding the practice of abortion. Over images of knitting needles and other household items, the SOS-Corpo interviewer states that women use a variety of objects they have at their disposal to provoke an abortion. This underscores the unsafe reality of at-home abortions and the desperation women must feel to use such crude instruments. Against images of women in hospital gowns in obvious physical distress, the SOS-Corpo interviewer states that the actual number of abortions performed each day is unknown but it is estimated that there are approximately 8 per hour in Brazil.

There is a cut to an interior space where a woman sits facing the SOS-Corpo interviewer. The woman, who sits in profile and whose face, for this reason, is not fully visible, is asked by the SOS-Corpo interviewer to explain what women do to themselves to provoke abortions. As a gynecologist she explains that she performs many curettages on women who provoke abortions at home. She adds that she sees a great deal of tissue damage from what she believes to be acid-based drops. Thus, the practice of clandestine abortions gains a different tone. It is not about religious belief, personal integrity, or hormone spikes. The practice of clandestine abortions is redefined as a widespread, dangerous practice and represents a significant healthcare crisis. She sits sideways, not allowing the viewer to fully see her face and she insists that she does not perform

abortions but, rather, curettages – which is actually part of an abortion procedure, a D & C procedure – dilation and curettage.

The SOS-Corpo interviewer next speaks with a lawyer. Positioned facing the camera with book shelves behind her, the woman refers to Article 124 of the Brazilian Penal Code which defines severe penalties for a woman who has an abortion, ranging from 0 to 10 years. She explains that during past periods in Brazilian history, the penalties were much less severe. She adds that many European countries at the time had already legalized abortion. Lastly, the woman argues that laws can be changed according to the political forces and social groups in the country. For a people exiting twenty years of military rule during which the government told them what was and was not possible, suggesting that laws can be redefined by civil society is a very radical move. The lawyer's statements also make the important suggestion that change is possible.

This documentary by SOS-Corpo is significant in three key ways. First, it takes an important step to make abortion a public issue of concern. Second, it reveals the differences of feminism in Brazil in terms of cultural, regional and class differences. Third, as with other videos by SOS-Corpo, it shows the people to itself. In this, the video bridges individual thoughts and opinions with social beliefs and public policy.

Shifts in SOS-Corpo Video Production

Later in the 1980s, SOS-Corpo made changes in its approach to video production. With continued financial support from international funding agencies and experience amassed from working on the “Transas do Corpo” series, SOS-Corpo chose to produce

fewer but longer videos.¹²⁴ Two important video projects from the late 1980s by SOS-Corpo took inspiration from social projects initiated or supported by the organization. Consequently, each involved increased research and collaborative input, which resulted in videos that more profoundly addressed cultural beliefs, social practices, and state policy. In 1988, SOS-Corpo produced a 31-minute video entitled Denise. This video emerged from a large field study conducted in the state of Pernambuco on the use of the diaphragm as a mode of contraception and marks a shift to fictionalized drama to impart information about women's reproductive health. One year later, SOS-Corpo completed a 15-minute documentary entitled Dupla Jornada (Double Day) that focused on women agricultural workers in different regions of Pernambuco.

Denise

The video Denise marks a significant shift in production for SOS-Corpo. In contrast to the documentary strategies found in other videos, a short fictional drama is developed in this work to discuss the use of a diaphragm as a method of contraception. In effect, the diaphragm and learning about women's reproductive health is at the center of a discussion of women's paid labor, access to healthcare information, and interpersonal conflicts that arise when women become more aware of their bodies.

This video also illustrates an innovative and collaborative work process. The video emerges out of a research project conducted by SOS-Corpo and local health authorities in the state of Pernambuco. A total of fifty 50 women from Recife tested the use of the diaphragm as a form of birth control and then reported their experiences. From their

¹²⁴ This choice may also be due to inflation-fueled increased costs for production but internal documents do not clarify this.

reported experiences, a script for the video Denise was drafted. Non-professional actors and actresses from Recife played the roles in the video.

