DIGITAL SPECTACLES OF VIOLENCE: FILM, TV AND SOCIAL MEDIA ENTANGLEMENTS IN 2010'S BRAZIL

EDUARDO PRADO CARDOSO
UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA (PORTUGAL)

Eduardo Prado Cardoso is a filmmaker and a PhD candidate in Culture Studies at the Catholic University of Portugal. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Audiovisual (2011) from the University of São Paulo, and a Master of Arts in Screenwriting (2017) from the Kino Eyes consortium (Lusófona University, Edinburgh Napier University and Tallinn University). His interests revolve around representations of violence, modernity, digital cultures and mass cultures. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8050-334X

Corresponding author
Eduardo Prado Cardoso
oeduardoprado@gmail.com
Universidade Católica Portuguesa
Faculdade de Ciências Humanas
CECC – Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Cultura
Palma de Cima
1649-023 Lisboa
Portugal

Abstract

The study of cultural industries, in particular the complex manifestations of spectacle, has produced valuable contributions that articulate capitalism, globalization and culture. The revisitation of this legacy, especially in dealing with Latin American phenomena, is this paper's effort. Two case studies that took place in the 2010's, in Brazil, underpin a reflection on mediated crimes in a digitalized, but still inequal society. The first tells of a prisoner's self-recorded video, made in response to TV Globo's news piece about a 2017 massacre; the second examines a reenactment of a 2000 crime that happened on the bridge Rio-Niterói in 2019, and referenced not only a real hijacking, but its film representations (*Bus 174* and *Last Stop 174*). Invoking examples of exceptionality, the article aims at delineating how certain digital spectacles of violence can be understood as direct responses to cultural texts: even though practices of socialization via the internet pose questions of accelerated efficiency (in reaching wider audiences, and updating the meaning of live events), the social and aesthetic performances involving violence retrieve long-standing traditions created by modern institutions.

Keywords Cultural Industries; Spectacle; Violence; Digital Cultures; Late Modernity; Brazilian media; Latin American cultural theory.

There were the usual deaths, yes, those to be expected, people who started off celebrating and ended up killing each other, uncinematic deaths, deaths from the realm of folklore, not modernity: deaths that didn't scare anybody.

Roberto Bolaño, *2666*

Introduction

In times of exponential growth in the practices involving digital tools and networks, acts of violence have not been left out of constant cultural transformations, impacted by mobile and online technologies. In order to approach such events, sometimes it is inevitable to add a complicating factor to the equation: some of the phenomena involving contemporary crimes take place in or make use of platforms such as Facebook – which claim to be "technology companies" only, as a way to distance themselves from the roles of traditional media corporations and therefore refusing "to take responsibilities that come with power" (Dick et al., 2018, p. 64). Precisely because there is a cultural genealogy to the way users and spectators consume violent stories, corporations that nowadays disseminate news and host video content ought to be considered central in the massive circulation of information and culture – but also as heirs of traditional media such as the press, radio, cinema and television.

This paper will analyze two cases that took place in the late 2010's, in Brazil, and which articulate crime and social media in unexpected ways. They speak of discursive and aesthetic negotiations between digital and traditional media – namely film and TV. The first event happened in 2017, in a prison in Alcaçuz, Rio Grande do Norte: an inmate took his own cellphone to record a video in response to a 10-minute piece aired by TV Globo's *Fantástico*, which narrated, in traditional journalistic fashion, a massacre that had taken place behind bars. The prisoner, on his turn, employed techniques such as voice over narration and the camera's subjective point of view with the

goal of construing a violent rhetoric – when uploaded on YouTube, the video met furious commentators that made clear how the televisual language of passive revolt now gives way to a dangerous consumption of digital technologies, if not unfiltered. The second case occurred in 2019, on the Rio-Niterói bridge, in Rio de Janeiro. A young man held a bus hostage to imitate what he had watched in the "Bus 174 film". This infamous case from 2000, which turned into a documentary and a fiction film – José Padilha's *Bus 174* (2002) and Bruno Barreto's *Last Stop 174* (2008) presented a tragic ending that, almost two decades later, the police authorities would not want to repeat. The 2019 hijacker was killed at daylight – and his desire to be watched live on the hostages' cellphones allow for a reflection about the influence of violent representations in areas where lies an institutional void, as cultural criminologists would say.

Given the entanglements between historical and social conditions, economic developments and cultural industries that these case studies present, it will prove to be illuminating to draw inspiration from some Latin American theorists who, already in the 1980's and 1990's, were concerned with the ways in which mass communication was, on one hand, eclipsing roles performed by the State, and on the other, forging singularities and national identities. Martín-Barbero, García Canclini, Ortiz, Sarlo and Yúdice will be present in this reflection for their critique to foundations of the late modernity in Latin America, and cultural processes that still seriously impact the way in which violence is massively reproduced, even if to do that creators and audiences might now use their mobile phones and computers. A look into the conversations between digitalized violent content and practices from film and TV will hopefully serve two purposes: the first is to steer away from overly optimist takes on technology and social media. Whatever specificities drive and make up connected media are to be considered also in very disadvantaged areas that expose the sometimes-invisible dynamics in society. The second purpose, and closely linked to this idea, is to understand long-term representational and cultural traditions that

perpetuate inequalities, which at one point were only vehiculated by newspapers, shows and films, but now also are shared in digital, online spaces.

Cultural industries as keys to understanding the late modernity

Contemporary manifestations of violence via social media demand interpretations in line with the phenomenal speed and complexity observed in our late modernity, when productions and reproductions of criminal acts intertwine through views, clicks and shareable screens. Analyzing digital objects is a challenge that other researchers have brought up with great concern in light of how cultural criticism might mirror built-in media obsolescence[1] – useful for two years or so, but easily discarded if broader discussions cannot be accomplished. David Bell, for example, says that "theory can't stand still in the fast-moving network society, and the sheer complexity and changeability of the world today almost inevitably works against any attempt to produce a grand narrative that can sum it all up" (Bell, 2007, p. 90). In evoking Lyotard's term, the cultural studies professor touches on the necessary stance that academia needs to have towards the very unstable nature of its analytical objects. Manuel Castells also ponders on the matter: "The speed of transformation has made it difficult for scholarly research to follow the pace of change with an adequate supply of empirical studies on the whys and wherefores of the internet-based economy and society" (Castells, 2001, p. 3). This hardship cannot be ignored, at the same time that it offers the chance for researchers to actively seek the role of curators in the examination of 21st century events and artifacts.

