

LANDSCAPES OF FABULATION AND DISPLACEMENT: CINEMA, ALTERITY AND CARTOGRAPHY IN *CHUVA É CANTORIA NA ALDEIA DOS MORTOS*

Júlia Vilhena Rodrigues

Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Sociedade, Instituto de Ciências Sociais, Universidade do Minho, Braga, Portugal

ABSTRACT

This article reflects on experiences of displacement and migration in contemporary cinema, focusing on the film *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos* (The Dead and the Others; 2018), directed by Renée Messora and João Salaviza. Drawing on Gilles Deleuze's concept of "fabulation," the discussion examines how cinematic practices developed in contexts of deterritorialisation mobilise fabulation as a creative gesture emerging from encounters with alterity and an openness to other temporalities, affects, and epistemologies. The analysis emphasises the film's creative process, characterised by a prolonged coexistence between the filmmakers and the Krahô Indigenous community in Tocantins, resulting in a ritualised, collaborative mode of filmmaking. Within this context, displacement appears as a constitutive condition of film form, the gaze, and the intersubjective relations that sustain the film. In dialogue with the concept of "diasporic space", proposed by Avtar Brah (2005), it is argued that the film constructs a relational space in which boundaries are constantly negotiated, both for the filmmakers and for the characters. Finally, the article proposes an approach linking the film to the cartographic method, understanding the work as a practice of sensitive mapping grounded in collective assemblage. Cartography is therefore regarded as providing fertile conceptual tools for tracing collaborative cinematic practices in which subject and object co-emerge, and where cinema functions as a space for the production of the common and the reconfiguration of modes of being in the world.

KEYWORDS

contemporary cinema, fabulation, displacement, cartography

PAISAGENS FABULATÓRIAS DO DESLOCAMENTO: CINEMA, ALTERIDADE E CARTOGRAFIA EM *CHUVA É CANTORIA NA ALDEIA DOS MORTOS*

RESUMO

O artigo parte de uma reflexão sobre as experiências de deslocamento e migração no cinema contemporâneo, centrando-se na análise do filme *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos* (2018), de Renée Messora e João Salaviza. Partindo do conceito de "fabulação", formulado por Gilles Deleuze, discute-se de que modo as práticas cinematográficas realizadas em contextos de desterritorialização mobilizam-na como gesto criativo, que emerge do encontro com a alteridade e da abertura a outras temporalidades, afetos e epistemologias. A análise do filme enfatiza o seu processo de criação, marcado por uma convivência prolongada entre os realizadores e a comunidade indígena krahô, no Tocantins, que resulta em um modo ritualizado e colaborativo de filmar. Nesse contexto, o deslocamento figura como condição constitutiva da forma fílmica, do olhar e das relações intersubjetivas que sustentam o filme. Em diálogo com o conceito de "espaço diaspórico",

proposto por Avtar Brah (2005), argumenta-se que o filme constrói um espaço relacional, no qual fronteiras são constantemente negociadas, tanto para os realizadores quanto para os personagens. Por fim, o artigo propõe uma aproximação do filme e do método cartográfico, entendendo a obra como uma prática de mapeamento sensível, baseada no agenciamento coletivo. Defende-se que a cartografia oferece ferramentas conceituais fecundas para acompanhar práticas cinematográficas colaborativas, nas quais sujeito e objeto emergem conjuntamente e onde o cinema se afirma como espaço de produção do comum e de reconfiguração dos modos de estar no mundo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

cinema contemporâneo, fabulação, deslocamento, cartografia

INTRODUCTION

This study examines experiences of displacement and migration in cinema, using the film *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos* (The Dead and the Others, 2018), directed by Renée Messoria and João Salaviza, as its point of departure. Analysing the film, the discussion addresses the fabulation inherent in cinematic practices developed in contexts of deterritorialisation. Drawing on Gilles Deleuze's concept of fabulation, the film's creative process is analysed, highlighting the filmmakers' ritualised production practices and their immersive engagement with the sensible world of the Krahô Indigenous community. More specifically, the analysis considers how time and the formation of bonds with the community of the "other" are intrinsic to the creation of affective landscapes and to opening the filmic form to alternative epistemologies.

In *Cartographies of Diaspora*, Avtar Brah (2005) introduces the concept of "diaspora space" as the "point at which boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and otherness, of 'us' and 'them', are contested" (p. 205). According to Brah, such a diaspora space is inhabited not only by migrants and their descendants but also by those constructed and represented as Indigenous, insofar as genealogies of dispersion intersect with those of "staying", relationally constituting both the "native" and the "diasporic" within social relations of difference, experience, subjectivity and identity, which are traversed by multiple articulations of power. In *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos*, *diaspora space* emerges as a constitutive dimension of the narrative and of the intersubjective encounter between filmmakers and characters, shaped by experiences of displacement and border-crossing. The film was produced by a Portuguese–Brazilian duo, who experienced deterritorialisation by establishing a base within an Indigenous territory in Tocantins (Brazil) for an extended period and developing social and familial bonds with the Krahô community.