The eponymous work, Denise, refers to the protagonist of the drama, a young married woman and mother of a young son named, Dudú. The narrative of this video follows Denise over the course of several days and, in terms of plot structure, the narrative follows a relatively conventional development with an introduction to the protagonist, the development of conflicts, a peak moment of interpersonal tension and a quick resolution. Throughout the drama, there are images of locations, people, activities and the speech typical of northeastern culture, and Pernambuco specifically. These elements make the plot accessible and indicate that the narrative is intended for a specific audience, spectators in and/or near the state of Pernambuco. Unlike the vast majority of telenovelas and films, which are taped or filmed in Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo, these elements of local culture make the message seem more relevant to the spectator. The drama does not arise from some other, distant location but, rather, emerges from within their own community.

The first sequence introduces the protagonist and establishes the first of a series of interpersonal tensions in Denise's life. In the opening scene, frevo, a regional style of popular music, plays in the non-diegetic sound space. The camera focuses on an urban bus, off of which a young woman, Denise, descends. The camera follows her to an open-air market where she buys groceries. In the next scene and with bags in hand, Denise stops off at a house to pick up her son. A woman, named Carmen, is outside the home sweeping and greets Denise. The spectators learn that this is Denise's mother's house and Carmen, it must be assumed, is a domestic worker. After chatting with Carmen and her

mother, Denise states that she must get going because she has a women's group meeting to attend later that day. In a shot-reverse-shot, the faces of Carmen and Denise's mother are captured. Their looks reveal a mutual disapproval of Denise's unending comings and goings and involvement in such activities. This is the first of several individuals Denise must disregard as she keeps in mind her own personal goals and desires to improve her life.

Indeed, Denise's participation in the women's group and the knowledge she gains from this experience about women's reproductive organs, health and contraceptive methods, leads to disapproval and gossiping from other women in the community. She becomes the target of gossip because she has broken out of expected patterns of behavior. Having tried birth control pills, Denise decides to not take them due to the negative side effects she experienced. At the women's meeting, she learns about using a diaphragm and other contraceptive methods. A day or two later in her bedroom, Denise inserts the diaphragm and dances around in front of a mirror, proving that there is no discomfort with using the diaphragm and that it is an easy method to use. A quick cut to an image of a Catholic figure hanging on the wall reveals that, while Denise respects her religion, she also needs to be concerned about her health and personal happiness.

The drama makes a transition to reveal that something as ostensibly benign as a diaphragm can bring great liberation and intense frustration. In the next sequence, Denise's husband comes home to find her dressed up, wearing perfume, and with a flower in her hair. Her frisky greeting sends a clear message – having discovered an appropriate birth control method, she is free to engage in heterosexual relations, notably on her own terms. In the following sequence, a Brazilian cover of the Def Leopard song

“Love Bites” plays in non-diegetic space. Denise comes home and finds her husband playing with Dudú. The music continues to play over shots of Denise cleaning the diaphragm and talking with her husband about it. He gestures that he had no idea that Denise had been wearing the diaphragm the night before and, in terms of sexual pleasure, he noticed no difference.

So, life is good and life is easy – but not for everyone. The next scene, a few days later, illustrates a creative use of editing to reveal how new-found personal freedom can translate into unreasonable social backlash. Denise descends the same path as usual on her way to her mother’s house where she drops off Dudú. She is dressed in nicer clothes, with her hair pulled back to show off a pair of earrings and she walks with a skip in her step. She is clearly happy and at ease. As she continues on her way, shots of faces of disapproving female neighbors and the high-pitched sound of whispering intercut every step Denise takes. With each intercut, the camera captures a shot of different parts of Denise’s body and her outfit becomes increasingly scandalous –a few buttons of her blouse are brazenly undone, a pin in the shape of a flower raises her skirt to show more of her bright pink fishnet stockings. A cut to a wide shot reveals that the fragmented representation of Denise is a false visual representation of the women’s gossip. Her blouse is completely buttoned and she is not wearing fishnet stockings. They have mentally crafted her as something akin to a sex worker when, in fact, she is just dressed nicely on her way to run some errands.