I will argue that the choice for cultural industries as a theoretical tool might prove to be a useful filter to face the blinding lights emanating from digital representations, in particular the violent ones. That is for the necessary read into power relations that constitute the history of creative and cultural industries. In fact, since their ambivalences reflect the iniquities found in contemporary capitalist societies (Hesmondhalgh, 2002/2013, p. 7), the mirror effect between object of study and critical thinking that was mentioned before can hopefully adapt form and content in original ways. One very important layer of interpretation, thus, has to do with widening the scope to better reflect political implications that affect the digital phenomena. Historical context ought to be paired with technological materiality in the attempt to decipher how our societies have created deep-rooted, grotesque stigmas relating to violence – that should avoid a good share of technological determinism, as if interconnected mobile phones have suddenly reinvented storytelling. Another interesting aspect about resorting to the cultural industries as points of reference in media history and cultural analysis is that, as much outdated that some excerpts before the turn of the century might read nowadays, many other cited writings will actually sound timely and current, the reason being their interest in structural changes. A good example of this is the critique by Brazilian thinkers on globalization around the 1990's: even contrasted to modes of production and reception that are very particular to our times (namely how social media shapes them), the contributions by Octavio Ianni (1992/2013) and Milton Santos (2001) had the merit of highlighting how economic forces end up normalizing aspects in culture and society to the detriment of certain populations. In present digitalized practices, the mere mention to "big techs" asks for at least a consideration on how the global/local pairing acts in the case study presented. In this instance, the Brazilian representations that happened or wished to happen via YouTube and WhatsApp call for a critique on the corporations which allow or even stimulate the sharing of violent stories. In that

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1   "The purposeful creation of products that go out of date quickly to assure new sales" (Reed, 2014, p. 48). For a different take on the meaning of obsolescence in media theory, see Elsaesser (2016). Such rapid technological transformations also require traditional mass media institutions to re-invent themselves (Rosenbaum, 2008, p. 175), as the present paper shall demonstrate.

sense, late modernity's radical stage of capitalism, by which platforms like Google and Facebook collect uncountable data, simply accelerated a process denounced long before.

Spectacles and mass media

If one of the avenues of interpretation about modernity leads to cultural industries, that is because cultural criticism has perceived how, in the age of consumerism and planned obsolescence, production and consumption of culture were crucial to the capitalist engine – to the point that the term "culture industry", which titles one of Adorno and Horkheimer's chapter in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944/2016), managed to encapsulate the labor involved in manipulating and selling illusions. All of that in an era that witnessed the destructive contradictions of modern societies, killing millions in two world wars. For the authors, then, it was first and foremost a political duty to discuss how monstrous were the limits of the cultural machinery, telling stories with ulterior motives. So much so that the idea of engagement between spectators and the work of art gets reduced to acts of unending hunger:

> The culture industry perpetually cheats its consumers of what it perpetually promises. The promissory note which, with its plots and staging, it draws on pleasure is endlessly prolonged; the promise, which is actually all the spectacle consists of, is illusory: all it actually confirms is that the real point will never be reached, that the diner must be satisfied with the menu. (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944/2016, p. 133)

An analogy to the senses comes in handy to associate culture to consumerism, aligning structures of work force to what the employees devour at home, in terms of stories and shows. In this regard, the concept of spectacle becomes useful in suggesting power mechanics that, to that point, had yet to be outlined with such vigor. The contribution by Guy Debord (1967/2005) would further cement the view on cultural representations as well-thought, ideologized projects, rather

than "mere visual deception produced by mass-media technologies" (Debord, 1967/2005, p. 7). Important as they are in impacting many of the direct sources this paper will engage with (in speaking of Latin American theorists of culture and media), I hesitate to strictly characterize the current phenomena as spectacles with the same connotation of the mentioned works. Firstly, there is a long history of mass media consumption way after they were published, which, by itself, and for more specific contexts (the Brazilian one) gives way to incredibly nuanced problematics, that have to do with the very idea of modernity in a colonized country. Secondly, with digital practices, audiences are partaking in models that blur certain traditional roles of producer and consumer. To speak of a "culture industry" after digitalization presupposes a certain attunement to the hybrid practices and technologies (see the way in which a computer screen can serve to read or to watch content), positioning the internet industries as crucial players in the production, distribution and exhibition of cultural texts. That being said, and the reason why it is still relevant to punctuate such seminal books, there might have been a movement of vertical disintegration in communication, but not accompanied by democratic disintermediation (Hesmondhalgh, 2002/2013, p. 344), which in the Latin American cases manifested in histories of centering power through authoritarian rule, monopolies, and political agreements with the USA. In other words, it is still highly valuable to assess the influence of the handful of big players in the cultural businesses, but now we also have to consider how the social media platforms have altered the sharing of information to a point of no return.

A pertinent understanding of spectacle comes from criminologist Phil Carney, to whom "audiences not only exercise agency and entrain desire in the way that they receive the performances of culture, but they also actively transform them in their own performances of everyday life" (Carney, 2010, p. 29). This consideration is important not only because the digital events that I will retrieve have a good dose of active energy, rather than passive – but also, to perceive how what cultural criminology coined as loops and spirals in

crime representation comprise a type of interaction between spectators and content that shows how well-versed in or domesticized by representations we have become. Maybe Debord's bold statement that representations already consti-tute a "concrete inversion of life" (Debord, 1967/2005, p. 7), or Baudrillard's claim that not even representations make up late modern societies, but rather simulations (1981/1994), are apt to describe how extreme (and sometimes emptied of meaning) the relations between mass media stories and their audiences have turned into. However, specificities that Latin American theorists have been able to spot as major players in the making of mass-mediated content might prove to be even more adequate to this article's purpose.

Latin american readings on modernity and cultural industries

Retrieving Debord's and Baudrillard's prescient descriptions about the loss of meaning and truth in postmodern specta-cles, one can imagine how researchers in the Global South were impacted by novel ideas in cultural analysis, when ac-celerated problems of capitalism were hitting the globe in different temporalities. To speak of spectacles and cultural industries, for a lot of them, required, again, to invest in a late modernity or postmodernity critique[2]. The Latin American experiences offer fascinating correspondence to many of the observations about decentralization and hybridization of postmodern times in Europe and the USA – precisely because the ideas of modernity and modernization in Latin America

were always charged with contradictions[3]. It is true that we need to problematize the notion that heterogeneity, disconti-nuities, and miscegenation in the continent simply foreshad-owed postmodernity in the Euro-North American context (Yúdice, 1991, p. 88). Still, postmodernism in Latin America as an *avant la lettre* concept or as a contemporary symptom is prevalent in the cultural studies in the region. Nelly Richard, for example, spots a crisis in authority and centrality that affects the hegemonic academic production, to finally find in Latin America's historical center/periphery relation a universal ob-ject of study (Richard, 1992, p. 59). Ronaldo Munck, referring to the 1990's in Latin American territories, recognizes a dem-ocratic disenchantment in accordance with a postmodern ambiguity, typical of transitional times (Munck, 2000, p. 197).