In light of the process of coexistence and sharing that gave rise to the work, the article discusses the foundations of the cartographic method, which is understood as offering fertile conceptual tools for engaging with cinematic practices emerging from collective assemblage. *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos* reflects the principles of the cartographic method, constituting a collaborative cinematic practice that emerges from

the filmmakers' and the Krahô community's intersubjective experience. It is therefore argued that it is through the articulation of cartography and fabulation — as a gesture of shared invention and world-making — that the film realises its aesthetic and political potency. This articulation underpins the analysis presented here, positioning the film as a sensitive cartography of territories and relations, in which aesthetic creation and collective construction are reciprocally intertwined and transformed.

THE INFINITE CONVERSATION IN *CHUVA É CANTORIA NA ALDEIA DOS MORTOS*

Renée Nader Messor and João Salaviza, co-directors of *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos*, are a Portuguese–Brazilian couple who met in Buenos Aires while both were studying cinema. Messor assisted in the production of Salaviza's first feature film in Portugal, after which the two developed a closer partnership in both life and cinema. In 2014, she introduced Salaviza to the Krahô community of Pedra Branca village in Tocantins, with whom she had been in contact since 2010. At the time, Messor was working with the collective Mentuwajê Guardiões da Cultura, leading workshops and collaborating on audiovisual productions by the Krahô themselves.

From that point onwards, Messor and Salaviza were welcomed by the community: they underwent an initiation ritual that granted them Indigenous names and, after nearly two years, began production on *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos*, the first work co-directed by the duo. Before this, they had produced two 16 mm short films as experiments in the Krahô village with a small four-person crew. During this period of immersion and preparation for the feature, the filmmakers encountered the story of a young Indigenous filmmaker who fell ill after being targeted by a *pajé's*¹ curse and decided to flee to the city. This story ultimately inspired the film's narrative.

The film opens with Ihjãc, a young Krahô man, responding to the call of his deceased father, who implores him to organise his end-of-mourning celebration so that he may journey to the village of the dead (00:04:26–00:04:27). The narrative continues by following Ihjãc through his daily life in the Krahô village, shared with his partner, young child, mother, uncles, and the wider community. Entirely spoken in Krahô, the film possesses a cadence that appears to synchronise with the community's rhythms. Moreover, it allows the viewer to engage in sensory experiences, emphasising the sounds and atmospheres of village life.

With the help of his family, Ihjãc begins preparing the fields for his father's end-of-mourning celebration. However, he feels a profound unease, an unfamiliar sensation. In one scene, he is confronted by a macaw in the forest; upon gazing at the bird, he feels unwell and faints. After being assisted by his partner, he is taken to Velho Crate, the village shaman, who informs him that he is also becoming a shaman and that the macaw is the

¹ "Pajé" is the term used in various Indigenous societies in Brazil to refer to a spiritual leader who mediates between the community and the spiritual world, and who is responsible for healing practices, rituals, and the interpretation of dreams and visions.

master summoning him. Velho Crate explains that Ihjãc will begin to see the *mecarõ*, the spirits of the dead. Yet Ihjãc feels too young and reluctant to assume the role of shaman. Sickened and frightened, he flees to the city, hoping to escape the macaw's call.

The protagonist's drift through the city, between the hospital and a support facility, is depicted as a collision of two worlds. The film portrays Ihjãc as lost, alienated, submerged in a harsh soundscape composed of sermons from a pastor, cowboy parades, and radio music — a landscape sharply contrasted with the slow rhythms and ambient sounds of his village. Scenes of acute social discomfort reveal the segregation and discrimination he experiences, such as the encounter with a healthcare attendant who demands his identity card. After wandering in the city without finding refuge, Ihjãc realises that spiritual resolution cannot be attained there and returns to the village to fulfil his responsibility of organising his father's end-of-mourning celebration.

The entire community gathers around a large, decorated log to mourn the deceased (01:38:09–01:38:11; 01:29:06–01:29:22). Following the ceremony, the elder shaman informs everyone that the time for remembrance has passed. From that moment on, all must release their longing and allow Ihjãc's father to depart. The young man appears reflective during the ritual and confesses to his partner that he is no longer the same; he now perceives the *mecarõ* — the souls of things speak to him. Despite still showing some apprehension, Ihjãc seems increasingly confident and prepared to assume his role.

In his studies of ritual practices, anthropologist Victor Turner (1969/1974) argues that liminality constitutes an intermediate phase in rites of passage. He terms this condition *betwixt and between*, in which individuals occupy an undefined space, much like the young Ihjãc in *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos*. The character undergoes a symbolic process of "death," after which he is reborn and reintegrated into the social structure. According to Turner (1974), during the liminal phase, individuals experience a temporary suspension of social norms, allowing for profound reflection and the potential for personal transformation.

Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. (...) Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon. (Turner, 1974, p. 117)

The film concludes with Ihjãc observing the rain washing over his village after the completion of his father's end-of-mourning ritual. *Flor do Buriti* (The Buriti Flower; Messoria & Salaviza, 2024), the directors' second film with the same Krahô community, concludes with a birth scene in the village. Together, the two films convey a sense of life as a continuous cycle of renewal, in harmony with Indigenous cosmology.

All the characters in *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos* are portrayed by members of the village, who enact their own roles. They therefore actively participate in the construction of the film, contributing their own ways of speaking, acting, and relating to one another. According to Messoria and Salaviza, the film's narrative is based on

conversations and real-life events witnessed during the nine months they shared with the community in the village.

