

# **From Global Entertainment to Amazonian *Tecnobrega*: Mobility in Contemporary Entertainment Practices**

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## Abstract

Notions such as *transference*, *movement*, *transit* and *mobility* have become fundamental to understand the mechanisms that rule the circulation, reception and production of contemporary cultural artifacts. In spite of the growing scholarship on the topic, very little attention has been given to a particular cultural arena: the realm of contemporary entertainment. By contemporary entertainment, I refer to a set of industrial products which are especially directed to urban young audiences: cartoons, comic books, computer games, blockbuster movies, theme park attractions, etc. This thesis argues that the realm of contemporary entertainment is marked by the presence of intense mobility, by movement and acceleration on at least two levels.

First, movies (*The Matrix*, *City of God*, *Run Lola Run*, etc.), TV programs (the so-called “MTV aesthetics”), computer games (*Doom* or games based on blockbusters) and even cartoons for children (*Spongebob*, *Pokémon*, etc.) present frantic editing and engage the audiences’ senses through moving images in a vertiginous “bombardment” of signs – a phenomenon I will call *kinesthesics*. Second, the production and reception of these cultural objects take place in a highly *intermedial* environment: computer games become feature movies (*Tom Raider*, *Resident Evil*), comic books become feature movies (*Sin City*, *Spiderman*, etc.) feature movies become theme park attractions (*Jurassic Park*), theme park attractions become feature movies (*Pirates of the Caribbean*) and so on. This thesis shows how these two basic mobile characteristics play a determinant role in the complex economic, technologic and aisthetic rationale that drives the contemporary entertainment industry.

The investigation of these basic traits suggests the existence of mobility paradigms that help us better understand not only products like the ones mentioned above, but also disparate cultural artifacts such as the Brazilian *aparelhagem* – a traveling technological paraphernalia that brings musical entertainment to poor audiences in the Brazilian Amazon Region. *Aparelhagens* present an intricate blending of physical displacement, media mobility, visual spectacle and musical frenzy. This successful combination propels a popular and powerful entertainment industry in Northern Brazil known as *tecnobrega*. By analyzing the phenomenon and comparing it to global entertainment products, the thesis discloses aesthetic patterns that cross social, economic and cultural boundaries.

Key words: entertainment industry, mobility, *tecnobrega*, *aparelhagem*.

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## **1. Introduction**

“The world is in a rush, and is getting close to an end” (Giddens, 2000, p.19). These are the opening words of Anthony Giddens’ *Runaway World. How Globalization is Reshaping our Lives*. They are not, however, Giddens’ own words. The author is actually quoting a sermon by a religious authority, Archbishop Wulfstan, given in York in 1014! In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, when the whole world seems to be in a rush, when society, technology, transportation systems and telecommunications change overnight, when we live in a real *runaway world*, Giddens wonders if the anxieties and doubts of each period might be only a mere repetition of the same concerns of previous eras. Giddens argues, however, that this is not the case, as there is, according to him, objective evidence to support the idea that we are now living in a time of major and accelerated transitions.

This is his point of departure to propose a reflection, divided into five sections, on globalization and its effects on modern society. In the first section, he investigates the notion of globalization, a term scarcely used until the late 1980s, but which since then has generated an overwhelming amount of debate within scholarly and non-scholarly spheres alike. “Every business guru talks about it. No political speech is complete without reference to it”, remarks the author (Giddens, p. 25). To Giddens, the sudden and global spread of the term in the early 1990s is evidence of the very phenomenon it describes. In the other sections, Giddens concentrates on the risks that come from the globalization of science, technology and economy. These are double-edged aspects of modern life that have to be understood in terms of constant tension. Science and technology have been at

mankind's service to counter the effects of global warming, for example. However, science and technology were also the driving forces that contributed to creating global warming threats in the first place (Giddens, p. 21). Globalization allows for the unprecedented circulation of images and information, and intensive contact with others who live and think differently. However, the same phenomenon that carries an extraordinary potential for fertile exchanges can cause phobias on a global scale (Giddens, p.22-23).

In Giddens' approach, the debate on globalization cannot be restricted to a perspective that neglects its direct influence on the lives of individuals.

It is wrong to think of globalisation as just concerning the big systems, like the world financial order. Globalisation isn't only about what is 'out there', remote and far away from the individual. It is an 'in here phenomenon too, influencing intimate and personal aspects of our lives. (Giddens, p.30)

The changes and transformations of our "runaway world" need to be studied by taking into account the interconnections between the big systems and the individual, between planetary events and the daily routine. This thesis also analyzes global cultural phenomena without overlooking their impact – and possible strategic uses, as I will reveal later – on daily cultural practices. From general mechanisms that drive contemporary global entertainment to a specific case study in the Amazon Region, I will address the particular universe of contemporary entertainment, also marked by strains and conflicts in scholarly and non-scholarly spheres. However, my interpretive framework will differ from those found in the extensive academic debate on globalization. I will discuss contemporary entertainment within the current debate of *mobility*.

### **1.1 The contemporary scholarly debate on mobility.**

Sociology (Urry, 2000), Geography (Cresswell, 2006) and Cultural Analysis (Moser, 2004, Greenblatt, 2010) are some of the disciplines that have witnessed what John Urry (2007) has called the “mobility turn”. The author refers to the widespread interest the idea of mobility has generated especially since the late 1990s as a heuristic compass to guide research in the humanities. The acute perception that the world is on the move has led researchers and thinkers to reevaluate concepts such as society, place or culture – notions that have always been paramount to the disciplines aforementioned. In this mobility turn, it has become imperative to produce knowledge beyond the idea of *tradition, rootedness, location, territory* and other notions that imply some degree of stasis and fixity. *Movement, transference, displacement, motion, flux, speed, transit, flow, travel*, etc. have occupied a central position in an increasingly mobility-oriented trend in the social sciences and humanities. As a result, the analysis of objects of study that deal with literal mobility – roads, transportation, airports, migration, Diaspora, tourism, circulation of objects, etc. – or virtual mobility – circulation of images and ideologies, the internet, communication systems, etc. – have become paramount. Theoretical frameworks try to interconnect all these mobility phenomena in order to grasp a world in constant movement. There are obviously considerable areas of intersection between the debates on globalization and mobility. However, the latter changes its focus to the mobile nature of contemporary societies. From global to very daily phenomena, mobility studies attempt to understand how *mobility* is reshaping our lives.

Urry's systematization of the mobility areas he intends to investigate can illustrate this paradigm shift. For a better comprehension of what he calls "movement-driven" societies today, Urry proposes the study of five interdependent types of mobility:

- The *corporeal* travel of people for work, leisure, family life, pleasure, migration and escape, organized in terms of contrasting time-space modalities (from daily commuting to once-in-a-lifetime exile).
- The physical movement of *objects* to producers, consumers and retailers; as well as the sending and receiving of presents and souvenirs.
- The *imaginative* travel effected through the images of places and peoples appearing on and moving across multiple print and visual media.
- *Virtual* travel often in real time thus transcending geographical and social distance.
- The *communicative* travel through person-to-person messages via messages, texts, letters, telegraph, telephone, fax and mobile" (Urry, 2007, p.47)

Urry's criticism of traditional social research is that these big themes are usually investigated separately, their underlying infrastructure is revealed and then generalizations are made from their particular characteristics. However, they are rarely interconnected; all the complexity of their interdependence is not fully explored. Urry aims at contributing to his field of studies by proposing an analytical framework that centers on what these big topics have in common, namely, mobility. According to Urry, this new paradigm "emphasizes the complex assemblage between these different mobilities that may make and contingently maintain social connections across varied and multiple distances" (Urry, p.48).

Stephen Greenblatt (2010) has also adopted the same methodological maneuver in which the notion of mobility is used as a model and blueprint for the understanding of cultural phenomena. For the sake of comparison it is worth quoting three of the five principles outlined by Greenblatt in his book *Cultural Mobility – A manifesto*:

First, *mobility must be taken in a highly literal sense*. Boarding a plane, venturing on a ship, climbing onto the back of a wagon, crowding into a coach, mounting on

horseback or simply setting one foot in front of the other and walking: these are indispensable keys to understanding the fate of cultures. The physical, infrastructural, and institutional conditions of movement [...] are all serious objects of analysis. Only when conditions directly related to literal movement are firmly grasped will it be possible fully to understand the metaphorical movements: between center and periphery; faith and skepticism; order and chaos; exteriority and interiority. [...]

Second, *mobility studies should shed light on hidden as well as conspicuous movements* of peoples, objects, images, texts and ideas. Here again it would be well to begin with the literal sense: moments in which cultural goods are transferred out of sight, concealed inside cunningly designed shells of the familiar or disguised by subtle adjustments of color and form. From here it is possible to move to more metaphorical notions of hiddenness: unconscious, unrecognized, or deliberately distorted mobility, often in response to regimes of censorship or repression.

Third, *mobility studies should identify and analyze the “contact zones” where cultural goods are exchanged.* [...] Certain places are characteristically set apart from inter-cultural contact; others are deliberately made open, with the rules suspended that inhibit exchange elsewhere. A specialized group of “mobilizers” – agents, go-betweens, translators, or intermediaries – often emerges to facilitate contact, and this group, along with the institutions that they serve, should form a key part of the analysis. (Greenblatt, 2010, p.250-251)

It is possible to note some parallels between Urry’s and Greenblatt’s propositions.

Both advocate the necessity of studying mobility in literal and metaphorical contexts.

This is explicitly stated by Greenblatt’s manifesto, but it is also present in the typology proposed by Urry. This typology proposes the investigation of literal forms of mobility like the corporeal travel of people or the physical movement of objects. From there, Urry moves to the imaginative, virtual and communicative travel that forms part of today’s mediascape. Most importantly, Greenblatt and Urry share with Giddens a clear interest in day-to-day activities. Mobility should therefore not be investigated only in terms of global physical or virtual displacement, but also in day-to-day actions. Climbing onto the back of a wagon, crowding into a coach, mounting on horseback and activities related to leisure, family life, and pleasure are all apparently trivial. However, as Greenblatt argues, they are all related to physical, infrastructural and institutional conditions of movement

that must constitute serious objects of analysis. According to the author, the “mobilizers”, agents and intermediaries who participate in the circulation of cultural goods, are also paramount for the understanding of mobility in cultural analysis.

Inspired by the thought-provoking works of the aforementioned authors, I have decided to place my thesis in the fruitful contemporary scholarly debate on mobility.

## **1.2 Mobility applied to the study of contemporary entertainment.**

As a young researcher at the Canada Research Chair in Literary and Cultural Transfers at the University of Ottawa from 2003 to 2009, I had the privilege of participating in the debate on mobility in the first decade of this century. The very dynamic CRC in Literary and Cultural Transfers received national and international scholars who came from all over the world – Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, the United States, Brazil, Africa, etc. – to advance the theoretical and empirical knowledge of literary and cultural objects that were investigated under the notion of *transit*, *transfer* and *mobility*.