The Brazilian situation, when it comes to the intellectual de-bate about communication and culture, also provided plenty of productions to advance the late modernity critique. Renato Ortiz, by using objects from the mass media and industries of culture – as, he says, "My choice is not by chance. The media are constituents of modernity." (Ortiz, 2009, p. 120) – points out to how the arts and culture industries relations in Latin America, and particularly in Brazil, could be seen as postmod-ern, insofar as a "modern stage" in which the arts dictated the norms of cultural production never existed (Ortiz, 2009, p. 123). Teixeira Coelho suggests that, in order to understand the floating, mobile cultures of today, a relational, postmod-ern, and inclusive approach is necessary, abandoning dual-isms and fixed truths (Coelho, 2008). Octavio Ianni speaks

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2   Although agreeing with Fornäs that *late modernity* is probably more adequate to express the tensions of the modern present, for *postmodern* would imply the overcoming of structures already observed in the Age of Reason (Fornäs, 1995, p. 36), it is also important to consider *post* as a reflexive tool. According to Canclini, "The postmodern relativization of all fundamentalism or evolutionism facilitates revision of the separation between the cultured, the popular, and the mass-based, upon which modernity still attempts to base itself" (Canclini, 1995, p. 9). In that way, this paper recruits the *late* and *post* modern terms to read more recent practices (digital and connected) as relational to modern experiences – if they have continued or broken those traditions, it is yet to be discovered.

3   Just to be clear: virtually, all "modern projects" were always bound to be incomplete, and their utopias or prescriptions ended up characteriz-ing sets of contradictions in different societies. The issue to be considered here resides in the heterogeneous temporalities found in modern Brazil and Latin America, manifesting themselves nowadays in socio-economic disparities, but also audiovisual ones – in modes of access or self-representation. Appadurai (1996) is a reference to help us never lose sight of the inherent dualisms that modernity in the Global South posed since colonization and that encountered new tensions in globalized times.

of a fluctuation and deterritorialization in contemporary Brazil but attributing more weight to how the cultural industries are inexorably tied to the global consumption chains (Ianni, 1992/2013). Milton Santos' book (2001) theorizes consumption fables, and how, in globalized times, they forge univocal discourses related to money and ascension in Brazil[4].

Two works, in particular, present optimal tools to understanding how cultural industries and mass communication feature singularities in contemporary Latin America: the first is Jesús Martín-Barbero's *De los medios a las mediaciones: Comunicación, cultura y hegemonía*, originally published in 1987 (English version: *Communication, Culture and Hegemony: From the Media to Mediations*). With a cultural studies approach, the book avoids technological and ideological determinisms (Martín-Barbero, 1987/2006, p. 232), to understand cultural processes (such as telenovelas[5] or radio shows) as articulations between communicational practices and social movements. The author emphasizes the ambiguities that new technologies bring to ideas of Latin American identity, as well as attempts to resist to homogenization, making evident a lot of tensions in the late modernity. The second is Néstor García Canclini's *Culturas híbridas – estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad* (English title: *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*), published in 1990, a look into several divergences between what is offered and what is received in contemporary communication. Invoking concepts such as deterritorialization and oblique powers – which rendered obsolete vertical and bipolar

mappings of culture (Canclini, 1990/2003, p. 345), the Argentine Mexican theorist goes along with Martín-Barbero in the sense that his analysis of the cultures of the masses escapes a Manichaean view of the power structures and its technologies. A certain hybridity in processes that put together highbrow and popular artifacts have generated, according to him, new modes of massive circulation, reception, and appropriation in Latin America – a good example is the relation between horror tales and the true crime TV shows (Canclini, 1990/2003, p. 258-259). More than an ode to regional idiosyncrasies, this topic touches on the ontology of violence discussed by Walter Benjamin (1921/2013, pp. 131, 147), to whom the admiration for the "great criminals" exposed the very nature of the law and the State in modernity[6]. Taking on this idea that cultural manifestations from the "surface" indicate tensions that base society, this paper sees potential in finding the perpetual representations of violence in late modern times as good indicators of the sociopolitical arrangements in Brazilian culture, particularly when the selected case studies raise law-breaking aspects, for they tell of crimes, but also because now dispossessed masses take on the role of representing, through mobiles and the internet.

An aspect that deserves our attention with regard to redefinitions of contemporary societies and which fundaments many works that deal with the late modernity has to do with the role of the State and how it has been changing – especially thanks to the communication industries developments and modes of reception. Octavio Ianni attributes the debilitation of the

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4   While someone like Jameson (1991/1997) employs the terms late modernity and postmodernism as base and superstructure, and therefore goes deep into the cultural manifestations he considers proper of a disruptive modernity, Santos and Ianni elect economic macrostructures as the crucial aspects to reveal contemporary times. Though the 1990's play a huge role in this critique of power for a certain disenchantment in politics typical of its time, with special attention to the influence of mass media (Beverley et al., 1995, p. 5), to speak of the developments in Brazilian capitalism is to address the social strife that directly links to the violent cases demonstrated here.

5   "Brazilian telenovelas are prime-time soaps broadcast Monday through Saturday on commercial television. Unlike daytime soap operas, telenovelas have clear narrative beginnings and endings, with each story typically lasting from six to eight months." (Hamburger, 2014, p. 419).

6   In fact, retellings of crimes are part and parcel of the modern experience in the cities. As Stella Martini writes, "The crime and its mythologies and narratives have a large history. The news, which is itself an account, retrieves, with the crime coverage, marks of literary genres and their cultural memory" (Martini, 2019, p. 272); Martín-Barbero also ponders on how the serials were able to encapsulate the fears of living in modern societies (1987/2006, p. 191).

nation state[7] to the new morphology of global societies, for which national matters fight with many other interests (Ianni, 1992/2013, pp. 42-43). Beatriz Sarlo, when describing the monumental impact of the television phenomenon in Argentina, highlights how, beyond a technical achievement, the live TV shows founded the credibility of its vehicle in light of the growing opacity of other institutions. According to the author,

> Invested with the authority that churches, parties and schools have lost, the television resonated the voice of a truth which everyone could quickly apprehend. The televisual epistemology is, in that sense, as realist as populist, and subordinated all the paradigms of knowledge transmission known by the lettered culture to a demolishing and pragmatic critique (Sarlo, 1994/1997, pp. 75-76).