In this sense, the work can be understood as a fiction derived from real-life stories, created through a shared perspective of insiders and outsiders, without the latter seeking to dominate the former. This approach to filmmaking produces moments of striking intimacy and naturalness, exemplified by tender interactions between mother and child and by the whispered exchanges between Ihjãc and his partner, Kôtô Krahô, as their infant sleeps between them (00:22:03–00:23:57).

The cinematography is by Renée Nader Messor, who, through the camera's movements, connects the viewer to the rhythms of village life and the surrounding natural environment. The silences and extended shots create a transcendent atmosphere, evoking a spiritual dimension essential to the work's appreciation. There is a palpable sense of a close, sensitive camera, seeking to engage with the territory and cosmology of the Krahô; a "body-to-body encounter between the one filming and the one being filmed," as noted by Joana Pimenta (2024):

this is a camera that invests in the integrity of bodies, and in the relationship with bodies, to construct a dramaturgy that is a space of shared action. A camera that does not censor but also does not exploit. A camera that is respectful without being imposing, thrown into the world of these possible images without imposing the limits of an artificial distance. (p. 82)

Through the directors' choice to remain in the village and engage in shared modes of working, the film achieves a subjectivation of the bodies and greater complexity in the representation of the worlds it portrays. There is no attempt to explain or objectify these worlds, or to render them more comprehensible to the Western gaze. Salaviza asserts that they were determined not to reproduce, in any way, the stereotypes perpetuated by Western imagination of these "figures of otherness", which had often been represented in cinema as "living fossils frozen in the sixteenth century" (Vieira, 2019, 00:03:20)

The character of Kôtô Krahô, Ihjãc's partner, appears on screen painting her nails, while he listens to radio hits in the city. The film thus adopts a critical stance towards the idea of cultural purity, which for a long time, shaped colonial and ethnographic representations of Indigenous traditions and village life. By highlighting the presence of contemporary elements in the characters' daily lives, the film recognises that Indigenous cultures also transform historically, and that such transformations do not entail abandoning their traditions. Furthermore, despite his challenging journey in the film, Ihjãc is not portrayed as a victim or as a passive figure constrained by his circumstances. On the contrary, the narrative is driven by him as he seeks to chart his destiny with autonomy, courage, and responsibility towards his community.

A CINEMA OF BECOMING KRAHÔ

Renée Messor and João Salaviza developed a collective creation method in *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos*, which they continued in *A Flor do Buriti*. The method

envisions a shared authorship of the screenplay with the non-professional actors from the community, who contribute to the narrative through their own stories and dialogues. According to Salaviza, their approach was to work with “an open construction that we would develop while filming”, with the idea of creating “a film that could travel through time, memories, myths, with the land as its backbone” (Roque, 2024, para. 37). The director describes a ritualised mode of filming: “there is, as it were, a ritual that seems highly codified — the ritual of cinema — but this ritual encounters the rituals of the village” (Portugal, 2019, para. 22).

This formulation allows the film to be approached in the sense described by Caixeta de Queiroz (2008) as a “ritual-film” within Indigenous cinema: the film functions as an extension or composition of what occurs in everyday or ritual life. The cosmological dimension that permeates ritual also traverses the film, structuring its organisation of the visible. As André Brasil (2013) notes, Indigenous cinema exhibits a strong interweaving between the field and the off-screen.

The centrifugal shot — open to what comes from outside, precisely from the off-screen — produces an indexical relationship through which the visible is traversed by the invisible and thereby affected and transformed. (...) The invisible passes through bodies as the wind passes through a boat’s sail, becoming tangible in its very invisibility and conferring upon the sail and the boat something of its agency. (Brasil & Belisário, 2016, p. 607)

Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos demonstrates a collaborative approach rather than a distant or objective one. Renée Messora explains that they sought to film the “invisible world” of the Krahô — situations that, in village life, were entirely ordinary (00:13:00–00:14:30), such as the encounter between a boy and the spirit of his father in the sequence that opens the film (Vieira, 2019). In this sense, the director asserts that their way of filming was permeated by a *becoming Krahô*:

I think our way of filming is increasingly imbued with a certain becoming Krahô, if one can speak in these terms. (...) We like to think of cinema as a ritual, a common space of action, where each participant has their role, and it only works when everyone understands and moves in the same direction (Roque, 2024, para. 38)

According to the filmmaker, each sequence required a different directorial approach, and the intention was to *dance the film* to the songs the Krahô were singing for them. Reality traversed the film in multiple ways, as the Indigenous actors brought their own worlds into the construction of the characters. Messora thus conceives creation as an open space in which a third reality — neither that of the filmmakers nor that of the community with whom they are working — can emerge (Escola das Artes–UCP, 2022).

This idea of *dance* is manifested in the camera itself: a living, attentive camera, almost always handheld, moving fluidly through the spaces, accompanying characters in motion or approaching their faces with delicacy, thereby subjectivising them. The

alternation between wider shots, capturing the natural and collective landscape, and closer shots focused on faces and gestures creates a formal rhythm that gives space to the *auto-mise-en-scène*² of the filmed subjects — their speech, their silences, their rituals — without confining them within fixed framings or controlled performances.