Within the Chair, part of my activities consisted in working as a research assistant to the project *La Culture en Transit* financed by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. My objective then was to carry out original research on the topic that could at the same time contribute to the project and eventually lead to a PhD thesis. In the meantime, scholarship on mobility studies received important contributions from renowned academic figures who proposed sophisticated analytical apparatuses for mobility investigations in their own fields of study like Urry and Greenblatt mentioned above. Daring to contribute to this rising field of studies was a daunting task for a young research assistant. However, the more I read and reflected on the texts of John Urry,

Walter Moser, Stephen Greenblatt and Tim Creswell – to name just a few of the scholars whose theoretical reflections have deeply influenced this thesis – the more I came to the conclusion that there was an important area of contemporary culture that was overlooked or not fully investigated by these thinkers, namely, the entertainment industry.

In the current scientific debate on mobility, there seems to be a pattern in the works of the aforementioned authors. They all start by offering an interpretive framework in which they present the importance, advantage and necessity of focusing on the mobile nature of their objects of study. Then they proceed to specific case studies in which they can apply and demonstrate the potentiality of this new mobility paradigm.

Tim Creswell's (2006) *On the Move – Mobility in the Modern Western World*, for example, analyzes 19<sup>th</sup> century photography, mobility in the workplace and at home, citizenship, immigration, suffragism, and airports. It also proposes a case study that is directly related to entertainment, the bodily movements of ballroom dance in the 1920s. As fascinating and inspiring as the chapter is, Creswell's analysis is very much pointed and restricted to a specific historic cultural manifestation, and its applicability to contemporary forms of entertainment is only slightly suggested. John Urry's (2007) *Mobilities* also presents a variety of case studies that spans from public transportation (roads, planes and trains) to networks (network capital and social networks). Urry briefly analyzes TV, radio and walkmans, but only in the context of larger contemporary communication systems. *Cultural Mobility – a Manifesto*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt (2010), the most recent significant addition to the mobility debate, presents articles that analyze, among other topics, mobility in the Portuguese colonial empire, the contemporary adaptation and *mise en scène* of a Shakespeare play in different parts of the

world, and the German reception of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the famous 19<sup>th</sup> century American anti-slavery novel. In Greenblatt's book, contemporary entertainment is partially neglected because one of the author's objectives is to give cultural mobility historical depth. There is a slight preference, therefore, for topics that show how motion was at work in past cultural phenomena or how past works of art "travel" in time and space.

Finally, Moser's (2004) "La Culture en Transit: Locomotion, Médiamotion and Artmotion" proposes the study of mobility issues in three broad categories, each one corresponding to a specific aspect of contemporary culture. In the section Artmotion, Moser shows how motion has become a central element in the production and reception of contemporary works of art, especially the so-called installations. As I read the accurate description and analysis of those artistic installations, I was struck by its applicability to another cultural universe, the one populated by blockbuster movies, video games and theme park attractions. Although artmotion was strictly directed to the art circuit in a more restricted sense of the word, it seemed clear to me that there were important parallels with some of the trends I observed in the creation and reception of products from contemporary entertainment industries. In spite of the possibilities of thinking about contemporary entertainment practices in terms of mobility, this was a cultural arena that has remained largely unexplored not only in the project I had joined but also in the significant publications on the topic that had since been released.

The idea that contemporary entertainment is and should be related to the general debate on mobility only became stronger as I read Angela Ndalanian's (2005) *Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment*. In her insightful comparison of

entertainment products and historic Baroque artifacts, Ndalianis performs an extensive analysis of computer games, Hollywood movies, theme park attractions and comic books. Although her comparative analysis does focus to a great extent on the mobile nature of these objects, there was no mention or use of the growing scholarship on mobility, mainly because it was being developed at the same time Ndalianis's book was released.

Some years later, my thesis aims at promoting this dialogue. More precisely, my objectives are, on the one hand, to fill in a considerable gap in current mobility studies by introducing objects from contemporary entertainment to the debate, and, on the other hand, to introduce a fresh new perspective for the cultural analysis of entertainment objects. In the upcoming chapters, my main argument is that due to its *overwhelming presence in today's culture, the entertainment industry cannot be overlooked in the mobility debate and, at the same time, that it is not possible to carry out an analysis of contemporary entertainment practices without taking into account their mobile nature.* However, to analyze the mobile nature and characteristics of contemporary entertainment practices, at the outset it will be necessary to develop a theoretical framework and describe the objects of study to be investigated.

### **1.3 A blueprint of the dissertation.**

In chapter one, I will show how the notion of *mobility* has long permeated the analysis of social and cultural phenomena in Western scholarly tradition at least since the *Dialogues of Plato*. This historic overview will show that the recent *mobility turn*, as Urry puts it, is, in fact, the result of a slow process in which the idea of mobility “moves” from a peripheral to a central position, from the margins to the center of academic interest

in the humanities and social sciences. In this chapter, I will also show in greater detail how the idea of movement has been paramount for the analysis of works of art in the last decades. The first important developments on the theme were the theoretical works on *Kinetic Art*. The term “kinetic” applied to art critique had first been used by the Russian-born sculptor Naum Gabo in the 1920s to name his work *Kinetic Sculpture, Standing Wave*. This sculpture did use movement as an integral part of its composition as many others had done before, but according to Chilvers (2004) this one was particularly important because it used real motion – not only the suggestion of movement – and its author consciously used the term kinetic in its title. In the same year, Gabo used the term in connection with the visual arts in a manifesto called *Realistic Manifesto*. In the following decades actual movement had been incorporated in the works of many renowned artists. Alexander Calder was one of the most notable “kinetic artists” with his famous *mobiles* created from the 1930s on. Although mobile works of art were extensively produced in the subsequent years, the term *kinetic art* only started being used by art critics in the 1950s.

Some years later, Frank Popper (1970) published *L’Art cinétique : l’image du mouvement dans les arts plastiques depuis 1860*, a thorough account of the evolution of movement in works of art, from its *suggestion* in 19<sup>th</sup> century impressionism to the *actual* use of motion in artworks in the 1950s and 1960s. Popper proposed a typology of different kinds of movement – for example, virtual and actual motion, movement of the work of art or of the audience – that could be combined for aesthetic effects. He also analyzed a large set of paintings, sculptures and installations to illustrate his typology. He carefully described these works of art and emphasized the importance of movement in

their constitution. A prolific academic debate on kinetic art continued in the 1970s when new technologies changed the focus of the analysis from *movement* to the *electronic and technical* innovations in art.

In the early 2000s, when the “mobility turn” in the humanities was in its incipient stages, Moser (2004) returns to the description and analysis of the aesthetic mechanisms found in recent works of art that had movement as a constitutive element. Under the name *artmotion*, Moser proposes to study how contemporary art – especially installations – rely on various kinds of movement to achieve their aesthetic objectives. In addition to *artmotion*, Moser identifies two other basic types of motion, namely *locomotion* (actual movement of the body) and *mediamotion* (movement suggested by the interaction with different media apparatuses).

The concept of *artmotion* was certainly part of the *mobility turn* that the humanities have recently undertaken, but it is also part of an academic tradition in which art historians and critics have long been aware of the importance of mobility in the production and reception of works of art. This long tradition brings up a question that is directly related to the main argument of this thesis. If the fine arts have long been studied in terms of the mobile nature of their objects, why has there not been an analogous and significant academic interest in describing and analyzing movement in objects of the entertainment industry? The entertainment industry, in so many products and artifacts has long relied on movement to achieve certain effects that are considered fun or pleasurable by the public. From the old motion pictures to the ultra-sophisticated modern motion games, entertainment products also depend on motion to achieve entertaining effects. Although there might be no definitive explanation for the absence of significant scholarly

studies that analyze and describe mobility in products of the entertainment industry, chapter 2 follows some possible clues.

The first difficulty in pursuing such a task is to come up with a clear definition of the area of investigation. After all, what is the entertainment industry? What products and activities belong to this cultural realm? Although “art” is far from having stable and clear boundaries, there are some restricted spaces – museums, galleries, etc. – and activities – painting, sculpture, poetry, etc. – that have traditionally been associated with “fine arts” in its most restricted sense, therefore making it a somehow more identifiable and manageable space of investigation when compared to the entertainment industry. As Hauptert (2006, p. vii) states, entertainment encompasses all kinds of recreational amusements, hobbies and everyday pastimes, forming a very fluid and heterogeneous group of activities and products. Even by narrowing them down and focusing only on the ones which have an industrial dimension, the researcher would still have to laboriously deal with very heterogeneous objects of study. The difficulty in doing so may partially explain why most academic analyses on the topic focus on specific areas – TV, video games, radio – rather than try to find common traits in these different entertainment industries. Some notable exceptions are Hauptert (2006) and Ndalians (2005) who carry out the task of describing common economic, social and/or aesthetic patterns that cross the borders of entertainment industries.

Another reason that can partially explain the absence of mobility studies in the entertainment industry is the cultural *status* these objects and practices have long had. It was not until the 1980s with the emergence of *Cultural Studies* that Pop Culture, Mass Media and the Entertainment Industry became areas of strong academic interest. Until

very recently, cultural artifacts were more rigidly placed in highbrow and lowbrow categories, a division that was very often consciously and deliberately cultivated as shown by Jim Collins (2002) in his *High-Pop - Making Culture into Popular Entertainment*. According to the author, in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the United States possessed the basic conditions for mass entertainment to flourish. At the time, popular and high art were not neatly separated and could occupy the same cultural spaces (Collins, 2002, p. 3). In the concerts of this first phase, popular songs and arias were performed together. There was not the notion that popular songs were inappropriate or that they were not part of the realm of arias. In a second phase, roughly in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a gradual segregation of culture into popular and elite spheres took place. Based on studies conducted by social historians like Paul Dimaggio (1992) and Lawrence Levine (1988), Collins affirms that the Brahmins, the wealthiest and oldest families from Boston, started a systematic and conscious process of appropriation and control of cultural organizations like museums and concert halls. Wealthy Brahmin entrepreneurs started restricting their cultural production exclusively to the particular tastes and sensibilities of Boston elites. As a result, the boundaries between High Culture and Popular Culture were strongly delimited and an inevitable hierarchization followed suit.