This sequence reveals that making choices about contraception crosses the threshold of private life and becomes an issue of public concern. Albeit, in this case, it is one of negative judgment. The point made here is that women need to reflect on what it means

to judge other women regarding the social roles they take on and, for those who wish to pursue new roles, to be prepared for resistance from the people around them.

Resistance sometimes comes from purportedly neutral agents. In the above sequence, Denise was on her way to meet up with a friend. There is a cut to a new location and both enter a building. A low-to-high angle shot of a plaque above the entrance indicates that this is a state-run health clinic. There, Denise sees a doctor and reveals to him that she has started using a diaphragm. He disagrees with using a diaphragm and recommends the Pill. She responds by explaining that she does not want to take any more pills. In addition to the gossiping of neighbors, Denise must defend her choices before an authority figure, which she does easily. But this is not, in fact, the first time in the narrative that she has had to stand her ground vis-à-vis medical authorities, their agents, and her neighbors. Earlier, she had an exchange with a woman, working for a local doctor, who tried to convince her to have a tubal ligation procedure. Rather than succumb to peer pressure or one-sided viewpoints, Denise shows that it is necessary to support the decision that she has made for herself in her own best interest.

Birth control plays a key role in determining a woman's professional possibilities. A high angle, long shot locates Denise and her friend walking in downtown Recife where there are many shops. They pass by a clothing store with a job announcement in the window. Denise grabs the sign, enters, and then exits with a smile on her face. Not being confined to the domestic sphere allows her to spend a leisurely afternoon socializing and pursuing personal goals. While she shows great excitement in this scene, in the next there is a cut to Denise who lies down and dreams about her recent decisions. Her restless movement indicates that there are fears and doubts involved in taking big personal steps.

Change is not represented, then, as a seamless process. There are highs, lows and moments of fear and personal doubt.

The last main sequence includes the highest point of interpersonal tension. Denise's husband arrives home later in the evening but neither she nor Dudú are there. There is a cut to their bedroom, where he enters, opens a drawer, and takes out Denise's diaphragm. Three sequential shots illustrate his frustration and outline his logic. First, there is a close-up shot of the diaphragm. Then, there is a close-up shot of a cigarette lighter. Third, there is a wide shot of the husband sitting on the corner of the bed holding both objects. This montage relates the frustration felt by Denise's husband. He blames the diaphragm for her not being there and the only solution is to destroy it. There is a cut to the front door. Denise enters with Dudú and an umbrella in her hand. It is dark outside, indicating that it is late. The husband expresses his frustration: he is not happy that Denise was not at home before he arrived, he is fed up with her working outside the home, he is tired of the neighbors' gossip, and he threatens to leave her. Clearly, he has not developed as much as Denise has as a character. Denise responds to his complaints, including some of the reasons why many women entered the paid work force to begin with: her job brings in much needed money into the household, she always wanted to work outside the home, etc. The altercation between the two characters illustrates that her greater sexual freedom has led to her being able to make choices about her life: how she spends her time and where. Not having her destiny tied to her reproductive cycle has allowed her to fulfill a long-held desire to work outside the home. In the end, Denise and her husband come to a mutually acceptable agreement, suggested by the final image of the couple embracing in bed.