As José Serafim and Francisco Rêgo (2020) observe, this involves recognising the “active role of subjects before the camera, as also constituting a *mise-en-scène*” (p. 183). Staging thus ceases to be the exclusive attribute of the filmmaker: it becomes a negotiated interplay of gazes, in which those being filmed exercise autonomy before the camera, as the filmmaker negotiates their own presence within the scene.

Messora’s conception of cinematic creation clearly evokes Deleuze’s concept of “fabulation”, which will be discussed below. The director’s description also recalls Jean-Louis Comolli’s notion of “aesthetic withdrawal” (2004/2008), referring to moments when the more decisive *mise-en-scène* — that which originates with the filmmaker — recedes to give way to the character’s *auto-mise-en-scène*. Comolli (2004/2008), moreover, also draws an analogy with dance: “filming thus becomes a conjugation, a relationship in which one seeks to intertwine with the other — even in form” (p. 85).

[A] documentary *mise-en-scène* — through its playful and choreographic character, its interplay with the other, and the risk of the real that it assumes when it opens itself to socio-*mise-en-scènes* and auto-*mise-en-scènes* — would perhaps be that through which cinema still intertwines with the world. (Comolli, 2004/2008, p. 85)

The creation process of *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos* lasted nine months. It was preceded by many years of contact between the filmmakers and the community, as evidenced in the intimate tone of the scenes. According to Salaviza, this extended period of coexistence also enabled them to sharpen their attention to everyday situations that found their way into the fictional narrative. The director maintains that their cinema is, above all, a practice. It does not emerge from investigative processes or from the kinds of critical inquiries that often drive documentary filmmaking — such as the distinction between “speaking with” rather than “speaking about” — evoking Trinh Minh-ha’s concept of *speaking nearby*. For them, however, this is insufficient; what matters is *making with, living with* (Escola das Artes–UCP, 2022). The filmmaker explains that this practice involves a constant balancing between their own cinematic desires and those of the community.

According to João Salaviza, such a practice requires a continuous unfolding — an *infinite conversation* with the Krahô — that continually affects and challenges them to reconsider what it means to make a film in this context. What they regard as essential to their mode of production, reduced to the bare minimum in their case, is time: time to translate and amplify the world they are filming with a force and vitality they consider an ethical imperative of the practice. It is about time as a lived experience, which they have found to be the foundation of the films they have been making.

² *Auto-mise-en-scène* refers to the active participation of filmed subjects in the staging of themselves before the camera.

This mode of production resonates with what Cláudia Mesquita (2011) describes as “works in process” (p. 18): experiences in which cinema becomes intertwined with life — limited, stimulated, or transformed by it — and in which the boundaries between scene and lived experience become porous. Rather than a model of production governed by control and the autonomy of the scene, this is a form of filmmaking in which control is not always possible and in which the film invents its own movement, in a close encounter with experiences it does not fully master.

This extended period of coexistence with the community, it is argued here, enables the emergence of *intervals* within the film’s temporality — moments in which the linear narrative flow is suspended, opening space for a sensorial presence of gestures, silences, and the unfolding of everyday life. Such suspension breaks with the representative regime and its hegemonic forms of visibility, engendering a cinema of fabulation. In *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos*, this operation translates into shots that accommodate the temporalities of the filmed territory, allowing themselves to be affected by them. Rancière attributes to these “any-moments” or “immeasurable moments” (Marques & Sá Martino, 2021, p. 478) a liminal potency capable of creating passages between what is considered legible and visible and what, at first glance, remains opaque or unintelligible.

A particular temporality governs the film, attuned to the time of listening and coexistence, allowing the camera to capture presences. In this sense, the landscape is not merely a backdrop but a shared territory, traversed by visible and invisible forces. The community’s spiritual dimension is inscribed in subtle ways. Nevertheless, it permeates the entire atmosphere of the film: nocturnal scenes, images of fire, and the opening sequence shot in day-for-night — a device that creates a night that is both artificial and dreamlike — all suggest a relationship to mystery, the transcendent, and a sensible world that lies beyond Western rationality.

Deterritorialisation and *becoming* thus emerge as key concepts for thinking about *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos*, both about its narrative and the very process through which the film was made. Both the filmmakers and the Krahô experience forms of displacement and construct new modes of expression through their encounter with the “other”. In this sense, a cinematic practice of *becoming Krahô* enables the emergence of new territorialities and subjectivities. The gesture of fabulation manifests as a creative response to deterritorialisation, allowing subjects to reconfigure their symbolic territories and cultural identities.