This observation could very well apply to modes of reception of other media in recent times, given the way they support ever more important socializations in complex, fragmented societies[8]. When it comes to the issue of representations of violence, understanding this institutional crisis is key. Cultural criminologist Mike Presdee uses a similar illustration to build his argument about intricate relations between crime and the aesthetics of violence: for him, postmodern societies not only saw the "fixed and authentic" losing meaning (Presdee, 2000/2005, p. 44), but also "the notions of Court, Church and State have been superseded by the mediated avenues of mass culture" (Presdee, 2000/2005, p. 46). In view of the social disarray detected by the aforementioned authors, what went to be known as "cultural criminology" should offer us great tools to the linking of a postmodernity analysis that encompasses both mediated acts of violence and the acts of

violence themselves. As the authors of *Cultural Criminology – An Invitation* explain,

> In late modernity the tectonic plates of gross inequality and widespread social stigmatization continue to grind below the social surface, erupting endemically in crime and disorder, more dramatically in riots, terrorism, and the 'reconnaissance battles' (Bauman, 2005) associated with contemporary warfare. In this world of dizzying instability and insecurity, exclusionary processes continue and accelerate, pushed along by mediated representation and global fluidity. (…) Here, crime and deviance mirror the disorder of the everyday (Ferrell et al., 2008, p. 53).

Considering such an instability in the cultural practices dedicated to producing and reproducing stories of true crime, we shall see if the cases involving murders are actually quite exceptional or if they tell of a normalization of violence, as cultural criminology suggests. Televisual spectacles of violence, as many of the 1990's authors in Latin America studied, ingrained the cultural imagination in such a way that both reception (their popular success) and the financial schemes that still support the making of those shows have to be considered when analyzing culture. When one transfers Benjamin's figure of the great criminal as the quintessential, spectacle-hungry modern figure to the late modern arrangement of Latin America, in which crime stories are profoundly indebted to social aspects typical of new democracies and colonized countries, a perfect storm is formed: unequal societies with a history of mass-distributed gory news suddenly present quick methods to not only watch but also create and distribute violent content – thereby, a word

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7   To what Milton Santos offers a different view: instead of proclaiming the end of *grand récits*, we should look into how the consumerist fables are constituents of an active, pervasive ideology (2001, p. 19).

8   In that sense, I slightly disagree with Hesmondhalgh in that the internet industries belong to the information sector only (2002/2013, p. 19), as the recent practices to watch films, listen to music and read the news have all been subjected to digitalization – even if access to the population is far from equal in Brazil, the growing importance the internet has been gaining (including within poorer segments of society) is comparable to this new populist epistemology Sarlo refers to, based on what is perceived as realistic and easily accessible.

on how the digitalities of the 21st century have been manifesting in that regard is needed.

The digital turn, violence and algorithms

Sherry Turkle was not alone when she suggested that, in the end of the 20th century, a postmodern phenomenon was in action vis-à-vis identity formations, after detecting a considerable change in historical, technological, and cultural levels: opposing linear, logic and hierarchical views about reality, computational experiences were making tangible the decentered, fluid, nonlinear and opaque (Turkle, 1995/1997, p. 23) realms. Such perception was shared, with different emphases, by theorists like Jean-François Lyotard, whose *La Condition Postmoderne* (*The Postmodern Condition*), first published in 1979, established new grounds to discuss the contemporaneity. For him, the sinking of grand narratives (forged by ideologies, institutions) was, indeed, linked to times of multiplication by informational machines (Lyotard, 1979/1989, p. 13), when legitimizing the truth would be less important than prescribing something (Lyotard, 1979/1989, p. 72), when the issue of testimony would be permeated by technique (Lyotard, 1979/1989, p. 87). In other words, computational practices that Turkle could only see in the late 90's as rising phenomena were investing in modes of perception that nowadays operate in more radical terms[9]; modernity as it was conceived by civilizational and communicational projects has given birth to new consumption and cultural practices that will be my goal to examine. Gilles Lipovetsky noticed how the tools used to dealing with the real, in urbanistic, technological, social terms, were rapidly changing as well – so much so that they would unlock whatever fixed meaning the "real" could have had (Lipovetsky, 1983/1989, p. 70). That idea also has a strong resonance with computational massification. The philosopher himself posed that the

culture of the masses, and not the isms (vanguardist movements) paved the way to the greatest cultural revolution in modernity (Lipovetsky, 1983/1989, p. 79), which he ended up coining first as the "era of emptiness", and later the "hypermodern times" (2004). This mapping serves the purpose of linking the digital turn to a broader transformation observed in late modern times, including that of contesting authorities and grand narratives. When Lister et al. assert that "New media can carry a sense of being the technological correlative of postmodern thought. Speed, flexibility, digitality, hypertextuality have all been posited as characteristic both of new media and of postmodernity" (2003/2009, p. 179), they contextualize digital practices over a backdrop this paper has introduced via authors that were critics to modernity. The characteristics mentioned, I would argue, have been fundamental to invoke many feelings in creators and audiences, within a specter ranging from utopian expectations (erasing the role of gatekeepers to share whatever is desired) to dystopian fears (for which a few businesses collect data to efface local cultures) and maybe cannot even make justice to the complexity of recent digital production involving violence.

Digital practices showing violence, I will try to dissect, present two main facets. One, lying deep down, is an accrual of historical, political, economic sediments. Such figure of speech risks taking historical change as a crystallized paradigm, which a media archaeology approach would frown upon (Elsaesser, 2016, p. 73), but instead of suggesting ruptures in modern thinking, it is possible to interpret the impact of those sediments in how the "other facet" of our events is culturally construed, i.e., the material one, on the surface. That is mainly for the way in which a certain violence has been normalized in cultural texts and how algorithmic technologies operate: effectively referencing collected data to predict patterns and

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9   Anthony Giddens proposed that we have not been moved out of modernity, but rather, are going precisely through its most radical stage (Giddens, 1990/1991, p. 50). Also weighing on the postmodernity debate, Jürgen Habermas points to, among others, an intellectual and humanistic danger in "abandoning" the project of modernity (Habermas, 1981, p. 9).

presenting their interfaces as accessible, efficient and neutral. In that sense, it is paramount to think of the engines behind Facebook and YouTube and their attempt to build a pervasive and objective façade, something that inescapably returns to the reflections about the business nature of a handful of North American companies concentrating so much power, as "this articulation of the algorithm is just as crucial to its social life as its material design and its economic obligations" (Gillespie, 2014, p. 179). *Platform Society* (2018) adds a layer with political undertones to this reflection by pointing out to how companies like Facebook and Google simultaneously use personal information from their users with commercial intent (Dijck et al., 2018, p. 10), and refuse to be held accountable as proper news media (Dijck et al., 2018, p. 64). In some sense, what the next case studies present, in form and content, is a complicated relation of power that goes beyond the replacement of gatekeepers, one reason being precisely the application of such algorithms. Mixing different media languages (and explicitly invoking modern institutions), the events somehow resort to highly efficient material tools and discourses to, sadly, perpetuate inequalities and stigmas once told by television and cinema.