This hierarchy of tastes remained relatively stable and continued in the United States towards the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Collins, 2002, p.5). Quoting Levine, Collins points out that “what was invented was the illusion that the aesthetic products of high culture were originally created to be appreciated in precisely the manner late nineteenth-century Americans were taught to observe: with reverent, informed, disciplined seriousness”

(Levine, 1988, p.229). The Brahmins case illustrates the construction of an opposition between art and entertainment as if these two spheres of cultural life never intersected each other's orbit. According to this logic, works of art have a set of characteristics that turn them into "noble" objects of study, worthy of being analyzed and "taken seriously". Entertainment products, on the other hand, are "just for fun" and do not constitute a respectable space of investigation – an opposition that will be refuted in the second chapter of this thesis.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the group of intellectuals that eventually became known as the *Frankfurt School* promoted a prolific debate on the social, cultural, economical and political conditions of the time. Part of their intellectual goal was to critically understand and explain what they believed to be the failure of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment project. Since the Enlightenment promoted reason as the legitimate source of intellectual authority, humankind should have emancipated itself from myth and therefore progressed towards more rational and evolved societies. However, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the world witnessed the birth of many authoritarian and violent regimes in Europe and capitalist class domination in the Americas. In their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, two of the most prominent members of the Frankfurt School, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1944), developed a complex argumentative framework in which the failure of the Enlightenment project was attributed to the replacement of old myths by new mechanisms of domination. Adorno and Horkheimer identified what they called the *culture industry* as one of these powerful new mechanisms of control. Much of what they called the culture industry included the entertainment industries of the time – in the section dedicated to the topic, Adorno and Horkheimer specifically discuss cinema,

radio, music and magazines. The Frankfurt School was so influential that from the Marxism of the 1940s to the New Left of the 1960s and 1970s, Adorno and Horkheimer's texts and ideas became central to the academic debate on the culture industry and mass entertainment. However, this debate – including the reevaluation of mass culture products by Cultural Studies since the 1980s – almost always revolved around supporters or detractors of Adorno's ideas (Bernstein, 1991, p.3-5). The powerful controversy generated by the Frankfurt School monopolized for decades the debate about products from the culture industry, leaving little space for significant works that would analyze this cultural space beyond its social and political role in modern societies.

Along with the reasons aforementioned, another factor might explain the relatively long tradition of mobility studies applied to the arts and the absence of an analogous tradition that would have studied the mobile nature of entertainment products. Since Baumgarten established the foundations of aesthetics in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this new branch of philosophy gradually specialized in the study of the fine arts up to a point it became a “philosophy of art”. Over the centuries, the elaborate reflections by art historians, aestheticians and art critics worldwide have created the ideal conditions for the development of a theory of movement in fine arts. After all, part of the tasks undertaken by aesthetics included the description and analysis of works of art and of their production and reception. The products of the entertainment industry received a different treatment from academia, which debated for several decades over the appropriateness of Adorno's interpretation of the culture industry as an instrument of mass domination.

However, as will be discussed in the third chapter of this thesis, aesthetics underwent a general crisis in the 1980s when the boundaries and definition of *art* began

to be questioned and challenged by scholars and avant-garde artists. Aestheticians and critics tried different strategies to respond to such a crisis. Among these strategies, one is particularly interesting due to its potential of opening up the limits of aesthetics by freeing it from the confines of the fine arts. This strategy consists in a return to Baumgarten's project of founding a theory of cognition based on subjective perception, a theory that would not be restricted to art objects. In this return to Baumgarten's initial project, it is important to remember the etymology of the term "aesthetics" from the Greek *aisthētikós*, which means "things perceptible by feeling, sensation". The empiricist tradition to which Baumgarten belonged tried to understand how knowledge was constructed via the sensorial interaction with the world. Aisthesis, meaning sensation or perception, becomes then the key element for the enlargement of aesthetics as a field of study. By restoring the aisthesis as a fundamental condition for any cognitive access to the material world, the aesthetic tradition with its reflections and analyses can be applied to cultural objects other than artworks, such as products from the entertainment industry, for example. Taking into account this return to aisthesis, I propose the notion of *aisthesis mobility* to undertake the project of studying the mobile nature of contemporary entertainment products.

In my analysis and description of the mobile characteristics of the entertainment industry, I am particularly interested in investigating how the senses are activated and engaged during the entertainment experience. That is, when someone watches a blockbuster movie, plays contemporary video games or rides a theme park attraction what aisthesis mechanisms are at work? Are there constant patterns in relation to the way the senses are activated? What kind of sensorial movement is produced in these

activities? Movements of the body – *locomotion* – and media movements – *mediamotion* – are the basic types of motion to which I will refer throughout the illustrations and empirical analysis, but I will specifically focus on the combination and use of these movements to achieve or enhance particular sensorial effects on contemporary entertainment audiences. By observing the reception of several entertainment products, I will highlight two of these movements, strong aesthetic “trademarks” of contemporary entertainment industries that were recurrent in most of the products analyzed. These two general traits were called *kinesthetics* and *intermediality*.

Under the term *kinesthetics*, I will draw attention to a trendy aesthetic feature in products from the entertainment industry, namely, different kinds of movement that satisfy the consumer’s taste for accelerated and/or immersive sensorial experiences. To watch a CGI – computer graphic imagery – blockbuster today almost invariably means to be exposed to fast-paced action scenes, frantic editing and an explosion of sound and visual effects that overstimulate the senses. This kind of aesthetic experience forces audiences to constantly and frenetically scan the screen in order to maximize the movie experience. *The Matrix* (Wachowsky, 1998) is the emblematic illustration used in chapter 3 to describe such an experience, but almost any recent CGI blockbuster would fit to some extent into this description such as *Spiderman* (Raimi, 2002), *Transformers* (Bay, 2007), *Iron Man 2* (Favreau, 2010), etc. Sensorial acceleration and aesthetic intensity – frantic montage, fast-paced action scenes, and high decibels – are used in these movies to produce the sensation of enhanced mobility. This sensorial intensity is preferably produced with technologies that can immerse audiences in the fictional worlds that are exhibited in front of them. This can partially explain the resurgence in the last decade of

3D technology in movie theaters and the considerable economic success of movies like *Avatar* (Cameron, 2009), *How to Train your Dragon* (Deblois and Sanders, 2010) and *Toy Story 3* (Unkrich, 2010). In the 3D experience the body stays still but the immersive technology augments the sensation of fighting alongside Jake against evil mercenaries in *Avatar*, or flying a dragon for the first time with the young Viking of *How to Train your Dragon* or even trying to escape a moving conveyor belt leading to a fire pit with Woody and Buzz in *Toy Story 3*. In this aesthetic tendency it is not enough to watch accelerated battle or action scenes: it is necessary to encapsulate the human sensorial apparatus so that one has the illusion of being *inside* these fast-paced adventures.

In addition to kinesthetic effects, entertainment products also explore a special kind of sensorial mobility. In the contemporary mediascape, old and new media coexist—cinema, TV, video games, print media, etc. — and they influence each other in many ways on many levels. The relatively new field of *media theory* has been interested in this phenomenon and has described it through different terminologies. Intermediality, remediation, franchise media-crossover, transmedia storytelling/transmedia practice, media convergence and cross media are some of the terms that have been developed in the last decades to describe with different focuses and objectives the intermedial phenomenon. In the particular field of contemporary entertainment, intermediality can be observed, for example, in the transposition of a franchise among different media. As observed by Ndalians (2004), this is part of the economic rationale of squeezing the fullest economic potential from a product (p.40-41). This means that the Batman franchise, for example, will be exhaustively exploited in all kinds of media and toy platforms from movies to TV series, to video games, to comic books, to McDonald's

toys, to Legos, etc. Ndalians (2004) focuses on the narrative and economic aspects of the transference of one single character and his basic storyline to several different media. In my own analysis, I am interested in exploring the sensorial aspects of experiencing the same franchise, Batman, for example, through a number of different media platforms. Entertainment products today demand much more from their audiences than simply knowing a character, and his/her allusions and references to other entertainment products. My argument is that the intense intermedial movement of entertainment products forces audiences to “transport” sets of sensorial elements through different kinds of media. When someone watches the initial credits of the movie *Spiderman 2* (Raimi, 2004), for example, he is “reading” a comic book on the cinema screen that retells the story of the previous *Spiderman* (Raimi, 2002). However, it is not only the narrative tradition of the character that is being retrieved, but also the sensorial experience of another media, in this case the comic book, that is remediated on the big screen.

Other representative examples – especially from the video game and the theme park industry – will be used to illustrate the very sophisticated ways in which bodily movements and mediamotion are used by the entertainment industry to achieve kinesthetic and intermedial effects. Although the description of these aspects will concentrate on the process of reception, there are features in their production that cannot be overlooked. The fact that these aesthetic effects usually depend on advanced technologies indicates a techno-fascination that will be further explored in chapter 3. How does the development of new technologies – or the evolution of existing ones – impact the production and reception of entertainment products? How do entertainment industries and audiences influence – and how are they influenced by – the development

of new technologies? What is its overall impact on the economic rationale that moves these industries? What are the correlations between aesthetic mobility, technology and economics in the making of and consumption of these products? In search for answers to these questions, a general principle can be extracted. Aesthetic mobility, technology and the industry's economic rationale impact each other on a feedback looping process that guides entertainment industries today – a mechanism that will be further described in chapter 3. It is important to stress that technological and economic aspects are not the central focus of this work – as is usually the case when entertainment industries are analyzed. In this thesis the mobility issues, more specifically aesthetic ones, will remain the focus of the overall analysis while technologic and economic factors will be considered *in relation to* the mobile characteristics of entertainment products.

#### **1.4 Tecnobrega: A Latin American case study.**

Most of the examples used in chapter 3 to illustrate the mobile mechanisms at work in contemporary entertainment industries come from global products, that is, artifacts that are consumed worldwide. Since most of these products come from the United States, it was necessary to pursue, in a comparative fashion, the analysis of a Latin American case. This comparative perspective would provide the possibility of observing the applicability of my interpretive framework to a Latin America case study and verify what similarities and differences would come out of the comparison with U.S. entertainment products. Are those aesthetic elements – kinesthetics and intermediality – only characteristic of products that have a global circulation? In a local Latin American context, do the dynamics among aesthetic mobility, technology and economics behave in

a different way? If so, how is it different? In order to answer these questions, I have chosen the *tecnobrega* industry in Belém do Pará as my main object of analysis.