THE GESTURE OF FABULATION

According to Jacques Rancière (2008/2014), while politics is founded on a gap between worlds, as dissent and disagreement, art operates a reconfiguration of shared experience, initiating new forms of visibility, modes of subjectivation, and ways of gathering and being alone. In this sense, as also proposed by the psychoanalyst Suely Rolnik (2002), the artist’s work can be understood as a process of deciphering the signs that emerge from encounters with the sensitive world:

the deciphering that such a sign requires has nothing to do with “explaining” or “interpreting”, but with “inventing” a meaning that renders it visible and integrates it into the prevailing map of existence, operating a transmutation therein. One could say that the work of the artist (the work of art) consists precisely in this deciphering of sensations. (Rolnik, 2002, p. 45)

In his philosophy, Deleuze (1968/1988) consistently used “intercessors” to expand his thinking. According to the author, encounters generate creation by compelling thought to move beyond immobility. One such encounter, which generated a potent zone of exchange with philosophy, was cinema. It was through cinema that Deleuze further developed the concept of “fabulation” — not merely applying it to cinema but using it as an intercessor to create new concepts. In his works dedicated to cinema, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (Deleuze, 1983/2004) and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (Deleuze, 1985/2018), he formulates the thesis that cinema, unlike any other art form, directly fictionalises reality, insofar as it situates us on the plane of moving images. It is this power to fictionalise reality directly that allows the cinematic apparatus to become art.

For Deleuze, the fundamental difference between the regimes of the movement-image and the time-image is that the former constructs its images based on the reality of the world. In contrast, the latter takes as its starting point the reality of cinema itself. In this context, editing loses its centrality, and camera movements and framing become fundamental procedures. As Deleuze observes (1985/2018), in this process, cinema becomes a free indirect discourse operating within reality.

In modern cinema, images acquire such potency that they sever the sensory-motor connection with the characters, existing for themselves rather than merely as a product of meaning constructed through editing. Characters become “seers,” capable of seeing and imagining something new, invisible (Deleuze, 1985/2018). Deleuze argues that art enables us to see and feel time by positioning us in the interstice — the inorganic fissure between ourselves and life. In this fissure, it activates the machinic capacity to create worlds, which he terms the “power of the false”. He relates this power to the fabulation function, which prompts the advancement of the self as “I is another”.

Deleuze (1993/1997) thus rediscovers Bergsonian fabulation through cinema. He draws from Bergson the notion of potency and becoming associated with fabulation, asserting that *becoming* is not the attainment of a fixed form but the discovery of a zone of proximity, indiscernibility, or undifferentiation that traverses the forms of lived experience. Fabulation, therefore, as a potency that allows us to create fictions, should not be confused with the forms it generates or the resulting models — myth, legend, fable, as well as works of fiction and art objects. Fabulation is the line of deterritorialisation that runs through them and keeps them alive (Deleuze & Guattari, 1995/2021).

The fabulation function that Deleuze derives from cinema seeks to re-establish the link between art and life, fiction and reality. It is associated with a temporal mode of narrative construction; a mode that treats time as a constitutive element of narrative rather than something to be overcome. According to Deleuze (1985/2018), cinema should aim

to capture the becoming of the real character as they begin to “fiction, when caught in the act of creating legends” (p. 218). The character becomes *other* when they begin to fabulate — a gesture that appears to have been fundamental in the work of Messora and Salaviza with the Krahô community during the making of *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos*. Simultaneously, the filmmaker also becomes *other* by interceding on behalf of the real characters, wholly substituting their own fictions with the characters’ fabulations. In this way, a double becoming occurs: of both the filmmaker and the characters, in a process that demands a re-evaluation of the modes of narrative in fiction cinema itself. When a filmmaker exchanges their fictions for those of real characters, they simultaneously realise fiction and fictionalise reality. This double exchange between fiction and reality reveals the fold of fiction, the *image-fable* (Deleuze, 1985/2018).

Deleuze draws from Pier Paolo Pasolini’s cinema the notion of the free indirect subjective perspective, which, he argues, enables the character’s becoming-other and interprets it through Bergson’s concept of “fabulation”. This idea resonates with the enunciative mode of the protagonist Ihjãc’s journey in *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos*. The character’s becoming during his liminal phase, before assuming the role of shaman, is expressed through the film’s language. The camera adopts his free indirect perspective, placing the viewer in a state of presence in which the character’s transformation is perceptible yet subtle and indirect. In this respect, Messora and Salaviza’s work aligns more closely with the role of the *political filmmaker*, as conceived by Deleuze, than with that of the ethnographer: rather than seeking to describe or explain, the filmmakers create cinematic forms capable of revealing other regimes of sensibility, opening space for becoming and otherness.

Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos employs fabulation not merely as a discursive device but as an integral part of its shared creative methodology, incorporating the subjects’ *free indirect perspectives* in the construction of the narrative. In the film’s creative process, encounters with otherness emerge through the opening of a fabulation space. This collaborative process dissolves the boundaries between fiction and reality, revealing the power of cinema as a space for the emergence of alternative modes of life. Fabulation thus constitutes a collective and political gesture, enabling the community to narrate itself and singularly assert its existence through cinema.

ONTOLOGICAL DISPLACEMENTS IN THE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SENSIBLE WORLD

Continuing the reflection on fabulation in cinema, attention now turns to how the sensible world appears in *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos*, seeking to understand how fiction can come alive through engagement with the reality experienced by the filmed subjects.

In this regard, Lemière (2024), in his essay included in the collection *Passagens* (Passages), devoted to the cinema of the Luso-Brazilian duo, addresses the current crisis of fiction within the field of cinematic art. He argues that Messora and Salaviza navigate this crisis by creating fictional works on the margins of the imperatives of the

hegemonic cinematic system. In his analysis, Lemière draws on a statement by Jacques Rancière regarding the cinema of Pedro Costa — a formulation which, in our view, also illuminates the aesthetic and political gesture present in the work of Messora and Salaviza. According to Rancière (Lemière, 2024), Costa invents a form of fiction that establishes a plane of equality between the characters and the story they live in, enabling them to be commensurate with their own lives, with “history”, and with art.

