

BEYOND FORDLÂNDIA: WOE UNTO THEE AMAZONIA!

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Devastation, death and divergent ethnocide seem to be your destiny. As much as your people struggle for the preservation of your nature, for the balance of your ecosystem, for the respect of your cultures and their traditional knowledge and techniques, the greed for easy money and lack of responsibility of big businessmen, especially the Brazilians, and the impunity for environmental crimes by governing bodies, seems to be leading us to a future of physical and cultural deserts.

Beyond Fordlândia (2017, 75 min) surprised us, not only for its beautiful imagery and the vast amount of information, but also for its esthetic concerns, not always present in documentaries, which are often much more concerned with the recording of depositions than with the images.

Films about the Amazon are a study apart. Foreign eyes still see us as lazy primitives, with no initiative, living at the cost of Mother Nature. However, national eyes rarely change their focus, for as Dr. Edna Castro of NAEA (The Nucleus for High Level Amazonian Studies (*Núcleo de Altos Estudos Amazônicos*) - of UFPA) stated: "Brazil does not know the Amazon, and what is even worse, we think that we know it".

Even living in the United States, Marcos Colón shows that he knows the Amazon. Although films about the experience of Henry Ford in the Amazon and the soybean advance in the region have been multiplying since the start of the 21st century – I remember some here, though they are rarely seen among us: "Soja, em nome do progre\$\$o - Soy, in the name of progre\$\$" (2006), by Todd Southgate (Greenpeace) (40 min.); "Amazonia- heranças de uma utopia - The Amazon - legacies of a utopia" (2006), by Ricardo Favilla and Alexandre Valenti (90 min.); "Fordlandia" (2008), by Marinho Andrade and Daniel Augusto (49 min.); "A soja na terra das chapadas - Soy in the tablelands" (2009), by Murilo Santos (42 min.); "Seu churrasco tem soja? - Does your barbecue have soy?" (2017), by Thomas Bauer - many of them, especially those on TV, heap praise and pay compliments to the enterprise of Ford, or

defend soy as the trigger for so called development (agro-business). Marcos brings us another vision in his film, a critical vision, of concern for the future of the Amazon, through interviews with scholars like Marcus Barros, Barbara Weinstein (author of an important book on the rubber cycle - "A borracha na Amazônia –expansão e decadência - Rubber in the Amazon - expansion and decline (1850-1920)" (1993)), sociologist and poet Paes Loureiro, journalist Lúcio Flávio Pinto, besides North American researchers and the many voices of the residents, farmers, unionists and activists from Belterra and Santarém.

His film brings, at least for me, two very interesting revelations:

1st – The fact that until the first "*sangria*", or bleeding, of the rubber trees in 1936, Ford profited much more from the export of wood and minerals than from rubber. An American researcher even concludes that "What Ford was interested in wasn't conquering the Amazon [as is often remembered] but in something much bigger: conquering global capitalism".

2nd - The other is about Ford's pioneering spirit in the plantation of soy and its use in the manufacture of parts for his car industry, as you will see during the film.

Finally, I would like to highlight the use of archive material (here I will stop to remember the importance of the recent access to North American archives that made it possible to throw some light on the darkness of the military coup of 1964 and the "*tempos de chumbo*" (heavy times) of the military dictatorship in Brazil) and the use of the statements of the interviewees, which are the amalgam of the film. A documentary is not an expression of reality; it is not the capturing of a truth. It is no longer cinema-truth. The filmmaker creates their reality, be it with the filmed material or be it with that which does not appear on the screen. (Remembering the analysis of Foucault's *dispositif*; that which is said, is the unsaid; the image on the screen and what is beyond the screen). Everything is the fruit of choices that materialize in the act of editing the filmed material. Therefore, a documentary can be as fictional as a film of fiction. Marcos' film tells the "truth" of the Ford archives and the "truth" of the statements collected, and with these it narrates its own truth.

Lastly, I would like to leave for reflection:

The film and the critical posture of Marcos Colón reverse the traditional process of predatory cultural extractivism, which rips out, captures and takes away images and knowledge, leaving a vacuum, a landscape of ruins, far from the eye and the knowledge of its inhabitants.

What does it mean for us to watch a documentary like this – the product of academic research from Marcos' doctorate – in which we receive highly important information at the cost of great effort? What changes may our ideas and actions come to suffer?

What are we, the researchers, the professors and the students doing, as Marcus Barros says in the film, to “at least contain the soybean where it is and not permit its advance?”

Cinema is a record, cinema is history, cinema is invention, cinema is artistic creation; in itself it is not an intervention. It is up to us to create a space for intervention in our social and professional lives.

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