The *tecnobrega* industry is a particular entertainment industry that was born in Belém do Pará in the Brazilian Amazon Region. It was chosen because it brought together the ideal conditions to constitute my main case study. It was a local Latin American entertainment phenomenon, but it had grown into a large business of industrial proportions with different enterprises and agents working in its chain of production. It also boasted mass audiences that consumed different products and engaged in entertainment practices that could be compared with their global counterparts. Furthermore, it was an industry I was relatively familiar with. As a resident of Belém do Pará I witnessed first hand the growth of this particular industry from a small local phenomenon to its regional outreach to its projection on a national level. Finally, it had “Latin American characteristics” that turned it into an even more interesting case to be analyzed. *Brega* in Portuguese means cheesy, tacky, therefore *tecnobrega* would literally mean “technocheesy” or “technotacky”. In Belém do Pará, *brega* is also a rhythm, a type of music style that has been enjoyed by the poorest Brazilian Amazonian population for decades. It also names the dance that couples have invented and developed in poor clubs called *bregões* or *clube sociais* where *brega* songs are listened to. It eventually started being used to refer to the whole industry and to the productive chain that was connected to it. The prefix “tecno” was added in the mid-2000s to name a variant of the traditional *brega* that was influenced by a more accelerated techno beat.

As the name reveals, and its origins suggests, *brega* was regarded from the very beginning as something cheesy, low, in bad taste. In the 1970s, *brega* songs were

romantic, unsophisticated ballads whose lyrics spoke about love, broken hearts and sentimental disenchantments and that were considered tacky, even vulgar, to the point that it was shameful to say one liked *brega* songs. In Belém, enjoying or despising this rhythm meant much more than simply consuming or rejecting a lowbrow cultural product. Listening to *brega* was almost a stigma, something that was immediately related to the musical tastes of the illiterate, the outlaws, the prostitutes and the lowest classes of the local society. From the mid-1980s to the present the *brega* industry grew exponentially and the controversy around the music increased in the same proportion. In the last decades new agents entered the *brega* circuit, some actors became less significant in the industry and others gained great importance, such as the *aparelhagem* parties. *Aparelhagens* are the moving sound systems that travel from place to place bringing music spectacles to poor audiences which, in spite of the stigmatization, have turned *tecnobrega* into a thriving industry – a phenomenon that will be carefully described in chapter 4

In the case of the *tecnobrega* industry, and more specifically *aparelhagem* parties, one can observe aesthetic patterns that are very similar to the ones found in global entertainment products. However, in such a context of social inequalities, poverty and cultural stigmatization, mobility issues clearly took on a striking – and seemingly inevitable – socio-cultural connotation. By watching documentaries, reading articles and books, conducting interviews, talking to friends, and attending an *aparelhagem* party for the first time, I discovered a complex case of entertainment in which the mobile aspects found in global entertainment products took on a whole new dimension. The in-depth analysis of the *tecnobrega* industry will show that the proposed correlations among

aesthetic mobility, technology and economics can “travel” to local contexts and in the process adapt to different social and cultural realities.

## ***2. On Mobility.***

### **2.1 Cultural mobility: a genealogic approach.**

The term *cultural mobility* has been used as a key notion for the understanding of contemporary cultural practices. In relatively recent academic studies, the term *cultural mobility* has been used in a very broad way to refer to all kinds of transfers, transferences, movements, transit and displacement and their impact on contemporary culture. Air travel, the internet, global trade and the complex interlocking networks of information and technology have become emblematic of an increasingly mobile society. Tourism, migration, the circulation of people, objects, images, texts and many other kinds of displacement are some of the issues that have been discussed in the cultural mobility debate (Greenblatt, 2010, p.1-20). In his book entitled *Cultural Mobility – a Manifesto*, Stephen Greenblatt defends a thesis that is today widely accepted in mobility studies:

The apparent fixity and stability of cultures is, in Montaigne’s words, “nothing but a more languid motion”. Even in places that at first glance are characterized more by homogeneity and stasis than by pluralism and change, cultural circuits facilitating motion are at work (Greenblatt, p.5)

Greenblatt insists on the idea that although this premise is generally accepted, it is important to give it some historical perspective and analyze specific cases that precede “the internet or Apex fares or the spread of English on the wings of international capitalism” (Greenblatt, p.5). For this reason, the author proposes in his book a varied collection of case studies that range from colonial Goa to mid-nineteenth-century America to contemporary China, from books to theater to tourism - a diversity that is representative of the applicability and extension of contemporary mobility studies. The somewhat recent but widely spread academic interest in *mobility* calls for a historic

account of the usage and circulation of the concept, from its ancient predecessors to its contemporary appropriation in different fields of study.

As for the movements of people, mobility goes back as far as human history itself. From ancient nomadic groups to modern tourism, physical mobility has always played an important role in human societies. Invasions, conquests, colonizations, exoduses and many other complex forms of displacement are part of virtually any societal constitution. Because physical displacement has always been part of human life, this kind of mobility has had a long tradition in the history of Western thinking. According to Rudmin (2003), a complete genealogy of the philosophical reflections on the theme can be traced back at least to Plato, who discussed the theme in his dialogues:

“The intercourse of cities with one another is apt to create a confusion of manners; strangers are always suggesting novelties to strangers. [...] On the other hand, the refusal of states to receive others, and for their own citizens never to go to other places, is an utter impossibility, and to the rest of the world is likely to appear ruthless and uncivilized; it is a practise adopted by people who use harsh words, such as xenelasia or banishment of strangers, and who have harsh and morose ways” (Plato, 1892 [348 BC], p. 338-339).

“[...] the stranger who comes from abroad should be received in a friendly spirit. Now there are four kinds of stranger, of whom we must make some mention – the first is he who comes and stays throughout the summer; this class are like birds of passages, taking wing in pursuit of commerce, and flying over the sea to other cities, while the season lasts; he shall be received in market-places, harbors and public buildings, near the city but outside, by those magistrates who are appointed to superintend these matters, and they shall take care that a stranger, whoever he be, duly receives justice; but he shall not be allowed to make any innovations. They shall hold the intercourse with him which is necessary; and this shall be as little as possible”. (Plato, 1892 [348 BC], p.501)

It is clear here that Plato is indirectly discussing human mobility. Traveling from one city to another may result in potentially hazardous “mixtures”. People who travel from place to place are always “suggesting novelties to strangers”. As a precaution to minimize such dangers, Plato gives a long list of recommendations and suggestions on

how to deal with the possible problems caused by the circulation of all kinds of travelers who come from abroad. The logic is simple: since mobility of these travelers is inevitable, it is necessary to take measures to minimize as much as possible the influence of these inter-cultural contacts. Of course Plato's main concern is not human mobility *per se*. He is interested in the possible "cultural contamination" that can come up as a *result* of such mobility.

It is not my intention to outline the enormous body of literature on this subject. However, it is important to point out that one of the main interests of academic studies on human mobility has been its impact on culture, as we can already observe in the Plato passages above. In modern Social Sciences, the Chicago School of Sociology tried to understand in the 1920s how "the migrant communities coming from the rural South, the Black community among others, or from various parts of the world, integrate into the town in a spatial way and into modernity from a cultural viewpoint" (Dubet, 2002, p.396). Actually, as early as 1918, two of the most prominent thinkers of the Chicago School, W. I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, had already published the seminal study *The Polish Peasant*, in which they tried to understand the cultural impact of immigration on the lives of Polish immigrants who had come to Chicago at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this classic work, the researchers, following the then dominant model of "acculturation", empirically analyzed the traumas, troubles and cultural transformation faced by Polish immigrants in the United States of the time (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1996 [1918]). In these earlier stages of research on the topic, immigrant groups were portrayed as collectivities that were taken out of their home countries and had to adapt as minorities in a new society. *The Polish Peasant* was paradigmatic of a whole academic tradition that

focused its research on the adjustments and changes experienced by aboriginals, immigrants and other minorities in response to their contact with the dominant majority. The process was usually described in terms of traumatic experiences, difficulties of adjustment and painful isolation from the country of origin. Concepts and ideas like assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization were commonly used to describe the migrant phenomenon (Berry, 1980). Theories were dominated by a set of binary paradigms: minority vs. majority, assimilation vs. resistance, country of origin vs. country of settlement. In *The Polish Peasant*, for example, Thomas and Znaniecki extensively analyzed hundreds of biographies to disclose the “cultural transformation undergone by the migrant who has to change from rural to urban society, from a community structured by its religious values to the diversity of the town, from recognition to anonymity” (Dubet, 2002, p.397).

Those binary approaches gradually changed as the world began to undergo major economic and political shifts. In late 1980s/early 1990s, the world could no longer be understood in terms of separate and individual nation-states whose borders defined monolithic human collectivities. Globalization, transnationalism and diaspora started to dominate the debates on the Human and Social Sciences. In his famous article “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy”, Appadurai writes:

“The new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models (even those which might account for multiple centers and peripheries). Nor is it susceptible to simple models of push and pull (in terms of migration theory), or of surpluses and deficits (as in traditional models of balance of trade) or of consumers and producers (as in most neo-Marxist theories of development)” (Appadurai, 1990, p.31)

By building bridges among migration studies, media studies and economy, Appadurai proposes a framework to understand contemporary global cultural flows.

According to him, these cultural flows have to be understood not only through the movements of people, but also through other complex movements that include the circulation of images by modern media and the circulation of capital on a global scale, among others. He specifically identifies five “-scapes” that would help understand the fundamental disjunctures that, according to him, characterize today’s interconnections of economy, culture and politics:

Ethnoscape refers to moving groups and persons that affect the politics of nations and transnational relations, such as tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, etc.

Technoscape indicates the global and fluid configuration of technology and its capacity to cross various kinds of boundaries at high speeds.

Financescape designates the global flows of capital in all its complexity: currency markets, national stock exchanges, commodity speculations, etc.

Mediascape refers to “both the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations and film production studios) [...] and to the images of the world created by these media” (Appadurai, 1990, p.33)

Ideoscape is also very image-oriented, but here Appadurai refers more specifically to the concatenation of images, ideas and terms that serve the ideologies of states as well as the counter-ideologies of opposing political movements.

In another groundbreaking article, Glick-Schiller et. al. (1992) also propose new frameworks for the understanding of human mobility:

“Our earlier conceptions of immigrant and migrant no longer suffice. The word *immigrant* evokes images of permanent rupture, of the uprooted, the abandonment of old patterns and the painful learning of a new language and culture. Now, a new kind of migrating population is emerging, composed of those whose

networks, activities and patterns of life encompass both their host and home societies. [...] Transmigrants develop and maintain multiple relations – familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political that span borders.” (Glick-Schiller et.al., 1992, p.213).

In this article, Glick-Schiller et.al. followed the academic tradition of studying specific examples from migrant communities (this time in New York), but insisted on the powerful role played by these groups both locally in the town they lived in as well as transnationally between two or more societies at the same time. The troubled minority of 1920s Chicago as described by *The Polish Peasant* is here replaced by influential and organized immigrant groups in New York in the early 1990s. Like Appadurai, Glick-Schiller et.al. also draw attention to the interconnections among migration, world capitalism and the flows of meanings. The article also introduces the flow of objects as a key element for understanding an ever-increasing world of mobility. The authors explore, for example, how the sending of *balikbayan* boxes from the United States to the Philippines had a significant cultural and economic impact on both countries.