Building on this reading, Lemière (2024) maintains that the greatest challenge for contemporary cinema lies precisely in reinventing fiction by anchoring it in reality, in collaboration with “actors of their own lives” — a process that necessarily entails a political interrogation of the situation depicted and, by extension, of the country. For the author, *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos* exemplifies this shared gesture: a cinema that immerses the viewer in the sensible world of the Krahô community, restoring not only their natural and spiritual context but also their relationships with the dead and the multiple beings that inhabit their world.

This pursuit of reinventing fiction is also shared by director João Salaviza, who recognises an affinity with the cinema of his compatriot, Pedro Costa. An example of this approach is found in the opening scene of *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos*, filmed using “day-for-night” lighting — an openly artificial device that, in the director’s words, constitutes “pure fiction”.

The use of “day-for-night” lighting is a deliberate decision. On the one hand, it seeks a poetics of another time, of another cinema; on the other, it establishes, from the outset, a “pact” with the spectator: this is fiction, perhaps as the ancients once did; (...) writing with the camera, with light, with bodies and their shimmering presences. (Lemière, 2024, p. 59)

The aesthetic construction of the film is therefore anchored in conscious choices of artifice and stylisation, which, far from masking reality, seek to intensify it. Messora and Salaviza affirm that, to tell this story, it was necessary to articulate different modes of expression — and that, in many moments, fiction could convey more about reality than reality itself. Each sequence demanded a singular approach, an aesthetic-poetic negotiation, and for this reason, the filming device was chosen in a situated manner, according to the demands of each scene (Escola das Artes – UCP, 2022).

According to Messora and Salaviza, the film’s documentary gaze, with minimal intervention, is most evident in the village’s festival and ritual scenes, which unfolded spontaneously within the community. Salaviza highlights the importance of the word *amjĩkin*, which in the Krahô language means “to bring joy to ourselves”. This is a central notion in Krahô life, as they are constantly celebrating or preparing to celebrate. The festivals may be related to both human life cycles and the seasonal cycles of the *cerrado* (Brazilian savannah), alternating between periods of rain and drought. During the film’s creative process, the crew filmed the *pàrcahàc*, the Krahô end-of-mourning ritual, twice. In the final edit, this ritual “danced” with the fictional narrative of the character Ihjãc, thus acquiring a new meaning, restored through the cinematic gesture itself (Culturalmente Falando, 2019).

Regarding the decision to work with non-actors — village characters embodying their own stories — Salaviza observes that the naturalness of the performances in the film derives from a conviction in words and gestures (Mendonça et al., 2024). According to him, the work carried out with the Krahô aims precisely to restore a truth that belongs to these people, something impossible for external actors to stage. The premise is to start from what each individual has to say, allowing aspects of their lives to be present in the film — whether in gesture, voice, or expression. As the filmmaker states, “there has to be a truth” (Mendonça et al., 2024, 00:24:00).

What is particularly striking in *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos* is the way the sensible dimension of the Krahô world is translated into images and sounds. Cinematic expressive resources are mobilised to recreate this reality, intertwining Ihjãc’s journey with the natural and social events that surround him. Messoria and Salaviza move away from a dichotomous view of culture and nature, seeking to materialise in cinema a conviction shared by some anthropologists, such as Tim Ingold (2000): “the entire world — and not just the world of human persons — is saturated with powers of agency and intentionality” (p. 14). The film thus proposes a sensible attentiveness to the assemblages of the Krahô world, simultaneously generating in the viewer a sensible perception. Attention to the sensible matter and affects constitutes “a mode of active, perceptual engagement, a way of being literally ‘in touch’ with the world” (Ingold, 2000, p. 23).

In the filmic narrative, when the protagonist moves to the city, his body — which previously inhabited the forest and its rhythms — becomes alien to the new urban space, where the soundscape is entirely transformed. The young man wanders through the city as a body out of place, adrift. In this passage, the film makes explicit the clash between two neighbouring territories, with their ways of life and relation to the spiritual world perceptibly distant.

The previously mentioned opening scene, in which Ihjãc communicates with his father’s spirit by the waterfall, is not represented in a mystified or supernatural manner. It is presented in the same way as the other scenes of everyday village life — the spiritual world and the earthly world share the same regime of reality. Regarding this, Philippe Descola (2024) notes that the film remarkably expresses a mode of relation to the sensible that ethnology has termed “animism”, yet which only a few major fiction films effectively convey.

The scene in which a macaw pursues the young Krahô and physically senses the call to become a shaman also avoids any exoticisation. On the contrary, the close-ups of the macaw’s eyes (00:42:32–00:42:41) and the atmospheric construction of the scene reveal an attempt to translate the intentionality of the animal spirit, to subjectivise it. What is visible here is Amerindian perspectivism inscribed in the cinematic register itself: the camera enacts a conversion of the gaze, placing the viewer in the perspective of other beings.