The hole in the screen

As a response to a news piece vehiculated by TV Globo, a prisoner in Alcaçuz, Rio Grande do Norte, recorded a video narrating what had occurred that week in the massacre behind the penitentiary's walls. An audiovisual document that stirs other gang members and the revolted YouTube commentators, the video actually proposes a clear blow in the authority figure of the televisual discourse, so prevalent and rarely contested in Brazil. Such defiance in this direct, aggressive approach takes form, particularly, in a scene that slowly moves toward a hole in the wall of the prison and serves as evidence of a criminal war that does not and cannot be made visible by traditional media.

When the Sunday variety show *Fantástico* aired its 10-minute report about the Alcaçuz massacre on January 22, Facebook and WhatsApp had already reached an important audience with first-person accounts of the killings. That goes to show how television primetime journalism has had to reposition its primacy of information, since its liveness (once a distinct asset) struggles to keep up with the urgency of social media[10]. However, the televisual discourse relies on a mix of voices (Machado, 1997/2014, p. 268), which means that, by definition, a journalistic approach *can* offer itself as a further representation of the truth with a collage of different views about the same phenomenon. This becomes evident with *Fantástico*'s portrait of the massacre, incorporating the following spokespersons: the anchors, presenting an overview of the incident; the reporter, who collects the data, attributes important names as the heads of criminal groups, sets the serious tone with his narration, goes in loco as a witness, and glues together all the discourses; the police staff and authorities related to the penitentiary system; and last but not least, the report (titled *Amidst the chaos in Alcaçuz, exclusive scenes show armed inmates*, my translation, in the online version) assimilates videos shot by unknown authors, mainly taken by the prisoners themselves, to guarantee more veracity to the whole.

The curatorship television proposes in the 21st century comes in handy to challenge the idea that whatever comes first is true or more important. The journalist working on the Alcaçuz reportage made sure to point to overarching structures, reasons for the failure of prisons in Brazil, particularly in the North and Northeast regions, where other cases of beheadings and mass murders took place in recent years. From the physical, topographic characteristics that might explain why the sandy grounds of Alcaçuz facilitate the smuggling of guns and smartphones, to corrupted prison employees, the report does not seem to be focused on an immediate violence spectacle. I

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10   Assimilating live streaming right from the newsroom is an alternative used by journalists that Kalianny de Medeiros (2018) studied for her dissertation in the context of the riots inside Alcaçuz that resulted in the January 2017 massacre.

would argue that this is calculated and serves a construct that brings an authoritative piece of truth to the fore. Assuming itself as part of an ideal, level-headed debate about public security, the production exhibits traces of spectacle, still. From the dramatic, tense music theme that adorns the images, to the aerial shots capturing prisoners listening to music and chilling outside, the TV news does build a story that fascinates its audience by outrage or fear. Not to mention that *Fantástico*, by its entertainment nature, jumps from one subject to another with ease and nonchalance, say it from the Alcaçuz massacre to the death of a Supreme Court judge, to an interview with actors from a comedic film.

The *far from sight* concept that for decades approximated spectacle and spectators through the TV screen has gained new meanings with the way mobiles – and, of course, the internet, promote information and audiovisuality. *Distance* alludes to the physical barriers imposed by technology but also to that figure of authority mentioned before, inferring a business model anchored on verticality and monopoly of knowledge. The video analyzed here was uploaded on the online platform YouTube two days after the airing of *Fantástico's* coverage, on January 24, 2017, and available until 2021. An identical video was uploaded by another account and is still live, with less views[11]. Contrasting the limitations of the TV piece, when the reporter illustrates his retelling of events facing the actual bars of Alcaçuz, the prisoner who shot the video gives a testimony from the guts of the place where everything happened. Whilst narrating what caused the killings, who perpetrated them and the role of the author of the video in murdering men in the name of PCC (*Primeiro Comando da Capital*), it is possible to see a geographic construction that reaffirms his verbal indications. The locations (cell blocks, the sector's interiors) go along with descriptions of the timeline of events ("here we killed them", "they came from that block", "they fell from the roof"), plus personal comments that give away the confrontational sentiment of the video ("they used

to threaten us", "we butchered them", "they can't with us", "we're warriors"). The video opens with a clear intertextual discourse (the prisoner literally calls out *Fantástico*, saying the present and *real* video will disprove what TV has aired), suggesting that the linguistic mechanisms in play, although direct and apparently mediated by technology of poor quality, are complex. The culturally produced narrator is first a consumer of the videos he watches and now shares via social media. Therefore, one can notice how stating the truth, even when in loco, is a nuanced process. In a state of profusion of information, counter-facts and discourse wars, showing hard facts through visuals is not enough, and the representation seeks approval by showing *and* saying what is genuine. In that sense, the more graphic, the better. The criminal resorts to slangs to point at the human remains he shoots and offers thorough proof that what happened is a product of his own hands. As a witness *and* teller of what happened, the murderer claims not only the ruling over Alcaçuz, but over history.

It is not a coincidence that the author of the video does not show his own face at any moment. In some sense, that is not needed, neither to have his name revealed. Not necessarily afraid of retaliations by the police (since the criminal system itself could be the one to punish him harder), it looks like the process of self-representation mixes up person and object. Christian Godoi (2006) wrote about the quality of objectification in the context of mobile phone usage, and the very nature of the camera used here should not be ignored. Before being a device with a camera, the smartphone is an index of power and freedom inside the prison. A communication tool, it works to make criminal connections, contact the family and withstand the days spent in cloister. Functioning in the regular society as a differentiator (according to model, year of release, brand) like any other consumption item, inside the penitentiary the (illegal) smartphone gains this possibility of articulating experiences of a new self. However, the process of objectification, or how the avatars and self-images are dehumanized and devalued, is still

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11   Retrieved in June 2022.

very much alive – and with worse consequences: one of the prisoner's few chances is to socialize through representation, since the majority of society does not want or need to have face-to-face contact with the criminals.