In her work on feminist audiovisual production, Julia Lesage considers of paramount importance the relationship between production processes, political goals and the formal construction (i.e. use of music, narrative structure, etc.) of a work.¹²⁵ In terms of the relationship between those who produce an audiovisual work and those who are represented, Lesage argues that the ultimate goal is to allow the community to express itself to itself.¹²⁶ With this in mind, I assert that the fictional representation of learning to use a diaphragm and the experiences that are associated with developing greater awareness of one's body – which is based on the pro-filmic research project – is quite effective. First, the drama reveals that finding an appropriate, adequate birth control method takes time. It is also a process of working with a woman's (heteronormative) sexual partner. Second, greater sexual liberation may lead to unforeseen opportunities that can result in unexpected tensions within a community. The fictional representation in Denise highlights the process that one individual woman may go through. Third, for sensitive topics, the fictionalized representation – again, based on pro-filmic research – may be a particularly effective mode in smaller, tight-knit communities. For example, video viewers in a workshop can talk about what a character did and the choices she or he made without having to bring up aspects of their own private lives. In other words, a fictional piece allows for an open critique of the social, political, and economic circumstances involved in a particular issue without making a direct critique of personal practices.

The Double Day

¹²⁵ Julia Lesage, "Women Make Media: Three Modes of Production," in The Social Documentary in Latin America, 315-347.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 342.

From 1970 to 1990, with an emphasis on the 1980s, women's participation in the paid labor force rose dramatically. This occurred in part due to rises in unemployment among men and general financial crises that resulted in the loss of real wages and necessitated additional income per home. In the labor market, Brazilian women were generally paid less than their male coworkers and occupied jobs in the tertiary or informal sector. Their work outside the home did not mean they abandoned domestic duties. After the quitting bell, women headed home to complete the numerous chores that awaited them. Thus was born the expression "the double day."

Discussion of this phenomenon must take into account socialized gender identity, individual family structures, and larger economic and political processes. In short, it is a phenomenon where the private and the public spheres collide, requiring structural changes in both arenas to make women's social roles more egalitarian. But complacency and ignorance will ensure that the double day persists. Women are generally unaware of their rights as workers or reluctant to give up their roles in the domestic sphere. Mass media outlets continue to promote women as mothers and housewives. And the State has paid little attention to the influx of women as members of the economically active population.

Internal documents at SOS-Corpo reveal that during the IX Encontro Nacional Feminista (Ninth National Feminist Meeting) held in early September of 1987, appeals were made to address the needs of black and rural women. Subsequently, in September of the following year, a conference was held on women and work entitled A Dupla Jornada de Trabalho (The Double Work Day) in Jaboatão, PE – a city outside Recife. With financial support from OXFAM, the Ford Foundation and UNICEF, the conference was

sponsored by the Centro de Estudo e Ação Social (CEAS, Center for Study and Social Action) and SOS-Corpo. The Conference arose from SOS-Corpo's history of working with women residing in rural areas and those women working in the agricultural sector in Pernambuco. The video Dupla Jornada (Double Day, 1989) emerged out of this conference.

The video itself incorporates two documentary functions. In one sense, it is an historical record of the proceedings at the conference, with images of women participating in group reflection sessions, listening to presentations, and acting in dramatic skits. In another sense, the video serves as a platform for women agricultural workers to encourage other women agricultural workers to demand labor rights and it lobbies for a more egalitarian distribution of domestic chores. As is the case with Denise, the video develops a more sophisticated style. There are dissolve transitions rather than abrupt cuts and the quality of the image has improved. The colors are more saturated and image edges are much sharper. These improvements are likely due to advances in post-production video technology (i.e. editing, sound mixing, and dubbing equipment) and increased experience with video production. The documentary itself is part of a larger campaign. SOS-Corpo produced a 38-page brochure on the double day to be shared with other women's groups in the region. SOS-Corpo's objective was to encourage women to construct new social identities and offer an alternative approach to discussing the double day, taking into account the pedagogical practices of feminist groups.¹²⁷

But the video reveals that there is much more to the matter of having to complete a full shift at home after working a full day in the fields. The images and interviews in this

¹²⁷ CEAS / SOS-Corpo, "Encontro de Mulheres Sobre a Dupla Jornada de Trabalho," (Recife: SOS-Corpo, 1988), 13, 32.

video seek to valorize women as an autonomous labor force and encourage women to separate feminine identity and the domestic sphere. An array of images show women as constant laborers. There are images of women working in the countryside that segue into women doing a number of domestic chores (e.g. sewing, cleaning, preparing food, etc.) while their children eat and their husbands sit. Additional images show women working in sugarcane fields, women washing clothes, and men putting loads on the backs of horses. The effect of these images is to compare the similarities and differences in men's and women's labor. While cutting and stacking sugar cane is similar to stacking wood on the back of a horse, the men are not shown doing additional domestic work.