According to the anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (1996), in Amerindian ontologies, the world is inhabited by multiple species of subjects — human and non-human, such as gods, spirits, and the dead — who apprehend one another from different

points of view. Animals and spirits perceive themselves as human and perceive humans as animals. From this Indigenous conception, the outward “form” of each species is variable, concealing a shared internal, human form that is visible only to members of the same species or to “trans-specific” beings, such as shamans.

For this reason, Ihjãc feels threatened by the presence of the macaw and, during his father’s end-of-mourning ceremony at the end of the film, hears the voices of spirits from the underworld communicating with him. The film thus aligns with Krahô cosmology by adopting a sensible and imagistic regime that invites other ways of seeing and thinking about the world. The “perspectival quality” it assumes redefines the classical categories of nature and culture. The sound design plays a crucial role in this process, giving expression to the invisible world of spirits and natural forces.

Referring to the films he made in Lisbon, before his filmmaking approach became permeated and shaped by the Krahô world, João Salaviza states:

I like to think of the city and the houses as bodies that breathe, that attack, that rest, or that call to us... There is a very intense sound work I do during shooting and in the editing of my films, which involves perceiving the invisible dialogues I can capture between things and people. (Jaeckle, 2024, p. 39)

It is noteworthy that the director held this conception of the city and houses as living bodies capable of establishing an equal relationship with people, suggesting a correspondence between landscape and subject. Jacques Lemièrre (2024) observes that, when filming with the Krahô, Salaviza’s cinema ceases to be merely an art of time, becoming also an art of place — in the sense that it aligns the filmmakers’ inquietude with a “politics of place” (p. 57).

We can assert that the sensitive attention and listening that Renée Messoria and João Salaviza dedicate to the bodies and gestures of the characters, sustained by enduring time, transform the film’s images into haptic images (Marks, 2000). These images, appealing more to touch than to vision, enable the viewer to engage in a visceral, emotional contemplation. They also correspond to what Deleuze (1985/2018) defines as the “affect-image”: images expressing the coincidence between subject and object in a pure quality.

Considering, therefore, the attention devoted to the process and to the collective assemblage mobilised by the filmmakers Renée Messoria and João Salaviza during the making of *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos*, we propose an approach linking this mode of creation to the cartographic method. The hypothesis presented here is that cartography, as a method, is present in the film from its conceptualisation to its production, even if the directors did not explicitly draw on it.

As previously discussed, the camera in the film acts as a sensitive observer of the rhythms of the Krahô community life. This gaze, respectful of the village’s time and dynamics, allows a shared experience to unfold through multiple sensations and perspectives. Such a narrative construction method reflects the cartographic principle of not restricting experience to a single perspective but of mapping the multiple ways of being and existing in the world, collectively.

In this way, the film reveals itself as a practice of creation that transforms in contact with the “other”. It is a cinema that operates through displacements — geographical, aesthetic, and ontological — and that, by privileging process, aligns with cartographic practices. From this perspective, we propose in the following section to reflect on the cinema of Messora and Salaviza as a cartographic practice.

CARTOGRAPHY IN THE PRODUCTION OF THE COMMON

The processes of deterritorialisation and becoming that traverse *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos* resonate with cartographic practices, especially because they allow the collective to emerge as an experience of the common. Cartography follows the movements of meaning-making in their immanence, opening itself to the emergence of the common and the singular. In this sense, we see it as a method that operates through displacement, in tune with the way Messora and Salaviza conceived and realised their work: attentive to the intersections of collective experience.

Cartography participates in the construction of intersubjective territories, going beyond mere recording. It is a mode of being in process with the “other”, producing zones of contact and transformation. In the case of the film, this gesture manifests in openness to chance, to the times and dynamics of Krahô life, and in the observation of the bodies that make up the territory. Cartography, as an aesthetic and political practice, also has a participatory dimension, evident in the collaborative method adopted by Messora and Salaviza. Thus, we argue that the work exemplifies a way of making cinema as a cartographic practice — attentive to the forces of the territory and the transformations that unfold within it.

“Cartography” is a central methodological concept in the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1995/2021), especially mobilised in the fields of knowledge production in the social and human sciences. The authors propose cartography as a form of inquiry focused on the processes of subjectivity production, which demands methodological paths capable of following the movements and transformations of the real.

In the book *Mil Platôs (A Thousand Plateaus)*, Deleuze and Guattari (1995/2021) present cartography as a principle of the rhizome: an “open map, connectable in all its dimensions, dismantlable, reversible, and susceptible to constant modification,” aimed at an “experimentation anchored in the real” (p. 22). Unlike linear and Cartesian representational models, cartography adopts a non-linear logic, able to embrace the multiple, the transient, and the heterogeneous, functioning as a theoretical-methodological tool for following and intervening in the dynamics of subjectivation without seeking stable or totalising representations.

Borrowing a term from geography, the cartographic method thus refers to the tracing of processual maps of an existential territory and the study of the power relations that compose a specific field of experiences (Ferracini et al., 2014). Cartography follows the effects of the investigative path itself on the object, the researcher, and the production of knowledge, without adhering to a fixed protocol. In some countries, cartography is also known as “nomadic” or “rhizomatic” research.