*Balikbayans* (literally homecomers) was a term created by the then president Marcos Aquino to refer to the Philippine diaspora. He officially encouraged the members of this diaspora “to visit their home once a year during the holidays. He developed economic and legal means to facilitate their return and allowed each of them to bring yearly two *balikbayan* boxes duty-free.” (Glick-Schiller et.al., 1992, p.215). All kinds of objects could be transported – appliances, books, toys, electronic equipment and the like. The result was a process of transference with large-scale cultural and economic impact especially on the two countries directly involved.

What is important in these very brief examples is to notice the inclusion of different elements in the academic reflection on mobility. The flows of people were no

longer the only mobility phenomenon to be studied. The idea of mobility began to be applied to all sorts of elements: media images, ideas, objects, capital, etc. However, it is important to notice that notions such as mobility, movement or transference did not appear as heuristic constructs *per se* in this academic research. That is, the interest was not so much in a theory of transference/mobility itself as in the **results** of such movement in the contemporary world. It was not until the early 2000s that John Urry and Walter Moser, working independently and in their own fields of expertise, started developing methodological approaches based on the idea of mobility. In 2002, Moser proposed a “theory of transference”, in which the idea of mobility would be a defining trait of the world we live in. The ambition of creating such a theory is explicitly stated in the institutional text used to present the then recently created Canada Research Chair in Literary and Cultural Transfers:

“The Chair adopts the following position: since transfer has proven to be a central process in contemporary culture, the notion of "transfer" might also prove a useful intellectual instrument, an axis concept, with which these current transformations may be approached and explored. This would entail an initial focus upon the concept itself, an attempt to extract from the various discursive manifestations of "transfer" a core concept, which would then serve as an analytical tool. (Moser, 2002a).

The objective of turning the notion of “transfer” into a heuristic construct that would enable us to understand contemporary mobility is also clearly presented in the objectives of the Chair: “Firstly, a theoretical section shall address the notion of "transfer", placing it at the very center of cultural mobility and manipulating it with a view to innervating, and then developing, a certain type of analysis” (Moser, 2002b). By placing the notion of transfer at the center of cultural mobility, Moser proposes a theory that would be capable of interconnecting in an elemental level the many intricate phenomena already mentioned above: the increasing physical human mobility, the

circulation of material goods and images on a global scale, media as agents of such a process, etc. As a minimal unit, “transfer” can be understood as the transport or the transference of material from a system A to a system B. However, by applying such an elemental notion as “transfer” to the understanding of cultural mobility, one runs the risk of bursting the applicability of the concept. Of course, the transportation of seeds by birds in the wild, for example, belongs to another field of study, which means that the application of “transfer” as a central notion for cultural mobility studies has to be further demarcated. Therefore, for the understanding of “cultural mobility”, the most fundamental unit of analysis would be “cultural transfer”:

In its simplest, interculturally accepted sense, cultural transfer is the transport of cultural materials from one culture to another. This means displacement and transport, the breaching of distances, the crossing of thresholds. At the point of departure, there is a selection of what to transport, an extraction, a de-contextualisation; at the point of arrival, a reinsertion, a re-contextualisation. The transferred material is transformed in the process, since its identity and its meaning depend on its relation to a context. (Moser, 2002a)

Applied to the field of culture as a minimal unit, the term “transfer” certainly opens up the possibility of putting an enormous spectrum of cultural goods and phenomena side by side. By analogy, if **cultural transfer** is placed at the very centre of **cultural mobility**, it means the latter also becomes applicable to the comparative analysis of a wide range of cultural phenomena. However, if on the one hand this methodological approach allows for capturing one of the defining characteristics of our society, that is, the widespread phenomenon of movement, in all its senses and forms, on the other hand there still is the danger of developing a concept whose powerful applicability can overflow its heuristic value.

As stated before, physical human displacement at first dominated the intellectual reflections on mobility. Afterwards, new types of movement produced by new media,

technology, globalization and other contemporary phenomena were included in recent academic reflections on mobility. The term “cultural transfer” as a basic unit to understand today’s cultural mobility was suggested as a powerful intellectual maneuver capable of greatly influencing current cognition on culture because it allows for incorporating all these new elements in the same framework. However, how can one propose such a powerful concept without losing control of its applicability? If everything in today’s culture tends to be “on the move”, how to establish “mobility” as a theoretical tool that does not lose relevance in empirical analyses? In her article on the concept of “diaspora”, Dominique Schnapper argues:

“Il faut simplement donner un sens assez précis à un concept pour qu’il reste heuristiquement fécond. Il n’est efficace pour aider à la compréhension sociologique ou historique que si le chercheur n’en étend pas indéfiniment le sens. S’il le fait, le concept perd en compréhension ce qu’il gagne en extension.”  
(Schnapper, 2001, p.36)

In the case of “cultural mobility”, extended applicability is certainly acquired by the use of “cultural transfer” as its minimal unit. However, for the term to keep its heuristic potential, the researcher needs to continue the conceptual work so that it can be applied to specific objects of analysis. “Cultural mobility” has to be “semantically demarcated” in a rigorous fashion, and its vast field of application has to be compartmentalized, so that empirical analyses of cultural artifacts and phenomena can be rendered possible. Systematization in the study of contemporary mobile phenomena is imperative; otherwise the term *cultural mobility* runs the risk of becoming a heteroclitical and unmanageable notion.

This systematization effort can be observed in a later moment when Moser (2004) proposes a framework for the analysis of today’s cultural mobility. In his “La Culture en Transit: Locomotion, Médiomotion et Artmotion”, the author identifies three large areas

in which mobility can be observed and used as a guide for analysis. Inspired by Appadurai's aforementioned article (1990), Moser also identifies areas in today's world marked by the idea of flow and movement. However, there are significant differences.

First of all, while Appadurai employs the suffix “-scape”, Moser uses “-motion”. According to the *Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* “-scape” comes from the Dutch suffix “-schap”, which is more commonly translated in English as the suffix “-ship”<sup>1</sup>. By using this suffix, Appadurai proposes a terminology that evokes categorization as “-scape” and “-ship” refer to the common characteristics shared by a set of individuals or elements. On the other hand, by choosing “-motion” for his terminology, Moser reveals the intention of placing mobility as the core concept in his theoretical framework. In Appadurai's case, “landscape” is the word that seems to have originated the other “scapes” (ethnoscape, mediascape, technoscape, financescape and ideoscape). According to the Oxford Dictionary of English, “landscape” refers to “all the visible features of an area of land” or in a more restricted sense “a picture representing an area of countryside”<sup>2</sup>. In his choice of the word “landscape”, Appadurai refers to a phenomenology of the contemporary world in which the observer/researcher can see a large set of elements having something in common from his viewpoint. In Moser's case, the suffix “-motion” immediately applies movement to this phenomenology. It is not about an observer who views a specific area of rural scenery. On the contrary, “motion” evokes

1 a: an act, process, or instance of changing place: movement [...]

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<sup>1</sup> “Landscape.” *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, Walter W. Skeat, ed., Oxford University Press, revised edition, 1959.

<sup>2</sup> “Landscape.” *Oxford Dictionary of English*, Angus Stevenson, ed. Oxford University Press, 2010.

6 a: an act or instance of moving the body or its parts<sup>3</sup>

Appadurai affirms that the suffix “-scape” has a double objective: to point to the fluid, irregular shapes of these landscapes and to show that they are deeply perspectival constructs (Appadurai, p.39). What Moser does by choosing the suffix “-motion” is to shift the focus from the viewer and landscape to the mobility/movement within and among these landscapes. In this way, mobility is placed right at the core of the theoretical framework proposed. This shift reinforces the genealogy of the concept proposed earlier. From Plato’s approach up until the recent propositions by Moser, it is possible to identify how “mobility” gradually turned from peripheral to central, from tangential to focal. A closer look at the three “motions” proposed by Moser can attest to such a tendency:

Locomotion Following the long tradition on mobility studies, “locomotion” refers to the actual physical mobility of human beings and its cultural impact on human societies. In an analogy with Appadurai’s framework, *locomotion* corresponds to *ethnoscape*, with both concentrating on contemporary manifestations of the human physical mobility phenomena. However, besides the methodological shift in which the movement itself is as important as its results in culture as discussed above, Moser’s *locomotion* also has an internal function within its systemic framework. It works as a contrast to the second “motion”, namely, “mediamotion”.

Mediamotion refers to the ensemble of movements observed within contemporary media. The semantization of Moser’s *mediamotion*, however, differs significantly from Appadurai’s *mediascape*. Appadurai focuses his analysis on the capabilities of creating and distributing images through contemporary media: newspapers, magazines, television

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<sup>3</sup> “Motion.” *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, <http://www.britannica.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/bs/dictionary?query=motion> accessed on 10 March 2011.

and film). In this global landscape of images (print, celluloid, electronic screens and billboard), audiences are exposed to a large array of images, narratives and ideas in which the “world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed” (Appadurai, 1990, p.7). Moser’s *mediamotion* also deals with the “ensemble des mouvements qui ont leur moteur dans les médias” (Moser, 2004, p. 27). However, Moser is interested here in a particular kind of movement:

"La situation type, dans notre expérience quotidienne, étant une personne assise devant un écran : l'être humain peut rester physiquement immobile, c'est le monde médiatisé qui est en mouvement sur l'écran et qui, en défilant, interpelle notre appareil sensoriel" (Moser, 2004, p.27)

So, in its most elemental conceptualization, *mediamotion* does not focus on the transfer of images in today’s media landscape as Appadurai does with his *mediascape*. Moser introduces a more basic type of movement from which, of course, other media mobility discussions can stem. This basic movement is related to the media capability of inputting images and sensations through the human senses (most remarkably hearing and sight) without any actual physical movement from the spectator. Both locomotion and *mediamotion* are kinds of movement; the former entails actual bodily displacement, while the latter implies movement through the senses which are activated by new media technology without necessarily involving real locomotion. That is, if we think in terms of the minimal mobility unit, we can say that the transfer from a system A to a system B in the *mediamotion* experience is performed by the interaction between the human sensorial apparatus and the world of images and sounds produced by new media. In a very didactic example, a person in Ottawa who watches a documentary about African lions on Discovery Channel in his living room has some sensorial access to a specific universe of images and sounds without actually traveling to Africa. In this case, the human being

moves between two systems, but not through travel. Cultural contact is made possible through a mediatic experience. In the author's own words:

"C'est ce monde, en médiation symbolique, qui est alors capté par nos sens dans une immédiateté esthétique qui entre en contradiction avec sa distance réelle. En « médiamotion » nous faisons souvent l'expérience paradoxale d'un contact à distance." (Moser, 2004, p. 27)

So while Appadurai frames his media mobility within the vast framework of the global cultural economy, Moser adds the sensorial aspect of modern media experience to the discussion. The aisthesis and the sensorium assume then a fundamental relevance for the understanding of media mobility and its impact on today's global culture. By performing this methodological shift on mobility studies, Moser once more opens up a whole new array of approach possibilities for academic research on the subject. I will later follow one of these possible paths in my particular analysis of mobility in the contemporary entertainment industry, and more specifically in my main case study, the *aparelhagem* cultural phenomenon in Belém do Pará, Brazil. Prior to the actual analysis of this phenomenon, due to its relevance in my conceptual apparatus, I will further develop the notion of *aisthetic mobility* in a special section.