Part of the modus operandi of criminal organizations in Brazil – particularly PCC, is that they live off criminal activities, of course, but also by monthly subscriptions paid by their members[12], in another overlapping of business models and cultural consumption. Producing and sharing a video like the one analyzed here needs to be considered as a vehicle to a message – to both the opponent's side (*Sindicato RN*) and to those in between (potential criminals), reassuring that the power of the entity is positive for the mob mentality and works on a propaganda style. What are, then, the connections between the type of portrayal and its intended audience? Indeed, the implications of referencing *Fantástico* by name do touch on the TV/internet issues; the author is, no doubt, recruiting new warriors and intimidating the other gang. But there is a third factor that can be examined further, specifically its traces left online. That is the dimension of YouTube viewership. Although profiles are not completely verifiable, it is possible to spot patterns when it comes to the general response in the comments section. Amassing 2,5 million views, the video was not under any type of age restriction guidance, which means that any of the male commentators that signed up with their Google accounts might even be underage. Judging by their pictures, they were young men; by their language, they were Brazilian. In terms of content, the written pieces were filled with hatred and outrage. A minority made fun of the video, and virtually none started any type of debate or criticism on YouTube for hosting this

type of production. In fact, even in revolt, the commentators seemed to rejoice in the act of having the space to practice verbal offenses[13]. Some call for another Carandiru, an emblematic massacre that took place in São Paulo, when 111 prisoners were shot down by the police. Others suggested the criminals should have been burnt alive; capital punishment was not uncommon to read between the lines and literally; one could even spot acronyms standing for other criminal syndicates among the posts (referencing *Comando Vermelho*, from Rio de Janeiro, for instance). The overall enraged feeling was translated into discourse mostly by direct conversations with the author of the video, employing the second-person singular or plural: "the army should go over there and start another massacre", "we're here waiting for another round, don't waste any time, just kill each other, all of you!". Included in the many forms of affronting the criminals (more than just the author of the video, or PCC), one could even find racist remarks, calling them "monkeys", without any kind of censoring by the website. Above all, the comments mirror the aggressiveness promoted by a convict that was just involved in the killing of a dozen. Arguably, much of the "bravery" shown online would not easily translate into a real-life type of confrontation, but I want to stress here that the video also does not equal the event. For that matter, everything the criminal mentioned could be fantasy and lies. That is why the choices in representation and the way they affect people are absolutely revealing of on and off-screen negotiations, which combine a social facet (the collective indignation with the security policies; a general fear of being mugged; the distrust in the police; racist and colonial mindsets) with a cultural one (rooted in negative expressions about poor classes in general or plain erasure

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12   According to specialists Bruno Paes Manso and Camila Nunes Dias, who studied the PCC organization for almost two decades, their model can be compared to a brotherhood, a church or a business, depending on the perspective to be adopted (Veiga, 2018). Still, a decentralized and horizontalized structure is also described in their book (Manso & Dias, 2018, 102). The anthropological take of Biondi (2010) has more resonance on these postmodern qualities of PCC's power, saying the entity can be understood as a flow: circumstantial and in movement (p. 220).

13   The platform's architecture aims at fostering this space for interaction. As a result, in the case of violence spectatorship, "by not only mediating existing networks but also brokering new networks, antisocial media aggregate transgressors, and in doing so, provide them with a platform for affirming their illicit, and harmful behaviours" (Wood, 2018, p. 159).

of stories about and by incarcerated people). What cultural marks, then, could be indicative of this video's response to a "genealogy" in representing violence?

Following Miller and Yúdice in their assessment of audiovisual citizenship, for which national cultures inculcate in the citizen/consumer desires to belong (2002, p. 72), the incarcerated man's self-portrait narrates a chronicle about fitting in: to the brotherhood, to the free society, to the legitimate (because global and accessible) screen. The boundaries that make up what can be shown and whatnot have legated traditions in journalism, and Globo's response to the massacre checks all boxes in how traditional television has approached prison violence in Brazil, by simultaneously creating images of somber authority and fearful excitement. When the PCC video maker denies the truthfulness of *Fantástico*'s version of the events, it is because he is very aware of the current state of news consumption, in that "each individual story operates as its own entity, seeking the widest possible distribution from the algorithmic systems that guide the distribution/curation practices of news aggregators, search engines, and social media platforms" (Napoli, 2019, p. 61). In other words, the YouTube video acknowledges the existence of TV coverage because that renders weak Globo's very idea of having *inside* information – therefore breaking the illusion of recollecting a massacre through voices that are not the prisoners'. Also, without the burden of credibility or social responsibility that is diluted along the exhibition chain (between the author of the video and the people who uploaded it on YouTube and can remain anonymous), the artifact can easily float without restrictions (one of the copies persists as of 2022, without being flagged as inappropriate content[14]) because it preys on the notion of gore as generator of public interest that Globo, the main channel in the country, refuses to fully engage with. The grainy, blurry image showing the hole in the wall speaks volumes

about this video's indexical importance: its found-footage appearance grants part of its reliability, at the same time that, as an object dragged and pasted from one device to another, it is a testament of the need to circulate information that cinema has accelerated in the 20th century and now other media configurations are investing in (Elsaesser, 2016, p. 283). The material conditions the video is conscious of, and the digital spaces it aspires to inhabit are as telling of the new practices interested in violence as the modern arrangements it seeks to contest.

Do you remember the film 174?

August 20, 2019, six in the morning: the bridge Presidente Costa e Silva, commonly known as bridge Rio-Niterói, has just become the stage of a spectacular event. A bus, line 2520, suddenly interrupts the traffic, presenting a rarely seen view on the long-steeled structure, desert and quasi apocalyptic. Inside the vehicle, 20-year-old Willian Augusto da Silva holds thirty nine people hostage. He carries a gun, a knife, gas and a lighter. His intent, a suicidal one according to some of the passengers (Werneck, 2019), was to catch the authorities' attention, and "paralyze the state". The closure to the disturbing event happened with the killing of Silva by a sniper, which was followed by the freeing of all hostages. Such tragic performative crime creates a parallel with another, infamous one: the 2000 hijacking of the bus 174, that also took place in Rio de Janeiro. However, the connection extends to films created after the criminal events, giving hints that Silva's intention to be seen and heard incorporated aesthetic elements which entered history books via cultural texts.