Cartography understands the creation of new territories as the opening of new powers of life and, for this reason, presupposes the researcher's continuous presence in the field, in direct contact with people and their existential territories. For this reason, it approaches ethnography, adopting some of its practices, such as participant observation. Another recurrent practice is the use of the field diary, both written and visual, which serves as a recording tool and as raw material for transforming experience into knowledge and knowledge into experience.

As noted by Virgínia Kastrup (CINEAD LECAV, 2019), the cartographic method does not seek to define abstract rules but to immerse itself in the plane of affects to access a collective plane of forces, rather than a plane of forms. For this reason, its objects of study are often situated in the arts, where process is central. From this perspective, there is a dimension of reality that presents itself as creation — as *poiesis* — so that knowing it implies participating in its construction, accessing a common plane between subject and object, a movement that sustains the production of a common and heterogeneous world (Kastrup & Passos, 2013).

As noted, one of the main premises of cartography highlighted by researchers is the production of the plane of the common. The common is not something pre-established; it is produced through procedures that follow experience, attending to the concrete practices that bring it into being. Cartographic research makes this collective visible and, in this sense, is always a research-intervention, requiring the researcher's engagement to produce a common and heterogeneous plane. From this perspective, we consider that reflections on the cartographic method developed in psychology offer relevant insights for research in the arts, especially when such research aims to follow processes of creation. Cartography keeps thought in constant motion, reshaping its statements and demanding original investigative practices.

Jacques Rancière's (2000/2005) concept of the "distribution of the sensible" resonates deeply with the premises of the cartographic method. According to Rancière, the common is not given; it is constructed, enacted, and instituted as a field of aesthetic and political contestation. The distribution of the sensible thus defines a configuration of the visible, the sayable, and the thinkable: what can be shared and what remains excluded. From this articulation of aesthetics and politics, it is possible to affirm that the cartographic method also enacts a distribution of the sensible. It constructs a common field by activating practices that bring forth new ways of seeing, feeling, and being in the world.

In this context, the field journal — a practice inherited from ethnography and central to cartography — plays a crucial role. More than merely recording facts, it becomes a space of attentive listening and engaged writing, where the collective agency of enunciation and the polyphony of voices can emerge. While verbal expression is important, Kastrup and Passos (2013) emphasise that subjective displacements demand attention to the concrete and material dimension of experience that accompanies the narrative — the *felt-meaning*. To map a territory, then, is to capture not only visible forms but also the transversal vectors that give it consistency — atmospheres, rhythms, velocities, and intensities — for it is this sensible plane that sustains the coherence of the territory more than its spatial boundaries.

According to Kastrup and Passos (2013), the challenge of research is to make phenomena vibrate — to engage with the *felt-meaning* that marks the landscape and mobilises the existential territory. In this regard, we concur with them in affirming that a good translation does not seek formal equivalences or abstract concepts, but one capable of touching the sensible and embodied plane of experience. In this sense, as Passos et al. (2015) note, the cartographer's attention is essential. This attention arises from a gesture of suspension, an openness to encounter.

CONCLUSION

As cartographers argue, subject and object are jointly constituted, emerging from the same affective plane. *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos* thus takes shape as a cinema of displacement — of the filmmakers, of the characters, and of the cinematic gaze itself. The film emerges from a prolonged experience of coexistence and sharing, in which the encounter with the “other” does not occur through representation, but through the construction of a common ground.

Throughout the analysis, we have seen how, in the context of deterritorialisation, fabulation opens space for the invention of narratives and possible worlds that escape fixed identity logics. In the film, this fabulation manifests in the relation to time, in ritualised gestures, in the attentive listening to the Krahô sensible world, and in an openness to other epistemologies, producing affective landscapes that displace hegemonic regimes of representation.

In this process, diasporic space, as formulated by Avtar Brah (2005), emerges as a constitutive dimension of the cinematic practice itself. The film inhabits this border space, where categories such as “us” and “them” become porous and are continuously renegotiated in the intersubjective encounter between filmmakers and the community.

Finally, we argue that the cartographic method offers fertile tools for thinking about and accompanying cinematic practices based on collective assemblage. As in the process of creating *Chuva É Cantoria na Aldeia dos Mortos*, cartography enables mapping processes, affects, and relations in becoming. The film thus affirms a way of making cinema that, by displacing the gaze, contributes to rethinking forms of creation and knowledge in contexts marked by displacement.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Júlia Vilhena Rodrigues holds a PhD in Artistic Studies, with a specialisation in Film Studies, from the University of Coimbra, in co-supervision with the School of Communication at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. During her doctoral studies, she conducted research with artistic practice in the fields of migrant/diasporic cinema, postcolonial theory, and documentary practices. Júlia was a doctoral fellow of the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology and a collaborator at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies (University of Coimbra). She holds a bachelor's degree in Anthropology from the University of Brasília, completed training in Film Directing at the Escola de Cinema Darcy Ribeiro, and earned a master's degree in Literature, Culture and Contemporary Studies from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro. She is currently a researcher at the Communication and Society Research Centre at the University of Minho, within the CONCILIARE project. In addition to her research activities, she works as an independent filmmaker.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4684-4095>

Email: vilhena.julia@gmail.com

Address: Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Sociedade, Universidade do Minho, Campus de Gualtar, 4710-057 Braga, Portugal

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