These images are overlaid with an aural quilt of women's voices. Different women, in a heterodiegetic, asynchronous parallel visual and aural space, critique the way they have been educated and call for socializing their children differently in order to break this cycle. But there is some doubt that social roles will change any time soon. Individual women's voices are heard, but there are relatively few tightly-framed close-up interviews. This underscores the fact that women's labor is not an individual issue. Rather, women are an important collective force in society whose social identities should not be limited by a common obligation to the domestic sphere.

A number of reasons are provided to explain the existence of the double day. Husbands or male partners refuse or resist helping at home. Following in their fathers' footsteps, sons are taught that they are not responsible for domestic chores. When children are asked to contribute to maintaining an orderly household, the daughters are the ones who sweep the floors, wash the clothes, and fetch water. But the conversations with rural agricultural women reveal that an important factor leading to the double day in

rural areas of Pernambuco is a fear on the part of the women of losing their feminine identity by giving up their domestic chores.

There are important questions not addressed in the video. Why should the general public care about women and the double day? What do private disputes between family members over who washes the dishes or takes out the trash have anything to do with the public sphere? Simply stated, a larger sociopolitical crisis (women needing to enter the paid labor force) results in pressures placed on the private sphere (completion of domestic chores), which leads back to the ability to participate in the public sphere. If a woman has some time each day to engage in activities that are for herself, be they relaxing, sleeping, watching TV, or reading a book, this has an impact on the nature and degree to which she can participate in public life. Considering, for instance, the high rates of illiteracy among women and girls in rural areas of Brazil, perhaps some amount of personal time could be dedicated to participating in a literacy program. And, recall that before 1989, the ability to read was a requirement to vote. So, beyond discussions of difference and equality, the double day is about personhood.

Having secured key (progressive) legal measures in the 1988 Constitution, the goal in the 1990s for SOS-Corpo (as well as other women's organizations) was to protect acquired rights, hold local, regional and national government accountable to their own agreements, and continue their efforts to increase women's reproductive and healthcare rights. Notwithstanding new economic crises brought about by the Plano Collor, SOS-Corpo continued producing audiovisual materials that responded to the key issues arising from tensions between the women's movement and the state.

At this juncture, the organization's audiovisual works were generally longer, closer to 25 minutes as opposed to the shorter segments of "Transas do Corpo." This reflects a shift in how the videos became a part of their outreach work. There were also fewer videos produced. This can be attributed in part to a shift in focus of international funding agencies such as the MacArthur Foundation. Once democracy was ostensibly re-introduced to Brazil, the focus of attention shifted to other areas of the world, such as regions affected by the then-recent fall of the communism.

The general professionalization of the women's movements in Brazil saw SOS-Corpo become less active in grassroots mobilizing. But despite increased professionalization and the need to respond to international funding agencies, SOS-Corpo continued to respond to women's specific health concerns in their own region such as abnormally high rates of cervical cancer and maternal morbidity and preeclampsia. What is more, their culturally sensitive printed materials and audiovisual work filled in where there were gross acts of negligence and incompetence on the part of the federal government.¹²⁸

The organization became a resource center and guidepost to women's activism in Brazil, with a focus on the Northeast. Video projects were part of specific campaigns and include videos on the abortion debates (Aborto: Desafio da Legalidade, 1995); the realities of rural women living and working in the Brazilian outback (Sertanejas, 1995), a campaign on the prevention of cervical cancer (Quem Faz Sexo, Faz Prevenção, 1995/96), continued calls for access to healthcare (Em busca da saúde, 1993) and a retrospective work on pioneering women activists in the Northeast (Almerinda, 1991).