When Willian da Silva announced the hijacking, around 5:10 am, he used a striking expression to establish the act, according to witnesses: "Do you remember the film 174?" (Ferreira,

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14 And ends up serving as important archival footage to be contrasted to what TV channels have broadcasted about the event. That poses an issue of "whether YouTube should seriously take responsibility for preserving, archiving, and curating this archive as a public good" (Burgess & Green, 2009/2018, p. 91). The role of cultural researchers not only in framing theories but also curating and preserving digital content seems to be worthy of attention too.

2019). After calming down the passengers, he said he did not want to hurt anyone, but simply to make history (Seabra & Garcia, 2019). His great wish seemed to be to disturb the traffic and inevitably be seen in the morning shows on television, and more specifically, to be watched via the passengers' smartphones, streaming live. The film reference, beyond a mere allusion to another crime, foreshadowed the type of reenacting that Silva would display in the following four hours. Inside the bus, he sprayed the windshield, broke the CCTV and tied the passengers to their seats with plastic clamps. More specifically, he asked a woman to write a message in the window using lipstick, demanding a negotiation with the police – in clear connection with the 2000 crime. But what is this "film" Silva asked about? It is not absurd to assume that the young man referred to the criminal event itself as a film, or to the TV representations that ensued during and after it. In any case, two films were produced about the case: the 2002 documentary *Bus 174*, with all its meta-discussion about representing crimes, and the fiction feature *Last Stop 174* (2008). I will try to demonstrate how the parallels in performance and crime between the 2019 case and its referents are not casual, but culturally produced.

Directed by José Padilha and Felipe Lacerda, *Bus 174* is designed after two main narrative lines: the hijacking of the bus, charged with drama and suspense, and the origins of the hijacker Sandro, the true victim of a perverse social system. The moral justification to engage with a certain spectacle comes via a supposedly objective lens, which aims to scan the urban violence in Rio de Janeiro. Orchestrating a polyphonic sequence (sometimes exemplified with public security authorities, sometimes by eyewitnesses), the film clearly tries to distance itself from the mediatic treatment given to the crime, even if at times resorting to similar dramatic strategies (Satt, 2007, p. 158). *Bus 174* marks both a turn in Brazilian documentary filmmaking (Hamburger, 2005, p. 210) – alongside *News From a Private War* (1999, João Moreira Salles & Kátia Lund) – and in public and academic discussion about aesthetic procedures in play when approaching violence and inequality in Brazil. Professor Esther Hamburger noticed how

Bus 174 can be read as a symptom of a strategic battle for audiovisual control, in particular about the disadvantaged populations and about the favelas (Hamburger, 2005, p. 215) – this should be understood in light of a TV history which has always neglected the visibility of the poor. In the 2000's, fiction in Brazil would see a handful of "favela films" emerge, highlighting this interest in setting the slums as exciting arenas to explore and exploit dramas and violent stories. A genealogy of representing favelas traces back to "modern films" in the 1950's and has resonance to this day, to TV series and videogames (see Cardoso, 2021b). As Hamburger sharply anticipated, the 1990's films cited were clearly preying on a content gap that only crime TV shows acknowledged for a while. This debate is timely for how current groups, inspired by the internet, blogs and social media make a plea for self-representation of the favelas and render evident how hegemonic the discourses about them have always been.

Last Stop 174 (2008) was directed by Bruno Barreto – who had already experimented with "based on true story" plots such as *Four Days in September* (1997), about the kidnapping of a US ambassador in Brazil – and presents a sort of chronicle about the 2000 events. The script, by Bráulio Mantovani (*City of God*), takes the liberty to enhance Sandro Nascimento's tragic story by putting him side by side to Alessandro, fictitious character who always *could have been* in Sandro's place, which invites audiences to reflect upon the turning point in their lives: what could have prevented Sandro from committing the crime that would end up taking his life? At times operating with classic drama tropes (empathy for the sufferer, desire to belong, friendship tales and maternal figures), at times with the thriller genre (chasing scenes, risk of dying at the Candelária massacre), the feature structures its story counting on an emotional journey that leads to the bus hijacking. Here, the descriptive structure (instead of the voice over on the documentary) uses secondary characters to assist Sandro's actions in the bus – and the soundtrack, composed by Marcelo Zarvos, intensifies the climax by seeking a grandiose and poignant conclusion. Curiously, despite making visible

what has not been seen by either the audience from the mediatic crime or *Bus 174* (Sandro's death by suffocation in the police van), the dramatic resolution is rushed and jumps to the reaction of grieving characters. Even as a self-sufficient piece, *Last Stop 174* takes for granted that Sandro's diegetic death might only make sense with a certain level of familiarity with the crime facts.

Interestingly enough, Sandro do Nascimento found, in 2000, a blind spot in visual representation to perform before live cameras and, like the man he would inspire some 20 years later, he also directly mentioned real crimes (the 1993 Candelária massacre, which he survived) and action movies, such as *Speed*, released in 1994 (Souza, 2019, p. 9). The main issue seems to be, then, why such cultural texts have become necessary tools to express indignation and revolt towards one's reality, which for both young black men was disadvantaged. Firstly, I think it is necessary to understand how the media and the internet have eroded boundaries between pretending and being real (Schechner, 2002/2013, p. 43). Brazilian fiction TV, for example, has rarely portrayed afro-descendent lives that escaped subaltern roles (see Araújo, 2008) – and underrepresentation also encompasses stories of violence dealt with nuance and originality. In that context, the surge in Brazilian cinema of stories about crime with tones of genre, documentary and spectacle – *City of God* (2002) and *Carandiru* (2003) were very influential – definitely indicated a cultural shift about what is visible in terms of Brazil. In some perverse fashion, what saturates the lives of millions of spectators as exciting tales about poor and black people relates to violence. What is does not, rarely is shown. Added to this, and very importantly, is the TV strategy from the 1990's on to speak to the masses, in some cases exhibiting "poor urban landscapes where ordinary people performed cases of domestic violence" (Hamburger, 2008, p. 205). For some individuals, then, to be visible for the world meant to partake in exploitative audiovisual productions that were seen as the sole alternative to the controlled and elitist portraits made by the telenovelas[15]. When portable computers and mobile phones with access to the internet became popular, access to various representations also grew considerably[16], but sometimes users and content creators do not necessarily choose cultural content simply for matters of accessibility: there is a good deal of dominant discourses which are still prevalent in telling stories about Brazilians who are poor and black[17].