Artmotion The neologism *artmotion* designates the contemporary artistic experiences in which the audience engages in some kind of mobility in their interaction with the work of art. "Art" here is understood in its most traditional sense, that is, as the cultural production associated with the realm of galleries and museums of contemporary art. Moser makes clear that artmotion does not deal with the culture industry, mass culture or mass media: "il s'agit du cercle étroit de l'art comme un sous-système culturel et social d'accès restreint" (Moser, 2004, p.36). In artmotion analyses, special attention is given to a form of art which has gained importance in this circumscribed cultural

universe, namely, the “installation”. Very often the so-called installations rely on a sophisticated technological apparatus with which the spectator has to interact for the realization of the artistic experience. The classic artistic experience of wandering around a museum and contemplating canonical works of art now coexists with a new form of artistic experience in which the spectator often has to watch videos, circulate from one space to another, touch objects and listen to narratives. The static contemplation of Mona Lisa gives way to more mobile experiences in some contemporary works of art. Now, in his interaction with the work of art, the spectator has to move: physically (locomotion) and/or through the use of a media apparatus (mediamotion)<sup>4</sup>. *Artmotion* refers precisely to these mobilities and their intricate correlations in the field of art.

The 2009 exhibition “Caught in the act” organized by the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa illustrates this tendency. In this exhibition, the artworks proposed by several Canadian artists try to engage spectators in a new aesthetic experience in which viewers are no longer passive spectators but active performers, “from immersive environments<sup>5</sup> into which we may enter, to sculptures that engage us through physical movement, to installations that promote interactions with other audience members, as well as a text project that offers a disturbance or interruption in the reading of the catalogue.” (National Gallery of Canada website, 2009). It is possible to easily isolate the basic kinds of movement described so far by observing the first installation presented in

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<sup>4</sup> The classic artistic experience I refer to is not completely detached from mobility issues. The trip to the museum, the physical displacement inside the gallery or the historical (16<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century) and geographical aspects (from Italy to France) of the “Mona Lisa experience” could be focused through a cultural mobility theoretical framework (Mieke Bal, 2001). Nonetheless, the paradigm shift I point out remains. Although the Mona Lisa experience may present aspects related to mobility, they are all *external* to the artwork itself, whereas mobility in contemporary artworks tends to be an *internal*, inherent constituent. That is, the actual moment of interaction between the audience and contemporary artworks tends to be based on some kind of mobility, not on contemplation.

<sup>5</sup> Immersive environment: “An artificial, interactive scene or world, within which a person has an altered sensory experience.” (National Gallery of Canada website, 2009)

this exhibition. Upon his/her arrival, the spectator is invited to go through a narrow opening which gives access to the installation titled *Vertigo* (Johnson, 2008). Once the spectator is inside, he finds himself in a wooden cubicle where there is a walking path along the walls at the edges of the floor. This narrow walking path forms a square in which only one spectator can go through at a time. The remainder of the floor is covered with sawdust on which the spectator cannot walk. On the center of the floor there are red spotlights carefully placed at specific positions which pop out from the sawdust. As the spectator walks, he/she feels dizzy to some degree. Some people feel a strong sense of unbalance and have to make an effort not to fall into the sawdust at the center of the cubicle. It is necessary to stop walking for the vertigo to go away. Once the person starts moving again, the destabilizing sensation comes back. So, the artistic effect desired – in this case the vertigo – can only be achieved if there is actual physical movement of the human body (locomotion) inside the installation. One of the likely elements used to achieve the artistic effect – besides the angle of the walking paths and the walls – seems to be the red spotlights on the sawdust floor. Their arrangement, their brightness and the way they interact with the spectator might contribute to the viewer's dizziness.

In this particular mediamotion case, we can observe some of the same sensorial principles discussed above: the viewer has his senses activated by a technological apparatus and from this interaction one can experience some kind of mobility. It is interesting to notice that in almost all other *Caught in the Act* installations, the viewer's participation necessarily involves some kind of movement: the eyes have to frantically alternate between two screens that show similar versions of a "fake" western movie, a table moves as we approach it, the audience has to walk through futuristic tunnels that

produce specific lights and sounds as we move, the spectator has to spin a brightly colored *wheel of fortune* as if he/she were inside the famous TV show, etc. This insistence on mobility in almost all installations reveals the close correlations between artmotion and the new paradigms for the spectator's participation in contemporary art galleries and museums.

It is important to emphasize that this is not a recent phenomenon. In fact, there is a vast body of literature that directly or indirectly analyzes mobility in the art world. *Kinetic Art, New Media Art, Digital Art* and *Multimedia Art* are some of the terms used to deal, one way or another, with mobility issues in the realm of the fine arts since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>6</sup>. An exhaustive study on the topic would probably have to go back as far as 1887 when Paul Soriau published *The Aesthetics of Movement*. At the crossroads of biology, physics and aesthetics, Soriau provides *avant la lettre* an extensive reflection on mobility. Mobility is at the center of Soriau's reflections in his attempt to disclose the mechanisms that link physical movement to the sensation of pleasure. Firstly, he turns to the anatomy of the human body and its movements as an essential principle of life, exploring the physical and psychological pleasures associated with these movements. By providing a large number of trivial examples, the author tries to establish the general laws that govern human mobility in everyday life (Soriau, 1887, p. 1-30). Once these basic principles are disclosed, the author presents the conditions for a movement to have aesthetic value (Soriau, p.33-78). He attempts to do so in a scientific way, that is, by observing the world around him and by using the tools provided by the biology, the physics and the philosophy of the time. Although the scientific methodology used by

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<sup>6</sup> Some titles on the topic include *Art of the Electronic Age* (Popper, 1993), *New Media in Late Twentieth Art* (Rush, 1999) and *Sensorium : Embodied Experience, Technology, and Contemporary Art* (Jones, 2006).

Soriau can be considered outdated, the work has a historical importance to our discussion, as it is one of the earliest scholarly studies to put the idea of movement at the core of its analysis. However, Soriau's *The Aesthetics of Movement* distances itself from Moser's *artmotion* in many ways. The most striking difference lies in the phenomenology used to establish the analytical frameworks. While the latter focuses on mobility within the boundaries of the fine arts, the former intends to disclose general principles to understand the beauty of movement in a larger sense. As a consequence, while Moser concentrates on spaces like art galleries and museums, Soriau's examples abound from everyday life, and the fine arts appear only marginally in the section "The Expression of Movement" (Soriau, p.81-105). Mobility as the central characteristic in the specific realm of fine arts would only be extensively articulated by scholars some decades after Soriau's work, with the emergence of what was called "kinetic art".

In its simplest definition, kinetic art is a "term applied to works of art concerned with real and apparent movement<sup>7</sup>." The term kinetic was first used by the Russian-born sculptor Naum Gabo in his work *Kinetic Sculpture, Standing Wave* (Gabo, 1920). In this sculpture, Gabo produced movement through an electrically-driven wire construction, and around the same time he used the term kinetic in connection with the visual arts in his *Realistic Manifesto* (Chilvers, 2004). In the following decades leading art figures like Marcel Duchamp and Alexander Calder continued to incorporate movement in their artworks. In 1931, the moving sculptures created by Calder had achieved great popularity in the art world and in that same year Duchamp named them *mobiles*. Mobiles, popularized by Calder in the following decades, are kinetic sculptures "incorporating an

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<sup>7</sup> "Kinetic Art." Frank Popper, *Oxford Art Online*. Available at <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/subscriber/article/grove/art/T046632>, accessed on 10 March 2011.

element or elements set in motion by natural external forces<sup>8</sup>”. So, by the simple circulation of air or by the contact with the hands, these balanced parts can be set in motion. In spite of the increasing use of motion in artworks, the term “kinetic art” did not become part of the critical vocabulary until the 1950s. According to Chilvers (2004), a pivotal event for the establishment of *kinetic art* as a strong trend in the art world was the exhibition “Le mouvement” in the Denise Renée Gallery in Paris in 1955. In addition to Calder and Duchamp, other prominent artists of the time such as Jean Tinguely, Yaacov Agam, Pol Bury and Victor Vasarely also participated in the exhibition, all of them creating works that primarily relied on movement for their artistic effect. The academic reflections on the phenomenon followed suit. One of the most influential works on the topic is *L’art Cinétique* by Frank Popper (1970), first published in 1968. In this major work, Popper provides an extensive analysis of mobility in the fine arts from the *suggestion* of movement in the impressionist paintings in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the use of *actual* movement in the work of art in the 1950s and 1960s.

Popper’s definition for *kinetic art* has many points of convergence with Moser’s *artmotion*. When circumscribing the cultural area for which he applies the term, Popper explains:

“Nous l’utiliserons pour décrire toutes les œuvres bi- ou tri-dimensionnelles , en mouvement réel, y compris toutes les machines, mobiles et projections contrôlées et incontrôlées ; nous l’utiliserons également pour la description d’œuvres en mouvement virtuel, c’est-à-dire où l’œil du spectateur est guidé d’une manière évidente. Ainsi le terme d’art cinétique comprendra certaines œuvres où les phénomènes optiques du mouvement jouent un rôle prédominant comme chez les

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<sup>8</sup> “Mobile (sculpture).” Gerhard Graulich, Oxford Art Online, available at <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/subscriber/article/grove/art/T058717>, accessed on 11 March 2011.

artistes de la Nouvelle Tendance<sup>9</sup>, à plus forte raison des œuvres qui comportent une participation active du spectateur, soit par son déplacement, soit par la récréation des propositions plastiques (le spectateur est tenu de composer ou recomposer un œuvre). [...] Le terme d'art cinétique appliqué à toutes ces œuvres en mouvement réel et virtuel n'implique pas que les expériences esthétiques du mouvement soient identiques dans toutes leurs manifestations. En fait, nous croyons qu'elles sont particulièrement variables selon les groupes auxquels les œuvres appartiennent : les groupes des œuvres stables à effets optiques, celui des œuvres appelant le mouvement physique du spectateur, et enfin le groupe des œuvres elles-mêmes en mouvement" (Popper, 1970, p. 90-91).