¹²⁸ A case in point refers to the National Ministry of Health campaign against the spread of STDs and AIDS from 1994 to 1995. The campaign included posters and additional print materials in which an image appeared of an androgynous couple of European ancestry (light hair, fair skin, light-colored eyes). The result was that information in the campaign did not effectively reach the target audience. Tânia Cypriano's film Odô Ya! Vida com AIDS represents an important effort to address Afro-Brazilian communities.

The 1995 documentary on abortion illustrates how SOS-Corpo and its work were shaped in post-Collor, democratic era. The video speaks to growing concerns in the Brazilian women's movement regarding retrocessions in political process. While politicians have voted to guarantee access to voluntary sterilization in the public health system, they voted to suppress text in proposed laws that would guarantee medical assistance in cases of legally permitted abortions.¹²⁹ The documentary on abortion reflects a dedication to the central tenets of SOS-Corpo's work that reproductive rights and women's access to health care were legal and human rights.

Concluding Remarks

In terms of production, those working in film formats as well as video were able to secure production assistance from international organizations and other non-profit groups. In terms of skills and expertise, Eunice Gutman was able to connect with other professionals at Embrafilme. Members of the Lilith Video Collective were able to obtain training in audiovisual production as well as work with others in the field in São Paulo. In terms of production financing, both Eunice Gutman and the Lilith Video Collective were able to secure some funds from government agencies. In the case of Eunice Gutman not only did she have access to production funds from Embrafilme but she also could utilize the projection equipment to screen her works in progress to other potential funders, which is a key resource considering that 16 and 35mm formats require expensive projection equipment for viewing. In São Paulo, the Lilith Video Collective secured funds from the

¹²⁹ The *Jornal da Rede*, a publication from the Rede Nacional Feminista de Saúde e Direitos Reprodutivos, published several articles since 1992 regarding women's reproductive rights and government-sponsored population control. Regarding the case mentioned here, see "Atendimento ao aborto legal é vetado na Câmara," *Jornal da Rede* 2.2 (1994): 6.

State Council on Women's Condition (Conselho Estadual da Condição Feminina, CECF).

However, as a non-governmental organization, SOS-Corpo relied on international funding agencies such as the Ford Foundation and the MacArthur Foundation.

Different audiovisual formats translate into different modes of distribution and exhibition. Given that she worked in film formats (16 and 35mm), Eunice Gutman was able to take advantage of the distribution services provided by Embrafilme. Not only did Embrafilme help send her films to film festivals but they also provided assistance for her to attend the festivals where her works were being screened. This, along with access to an exhibition space in Embrafilme for showing works in progress to potential funders, were vital to the success of Eunice's career as an independent filmmaker. Meanwhile, video formats were generally distributed directly between people either by borrowing or purchasing copies. This is the case for both SOS-Corpo as well as the Lilith Video Collective. Like Eunice, both groups were able to send their videos to festivals that were dedicated exclusively to video production, dedicated to women's audiovisual production, or included video sections within a larger film festival. Although the Lilith Video Collective was able to have their work distributed in São Paulo by the State Council on Women's Condition (CECF), neither the Lilith Video Collective nor SOS-Corpo, both of which worked in video formats, could rely on a state agency such as Embrafilme to distribute their works or send them to national or international festivals.

Different formats also translate into different spaces of exhibition and different populations for reception. Although both film and video were able to be widely screened in film and/or video festivals, the fact that video formats do not require expensive projection equipment allowed for viewing video works in a wider variety of spaces.

Given the relative ease involved in plugging a VCR into a television, videos were shown in homes, during workshops at community centers and even in open-air patios. And, in the case of the Lilith Video Collective, their work was shown on broadcast television to an untold number of viewers.