Such negotiations between underrepresented populations and traditions created by culture industries appear to be in a critical moment with the inclusion of digital technologies in many forms of socialization. But that critical "friction" has always been a characteristic of mass-mediated practices in Latin America. Renato Ortiz was one of the voices to bring attention to a singular, consolidated *market* of cultural goods in Brazil (1988/1999, p. 16) without compromising the detection of problems stemming from globalization. In the same vein, Yúdice (1991) says that to speak of articulations of modernity in Latin America it was useful to understand how "groups *recycle* their traditions in national and international markets" (p. 104). That does not always mean that popular sectors, when given the chance, have created counterhegemonic artifacts (Canclini, 1990/2003, p. 280), but rather were constantly incorporating tropes, styles and identities that resonated with their realities. Silva decided to respond, after spectatorship, to a certain treatment that society gave to him – when it comes to the cultural texts that based his criminal performance, the cinematic diversion from one-sided,

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16 Many times, giving birth to acts of self-representation, authenticity and diversity, see cases in Brazilian funk and rap music (Salles & Muniz, 2020; Cardoso, 2021a) and blogging in the favelas (Holmes, 2018).

17 Those comprise the majority of Brazilian citizens. According to IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), 56% of the population identify as black ("preto" or "pardo"), and around half the population survives with less than half the minimum wage (IBGE, 2020).

repetitive content that media in general gave to the Bus 174 case, created a precedent to spectacle in which Nascimento was someone beyond a hijacker, almost an anti-hero, despite his ill-fated attempt to gain attention. If this new "tradition", imperfect as it might be, offered an alternative to the publicized ideals of youth and freedom celebrated by the market (Sarlo, 1994/1997, p. 41), a society of masses after digitalization seeks difference in representational and performative levels too – reenacting or referencing an audiovisual canon seems to be only the first step to becoming one's idea of spectacle. Being seen equals connecting and, therefore, existing – even if for negative reasons.

The case of *Bus 174* was already symptomatic of a changing digital world, take as an example the box office hit *Elite Squad* (José Padilha, 2007), whose pirate DVDs were sold together with *News From a Private War* and *Bus 174* as if they were prequels and sequels (Szafir, 2010, p. 65). After digital content no longer needed DVDs to be distributed, the internet has come to pose other problems[18]: Willian da Silva might have had access to both "174 films" online[19] – in fact, if he was one-year old when the crime took place, the indirect mediation about Sandro through news and films is all he could have a memory of – but his alleged wish to be watched through the hostages' smartphones opens up to an interpretation of spectacle that is also affiliated to social media practices. In an era in which having a digital profile seems to be so important to build socialization, Silva reenacted a crime that caused a commotion in 2000 to insert himself digitally, to belong to an important public debate, and via an ironically (he knew he could get killed like Sandro was) protected, fictitious world where notoriety trumps real life. In a public statement, President Jair Bolsonaro – known for his rhetoric of violence (see Funari, 2021) – immediately made a parallel with the 2000

crime, in which, according to him, the lack of sniper action was disastrous (Lima, 2019). This time, with state support, Willian was killed at distance and under applauses by the Rio Governor Wilson Witzel – who exactly a year later would be impeached, after accusations of high crimes and misdemeanors. The political answer, thus, mirrored the performative act in all dimensions: the reenactment of the 2000 crime, founded upon cultural knowledge of a tragic and cinematic story, was swiftly resolved and presented as a late vindication of the "film 174". In times of ephemeral news, however, public discussion ceased together with Silva's life, revealing that his wish for historical validation came to existence right when mediatic loops and spirals of crime are reinforced in digital culture, so much so that representations, reenactments and simulations of a concrete violence in Brazil get reduced to the exceptionality typical of fiction films.

Final considerations

Bearing in mind the age of platforms and digital practices and facing the challenge of analyzing ephemeral artifacts such as YouTube videos, this paper resorted to a tradition in cultural studies which is concerned with late modern spectacles produced by mass media and culture industries. The first main advantage of looking into how current production of culture is tied to the late modernity is that, in giving a step back, it is possible to insert new technologies in longer cultural movements (i.e., how the big techs resort to gathering information of their consumers more efficiently) that trace back to social and economic structures still relevant to this day, particularly in unequal societies of Latin America. The blatant role of mediators that Google and other companies play (allowing exhibition and distribution of violent content), is indicative of how blurred the lines in the dissemination of cultural texts have

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18 As García Canclini states, the turn of the century brings challenges related to "understanding how the permanent and remote spectacularization changes us, in other words, this strange combination of mediatization and interconnectivity" (2004, p. 173).

19 As of June 2022, open versions of both the fiction film and the documentary could be found on the YouTube and Vimeo platforms, uploaded by third parties.

become, and exactly for an intended position of neutrality in this production of information, it is important to hold them accountable for enabling, promoting, and ultimately profiting on crime objects.

The second point I maintain about spectacles as theoretical tool is justified by the very construction of culture, which in modernity and beyond saw mass media forge national identities on screen – for example, through serial news, telenovelas, TV shows on violence, "favela films". The referential nature of a postmodern, digital era retrieves much of the production of knowledge that film, TV, the press, radio and other traditionally modern landmarks have created. My case studies, in that manner, directly take issue with objects that circulated before (a news piece by TV Globo and films about the Bus 174 case) to perform digitally in an interconnected society. One can find signs that there is investment either in retributing violence through words (in the case of the prisoner's self-account) or gun action (in the case of the bus hijacker). The narratives, tropes and styles of violence that circulate among producers, distributors, exhibitors and audiences (also consumers and now "users") seem to function more than simply headlines to grab one's attention. They range from techniques in performative acts (narrating or shooting a video, imitating a bus hijacking) to discursive political action and constitute strategies to understand and act upon a violent society such as the Brazilian one.

Limitations in my approach lie in the observation of exceptional cases to draw greater connections in cultural criticism, and as much as Carlo Ginzburg's historical methodology inspires this research – "the anomaly always includes the norm, while the norm does not include, necessarily, its transgression" (Ginzburg & Guerreiro, 2020, p. 162) – new steps in the inspection of late modern digital phenomena could include more examples of normative representations, comparative study to Latin American cases and modes of resistance or alternative epistemologies to the production and dissemination of digital spectacles of violence. That being said, retrieving crimes represented online and inspired or impacted by film and TV is a non-exhaustive task that can only gain in scholarly research, if the digital realm works in favor of a multifaceted critique to violence.

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