In this proposition Popper encompasses under the term "kinetic art", some of the phenomena we have proposed to analyze so far: the physical displacement of the spectator in the artistic experience (a kind of *locomotion*), the virtual displacement caused by the senses being activated by different media (*mediamotion*), the actual movement of the artwork and the combination of all these movements in the fine arts (*artmotion*).

Studies on kinetic art continued in the 1970s, but as new technologies emerged and dominated art production, the debate which once revolved around mobility started to become technocentric. This means that the use of new technologies and techniques became the guiding line that directed most of the research and academic discussion on new trends in the art world. Studies on *New Media Art*, *Digital Art* and *Multimedia Art* certainly continued to deal with issues involving mobility (*locomotion*, *mediamotion* and *artmotion*), but the focus was shifted to a more technologically oriented approach. For example, Frank Popper himself, the best known scholar on kinetic art, published in 1993 *Art of the Electronic Age* (Popper, 1993). The title itself illustrates the shift I am referring to. Popper once again provides an in-depth overview of the new tendencies in art

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<sup>9</sup> Nouvelle Tendance: "Title of a series of exhibitions held in Europe in the 1960s. The first of these, a result of the initiative of the Yugoslav critic Matko Meštrović, took place at the Galerija Suvremene Umjetnosti in Zagreb in 1961, under the title *Nove Tendencije*." (Stephen Bann, *Oxford Art Online*, available at <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/subscriber/article/grove/art/T062903>, accessed on 10 March 2011).

production, this time analyzing artworks from the 1950s to the early 1990s. By building up an impressive catalogue in which the artworks are meticulously analyzed, Popper shows through and through how art production and reception have been heavily influenced by the development of new technologies in the last decades. The author allies academic reflections with an extensive inventory of the artists and works of what he calls *electronic art* or *art of the electronic age*. As argued before, the analysis this time tends to scrutinize the technical aspects of these works, and the theoretical reflections aim at understanding the impact of new technology on art production and reception. For example, in chapters 2, 3 and 4 – Laser and Holographic Art, Video Art and Computer Art, respectively – the criterion to group and analyze the artworks is the medium used to produce them. Of course the notion of mobility is present throughout the book and is sometimes explicitly addressed. For example, when discussing the predecessors of the electronic art, Popper states:

“One of the most important sources of technological art is related to the new interpretation and use of light and motion as represented in Kinetic and Lumino-kinetic art. The origin of these arts can be traced back to between 1913 and 1920, when Duchamp, Tatlin and Gabo were producing their first works in which actual mechanical movement played a part, as well as formulating theoretical statements on the subject” (Popper, 1993, p.12)

The author continues his historic approach on the roots of *electronic art* by identifying several artists who developed an art of combined light and movement from the 1910s to the 1930s; artists who “pursued an art of actual movement” (p.12). In this historic perspective, Popper shows how Kinetic Art became an actual artistic movement in the 1950s with the works of leading artists such as Jean Tinguely, Nicolas Schöffer, Gyorgy Kepes, Thomas Wilfred, Bruno Munari, George Rickey, Kenneth Martin and Alexander Calder. After this direct mention of the mobile origins of the electronic art,

Popper continues his analysis by describing the technologies that determined art production in later decades. Mobility in the art of the electronic age is only marginally discussed.

Therefore, the difference between Popper's approach (and the scholarly tradition he represents) and Moser's *artmotion* is that through the latter's framework, mobility/movement constitute once again the heuristic center that guides the research. While Popper's *Art of the Electronic Age* tries to understand how technologies have determined art production in the last decades, Moser's *artmotion* focuses on mobility and on how new media have exacerbated the mobile experience in the audience's interaction with the work of art.

My specific interest in mobility as one of the defining traits of contemporary culture lies in the possibility of bringing together the scholarly tradition of social sciences, media studies and the history of art for the analysis of contemporary cultural experiences. Furthermore, due to its power of encompassing different academic perspectives and traditions, mobility provides the possibility of analyzing a wide range of contemporary cultural objects. By taking advantage of this analytical potential, I shall articulate the correlations between cultural mobility and the contemporary entertainment industry in the third chapter of this thesis.

## **2.2 Mobility in the social sciences: contemporary uses of the term**

Before proceeding to the specific articulations between mobility and the entertainment industry, it is important to point out the two most common usages of the terms “mobility/cultural mobility” as articulated by current social science studies<sup>10</sup>.

### **2.2.1. Cultural mobility and the “cultural omnivore theory”**

In 1992, Richard Peterson coined the term “cultural omnivore” in his influential article “Understanding Audience Segmentation: From Elite and Mass to Omnivore and Univore” (Peterson, 1992). In this article, the sociologist challenges outdated “elite vs. mass” models of cultural taste and proposes the existence of other paradigms of cultural consumption today. In his research on musical tastes (Peterson and Simkus, 1992), Peterson noticed that high class people did not always reject cultural practices and artifacts associated with popular culture. On the contrary, he observed that a significant portion of these people circulated among cultural realms associated with different social classes. They engaged in “high brow” cultural practices (go to the opera or watch a David Lean movie, for example), as well as in “low brow” cultural activities (go to a concert by a pop star or watch a blockbuster movie, for example). These people are capable of incorporating distinct practices and cultural forms into their cultural repertoire. They are

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<sup>10</sup> Besides these two usages from the social sciences, there is another domain in which the term circulates. “Cultural mobility” is often used in cultural policy-making milieus referring to strategies to promote the circulation of artworks and artists in different geographical spaces. This usage of the term has been popularized among politicians and policy makers especially in Europe since 2006 when the European Commission launched the massive project *Practics-see Mobile, see practical* (for an analysis of the political dimension of the project, see: [http://newsweaver.co.uk/visitingarts/e\\_article001235250.cfm?x=b11.0,w](http://newsweaver.co.uk/visitingarts/e_article001235250.cfm?x=b11.0,w) accessed on 12 March 2009). Of course, this specific use of the term is absolutely circumscribed by the mobility issues addressed above – especially *locomotion* and *artmotion*. However, here, the focus is less scholarly and more concentrated on a political agenda. The discussion in fora and debates promoted by government agencies and councils in Europe as well as official reports revolve around the management of programs and funds for the implementation of official projects to facilitate, implement and guide cultural mobility.

therefore called “cultural omnivores”. The term omnivore is a direct reference to “omnivorous”, which means:

1. (of an animal or person) feeding on a variety of food of both plant and animal origin.
2. indiscriminate in taking in or using whatever is available<sup>11</sup>.

The “cultural omnivore” theory takes up the more figurative sense found in the second definition. It refers to the person who has the ability to “consume” diverse cultural artifacts regardless of their status and social origins. The cultural omnivore theory represents a particular case of cultural mobility, that is, the ability to move among different socio-cultural realms. Michael Emmison (2003) defines “cultural mobility” as follows:

The concept of cultural mobility refers to the differential capacity to engage with or consume cultural goods and services across the entire spectrum of cultural life, an ability which is itself premised upon an unequal, class-related distribution in cultural competence. Cultural mobility, then, is the ability to move at will between cultural realms, a freedom to choose where one is positioned in the cultural landscape. (Emmison, 2003, p. 211)

This means that the “cultural omnivore” possesses a high degree of cultural mobility, whereas the “cultural univore” has little capacity of engaging with or consuming cultural goods beyond his/her own socio-cultural niche. In his original account of the phenomenon, Richard Peterson (1992) suggested that there was a direct correlation between social classes and their capacity for cultural mobility. Cultural omnivores were more commonly found in populations belonging to higher social strata. Therefore, the higher the social class, the more likely it is to find cultural omnivores. A detailed account on the pertinence and accuracy of Peterson’s model is beyond the scope

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<sup>11</sup> “Omnivorous.” *Oxford Dictionary of English*. Oxford University Press, 2010, available at <http://www.oxfordreference.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t140.e0579480>, accessed on 11 March 2011.

of this chapter<sup>12</sup>. The objective here is to point out a specific definition of the term “cultural mobility” within a precise academic debate. This particular use of the term “cultural mobility” is closely related to studies on social mobility and the interconnections between cultural practices, tastes and social classes.

### 2.2.2 The “mobility turn” in the social sciences

The “mobility turn” in the social sciences as proposed by Urry already has a history of its own that can be traced back to at least as early as 2000, when the author wrote *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-first Century*. In this book, Urry argues that the term *society* can no longer direct and guide sociological studies. For the author this is an outdated concept on which the social sciences as a discipline should not rely, since it is no longer capable of grasping the complex dynamics of the contemporary world. Therefore, Urry proposes rethinking sociology in terms of mobility:

In this book I seek to develop the categories that will be relevant for sociology as a ‘discipline’ as we enter the next century. I seek to present a manifesto for a sociology that examines the diverse mobilities of people, objects, images, information and wastes; and of the complex interdependencies between, and social consequences of, these diverse mobilities. Hence the subtitle of this book – the investigation of mobilities into, and for, the next century. (Urry, 2000, p.1).

As the very first paragraph of the book points out, Urry does not simply try to analyze contemporary social phenomena under a new theoretical perspective. It is not only a phenomenological account of the world we live in. There is an explicit agenda outlined by the book. The author writes a real *manifesto* beckoning the whole discipline

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<sup>12</sup> One of the main criticisms of the cultural omnivore model is that by celebrating a new paradigm in which individuals are able to move among diverse cultural circuits, Peterson actually created a hierarchy of cultural consumption. The cultural omnivores are seen as distinguished, advanced consumers, the ones that represent the new paradigm, while the cultural univores are consequently regarded as “old-fashioned”, outmoded consumers. The problem is that, as mentioned earlier, cultural omnivores commonly belong to a higher social stratus and cultural univores usually come from lower classes. This means that the hierarchizations found in the social level are transferred to the cultural arena by Peterson’s model – for further information on the subject, see Warde (2007), Ollivier, Michele and Guy Gauthier (2006) and Emmison (2003).

into a new methodological approach in which the idea of *mobilities* would occupy a central heuristic position for the understanding of contemporary societies. Many recent book titles reveal the “mobility turn” in the social sciences which Urry advocates: *Sociology Beyond Societies : Mobilities for the Twenty-first Century* (Urry, 2000), *Splintering Urbanism : Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition* (Graham, 2001), *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (Cresswell, 2006), *Time, Innovation and Mobilities : Travel in Technological Cultures* (Peters, 2006), *Personal Mobilities* (Kellerman, 2006), *Mobilities, Networks, Geographies* (Larsen, Jonas et.al., 2006), *Mobilities* [Routledge quarterly journal, first issue released in 2006], *Mobilities* (Urry, 2007), etc. This brief list of titles indicates the growing interest the social sciences have developed for mobility studies and the central position it has recently occupied. As argued before, mobility in Western thinking gradually became the core concept for the understanding of contemporary society. The same movement seems to have taken place within the social sciences as a discipline. In the 10-year span since the publication of *Sociology Beyond Societies*, the notion of mobility progressively became central in the social sciences. In the works mentioned above, the term *mobilities* itself “moves”. In earlier titles, it is mostly used in the subtitles along with other terms – *time, innovation, networks, geographies*. Then it steadily occupies a central position until it becomes the sole term under which all the other social phenomena are analyzed. Of course, book titles are not enough to assert new tendencies in a given discipline, but they do provide a brief indication of the current uses of the concept.