The differences in exhibition correspond to differences in audiences for reception. Generally speaking, middle and upper class women can afford the price of a ticket to see a film in a mainstream cinema or attend a film festival. In contrast, poor and working-class women do not have the disposable income nor the free time for leisure activities. It is impossible to know for certain who viewed the audiovisual works by Eunice Gutman and the Lilith Video Collective, but SOS-Corpo clearly targeted their works towards less advantaged spectators. Together, women's independent and alternative film and video bridged class, race and regional differences to bring about greater awareness to issues affecting the lives of all women. It is in this that these works effectively contributed to the reshaping of citizenship for women in Brazil.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

As discussed in previous chapters, the works of literature, film and video made the female body a site of political struggle and a point of departure for talking about citizenship. The reflection on abstract concepts related to definitions of citizenship such as the assumed division between the public and private spheres and the notion of a universal subject of rights are eloquently treated in the anthology of short stories by Clarice Lispector and Sonia Coutinho. Both writers' works contributed to a discourse of citizenship in the early 1970s when literature was a key outlet for political expression and a mode of cultural expression to which women had access. As the barriers to women's participation in feature-length filmmaking slowly fell, the films by Ana Carolina Teixeira Soares and Tizuka Yamasaki brought forth into the public sphere questions regarding women's sexuality, gender and sexual identity, race and ethnicity. For both directors, their films served as their mode of activism in an effort to reshape the understandings of brasilidade and the structuring of society.

There are a number of continuities and disjunctions in the representations by these women artists. The sense of fragmentation and disconnection seen in the short stories by Sonia Coutinho and Clarice Lispector is echoed in Ana Carolina's films. Both writers and the filmmaker question the absurdity underlying the prevailing logic of a heteronormative, patriarchal society in which women like Ana Carolina's Felicidade or

Lispector's *Miss Algrave* are held captive to abstract ideals. Meanwhile the films of Tizuka Yamasaki and the independent, alternative audiovisual works present alternative ways of being in Brazil. Yamasaki's films portray women who live their lives according to their own desires. While Ana Carolina's films present subjective reflections on the female experience, Yamasaki's characters actively push against the limits placed before them. In this, Yamasaki's films coincide with works by Eunice Gutman and SOS-Corpo where uncompromising women are presented not as models but as examples of how women can be active agents in defining their own life experiences and shaping the communities in which they live.

The overall movement in the representation of the body by these women writers and filmmakers is one of exclusion or isolation towards inclusion or social engagement. This trajectory of increasing connection to and involvement in the public sphere comes to fruition in women's independent and alternative film and video. As discussed, three key forces allowed for the expansion of women's independent and alternative film and video in Brazil during the 1980s. Political opening with a concomitant revitalized civil society combined with the supportive structures of the state-led film agency Embrafilme and funding from international agencies to allow women outside the monopolized arenas of mainstream media to make claims on the state and motivate new thinking about women's bodies, gender policy and gendered identities.

Where do women's movements stand today? This trajectory of increasing participation and inclusion did not continue smoothly. The fervor seen in social movements began to lose steam after the return to democracy in 1985. This was due to several factors. Once democracy had been restored, there was no longer a common

oppositional discourse against authoritarian, military rule. Bringing an end to the dictatorship had served as a solidifying force among disparate social groups. For women's groups specifically, transition politics had provided an opening for women's voices in political life. But politics returned to being a male domain and preexisting patriarchal barriers were once again erected after José Sarney took office in 1985.¹ Economic difficulties also contributed to the curtailing of social movements' progress. By the late 1980s, Brazil found itself in a deep economic crisis, which prevented the State from pursuing social reforms, including new initiatives in the area of gender policy.² Women's organizations continue to fight for access to health care and the debate on access to abortion continues. As recently as the summer of 2008, Brazil's Congress voted down a measure to decriminalize abortion in the Brazilian Penal Code.

Women cultural producers in the area of audiovisual production faced new challenges in the post 1985-88 period. Plans for the closure of Embrafilme became effective at the end of 1989, resulting in the virtual standstill of the film industry until the early to mid 1990s. Non-governmental organization such as the MacArthur Foundation and the Ford Foundation took greater interest in the shifting sociopolitical landscape of post-Soviet Eastern Europe, resulting in the loss of funds to organizations like SOS-Corpo. Although SOS-Corpo was able to produce a few videos during the 1990s, its ability to initiate new audiovisual projects has been severely hindered.

The downturn in independent and alternative video production comes at a time when forms of media outside the mainstream are increasingly vital. Indeed, the current media landscape in Brazil has remained highly controlled and anti-democratic since the end of

¹ Sonia E. Alvarez, *Engendering Democracy*, 223.

² Ibid.

the military regime in Brazil. A lack of regulation in the 1980s and, specifically a lack of media reform in the 1988 Constitution, has effectively resulted in a private system of communications in Brazil.³

Efforts have been made to reformulate the media landscape in Brazil but they have not resulted in greater democratic responsibility to the Brazilian public. During the period of redemocratization, the television and radio lobby group ABERT prevented social communication from being included in the reforms proposed by the 1988 Constitution.⁴

Ramos observes that pressure groups like ABERT (with great assistance from Globo Organizations) fought to make sure that social communication was the only area to not have a final report presented before the Comissão de Sistematização (Constitutional Commission) and, although a chapter on social communication was included in the final Constitution of 1988, it was “impregnado de absurdos normativos” (impregnated with absurd rules).⁵ Ramos explains that some of these new rules granted the government relative ease to eliminate television and/or radio concessions while making it such that concessions could be indefinitely renewed. He further asserts that the Council on Social Communications was made basically a “decorative auxiliary organ” of the Congress, which he defines as a particularly egregious move to reduce accountability to the Brazilian public.⁶

Since the return to democracy a number of other steps have given shape to the current media landscape. In 1995, a new Cable Law (Lei do Cabo) was proposed. This law, however, also failed to provide for a space for social communication. In 2000,

³ See Murilo César Ramos, “A força de um aparelho,” 57-76.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

GEDIC (Grupo Executivo do Desenvolvimento da Indústria Cinematográfica, the Executive Group for the Development of the Cinematographic Industry) was established to form a regulating agency to be named ANCINAV (Agência Nacional de Cinema e Audiovisual, National Audiovisual and Cinema Agency). But, with a number of members from the Globo Organization bringing pressure against the Lula administration, ANCINAV was reformulated as ANCINE, meaning that the “audiovisual” arena (i.e. television) was left out of the picture.⁷ And in 2004, a measure proposed the creation of the Conselho Federal de Jornalismo (Federal Council on Journalism), which would have overseen the profession and the companies that control journalism and brought about greater responsibility to the Brazilian public. The Brazilian Congress rejected the measure.⁸ Thus, it is unlikely that the current state of an anti-democratic, radically privatized mainstream media will be undone.

The election of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula) to the presidency in 2002 heralded a significant shift in the Brazilian sociopolitical landscape. Despite continuing with a number of economic policies of the previous administration of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the election of Lula as the standard-bearer of the Brazilian Left and a man of humble origins from the Northeast made reality the idea that those previously disenfranchised could become not only full members of Brazilian society but also its leaders. In short, the election of Lula holds an affirmative, symbolic value for a significant proportion of the Brazilian populace.

In a geopolitical space with one of the world’s highest indices of socioeconomic disparity, it seems imperative to continue raising questions about citizenship in Brazil.

⁷ Ramos, “A força de um aparelho,” 71-72.

⁸ Brittos and Bolaño, eds., *Rede Globo*, 13.

While efforts must continue to fight for greater economic and political equity, there are crucial boundaries to citizenship that merit greater critical attention by the legal system in Brazil and the academic community at large. These concern the intersection of race, ethnicity and non-heteronormative sexuality as body-based markers that continue to prevent thousands of Brazilians from being full members of society.

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