The analyses performed by Urry in *Mobilities* (2007) seek to further advance and synthesize the “mobilities paradigm” the author attempted to establish in *Sociology Beyond Societies* (Urry, 2000) and elsewhere. Traditional questions dealt with by the social sciences such as space, time, place and social connectivity are brought up by the author, but this time under the new “mobilities theoretical framework”. Reflecting the discipline’s ongoing concern with issues of race, class and gender inequalities, Urry also makes a major effort to shed light on the debate of these matters through the notion of mobilities. In addition to these topics, Urry’s framework incorporates a great deal of very eclectic objects and phenomena: roads, airports, migration, railways (“locomotion” in Moser’s terms), communication systems, electronic images and virtual mobility (“mediamotion” in Moser’s terms), etc.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, one of the remarkable characteristics of the mobility paradigm is the possibility of empirically confronting materials as diverse as movies, TV shows, transportation systems, object flows and dancing, to name just a few. We also saw that this can be either an advantage or a setback for the concept. In his article “If Mobility is Everything Then it’s Nothing: Towards a Relational Politics of (Im)mobilities”, Peter Adey (2006) addresses the potential and dangers of the studies on mobility by claiming that for the term to be analytically useful, one has to contextualize the movement(s) being studied, and the inter-relations among them. Urry is aware of this challenge, as he tries to provide a systematic elaboration of the mobilities paradigm in his book – especially in the first section when the author presents the theoretical basis he will adopt in his empirical analyses.

Another major work on the theme, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* by Tim Cresswell (2006) seems to be more daring in the advocacy of an all-encompassing approach for mobility studies: “Moving your hand, walking, dancing, exercising, driving to work, moving home, going on holiday, marching, running away, immigrating, traveling, exploring, attending conferences. All of these are forms of mobility but they rarely enter each other’s orbit in social and cultural enquiry” (Cresswell, 2006, p.1). Doing the same as Urry did in sociology, Cresswell proposes for his own discipline, geography, a new interpretive framework based on the production of mobilities. As the opening lines above reveal, the author fully embraces the possibility of studying apparently disparate activities under the same theoretical methodology.

In their works, both Cresswell and Urry consistently convince the reader of the importance of changing their disciplines’ approaches from stasis-related concepts (society and place) to mobile concepts (mobility, movement, flow, etc.). However, the wide range of theories incorporated by their argumentation and the enormous leaps from one empirical analysis to another force the reader himself to strenuously move among a highly heterogeneous group of objects of study, dealing with many different theoretical and methodological resources at once. Of course, as stated before, one of the advantages of using mobility as a key concept for the analysis of today’s culture and society is precisely its power to horizontally cross diverse scholarly traditions and empirical materials. However, the way this encompassing power is used has to be handled carefully. Earlier in this chapter, I presented Moser’s cultural mobility theoretical framework and the internal logics of his approach for the cultural analysis of contemporary mobility phenomena. On that occasion, part of my argument was to show

the advantages of establishing “**cultural transfer**” as the most fundamental unit of analysis for the understanding of “**cultural mobility**”. This would immediately demarcate an area of analysis in which “the transportation of seeds by birds in the wild, for example, [would] belong to another field of study”. Urry and Cresswell go on a different path and make an effort to incorporate an all-encompassing body of objects and theories in their analysis. The broader theoretical framework constructed by Urry and Cresswell in comparison with Moser’s conceptual apparatus can be observed in their respective terminologies. While Urry and Cresswell use the term *mobility/mobilities* in their works, Moser develops his thinking around syntagmas such as “**cultural mobility**”, “**cultural transfers**” and “*la culture en transit*”. This means mobility studies as proposed by Urry and Cresswell go beyond the cultural focus undertaken by Moser. For the analysis of entertainment industry products and more particularly of the *aparelhagem* party in Belém do Pará in this thesis, Moser’s theoretical framework will be used more extensively, as it provides more structured cultural analysis tools – tools that were developed to be used in the **cultural realm** and that can be immediately applied to my particular objects of analysis.

### ***3. On the Entertainment Industry***

#### **3.1 The Entertainment Industry: searching for a space of investigation**

In the previous chapter a great deal of attention was given to the concept of *artmotion*. Through this concept, the notion of cultural mobility was applied to the specific realm of the fine arts, opening up new avenues of enquiry that strongly resonated in contemporary art production. From Popper's *kinetic art* in the 1970s to Moser's *artmotion* in the 2000s, artworks have become increasingly mobile, integrating in their conception and creation *locomotion* and *mediamotion* elements. In the contemporary fine art scene, mobility has indeed become a crucial aspect, even a dominant trait. The conceptual field of artmotion field, however, was delimited to a specific cultural domain exclusively associated with the fine arts. The following paragraph clearly sets the boundaries for the concept "artmotion" within the contemporary cultural landscape:

Mais précisons d'abord que, malgré les affluences accrues aux musées et aux expositions d'art, nous n'avons pas affaire ici à un phénomène culturel de masse comme c'était le cas pour les chantiers « locomotion » et « médiamotion ». L'accès à cette expérience particulière du « in-transit » est limité aux visiteurs des musées d'art contemporain et des galeries où exposent les artistes qui sont actifs aujourd'hui. On ne parle plus ici de culture de masse, de « mass-media », d'industrie culturelle, mais de production artistique au sens traditionnel du terme: il s'agit du cercle étroit de l'art comme un sous-système culturel et social d'accès restreint. (Moser 2004, p.36)

In the next chapter I will argue that a thorough comprehension of today's cultural mobility has to encompass another cultural arena that should also be analyzed and understood in terms of movement: the contemporary *entertainment industry*. But before presenting the reasons that support this argument, some preliminary questions need to be explored in this chapter: What is the "entertainment industry"? What cultural objects and activities are included in – or excluded from – the entertainment industry space? What is its scope?

In order to accomplish this task, two common strategies of definition and their implications in defining the term *entertainment industry* will be discussed. According to Hurley (2000), the basic, semantically plain task of definition consists in assigning a group of words to describe another word or group of words. This basic operation presents two minimal units: the *definiendum* and the *definiens*. The *definiendum* is the “word or group of words that is supposed to be defined, and the *definiens* is the word or group of words that does the defining” (Hurley, 2000, p.89). Since a term may have many different meanings, in a lexical definition – such as those found in dictionaries – each specific sense of the *definiendum* is defined by a *definiens* (plural *definientia*). That is, a *definiendum* may present different *definientia*. Schematically, this basic operation can be represented as:

$$X \text{ (definiendum)} = d1 + d2 + d3 \dots \text{ (definientia).}$$

Usually the *definiens* will semantically consist of the qualities and attributes that the *definiendum* denotes. So, for the *definiendum* “dog”, for example, a *definiens* would include words such as “domesticated animal” or “carnivore having prominent canine teeth”. Sometimes, instead of enumerating the qualities and attributes of the *definiendum*, the operation of definition is simply done through relational opposition. In this second case, the term is negatively defined in a usually dichotomic opposition to another known term. Schematically, this operation can be represented as:

$$X = \text{opposed to/not } Y \text{ (in which } Y \text{ is supposed to be known/ to have been defined).}$$

In Logic, this kind of relational opposition is usually not considered helpful in the task of definition because it can cause a “fallacy of negative definition” (Hurley, 2000,

p.108). To state, for example, that “a dog is not a cat” may be true, but it does not define “dog” accurately due to its internal fallacy of logic – not all animals that are not cats are dogs.

By looking up some dictionary definitions, we can analyze some common definientia associated with the definiendum “entertainment”. According to *dictionary.com* “entertainment” means:

1. the act of entertaining; agreeable occupation for the mind; diversion; amusement: *Solving the daily crossword puzzle is an entertainment for many.*
2. something affording pleasure, diversion, or amusement, esp. a performance of some kind: *The highlight of the ball was an elaborate entertainment.*<sup>13</sup>

The *Merriam-Webster* dictionary provides similar definitions:

1. the act or activity of providing pleasure or amusement especially for the public <*a variety show was staged as entertainment for the scouts at the jamboree*>  
*Synonyms* amusement, distraction, diversion, recreation  
*Related Words:* show business; delectation, delight, enjoyment, joy, mirth; gratification, relaxation, relief, satisfaction; exhibition, performance, presentation, production, show, spectacle; escapism
- 2 someone or something that provides amusement or enjoyment <*what do you do for entertainment in this town?*><sup>14</sup>

According to Hurley (2000), the cognitive meaning of a word usually comprises two elements: an intensional and an extensional meaning. The intensional meaning consists of the attributes and qualities that the term connotes, while the extensional meaning “consists of the members of the class that the term denotes” (Hurley, p.85). So, for example, for the word “dog”, the intensional meaning refers to the attributes of having four legs, barking, walking in a certain way, and so on, while the extensional meaning consists of dogs themselves – all existing dogs in the world. The first challenge in defining “entertainment” is the fact that the definientia used – “agreeable occupation of

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<sup>13</sup> “Entertainment” entry from Dictionary.com: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/entertainment> accessed on 01 June 2009.

<sup>14</sup> “Entertainment” entry from Merriam-Webster online: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/entertainment> accessed on 02 February 2010.

the mind”, “diversion”, “amusement” and “pleasure” – can be applied to an excessively large scope of objects and activities: drinking wine, reading a book, staying out in the sun, taking a photograph, visiting a friend, fishing, watching a movie, gardening, shopping, traveling, riding a horse, swimming, solving crossword puzzles, singing, cooking, etc. In other words, although the intensional meaning is relatively clear, it implies an extensional meaning that is too broad. This broad extensional meaning encompasses such a heterogeneous group of objects and activities that it can hinder the task of setting “the entertainment industry” as a manageable space of investigation. One way to avoid such a difficulty is by developing a **precising definition** for “entertainment”. A precising definition is used when vague and common language terms need to be replaced with more specialized and formalized definitions (Hurley, 2000, p.91). This is the strategy used by Michael Hauptert to define “entertainment” in his book *The Entertainment Industry* (Hauptert, 2006). Hauptert acknowledges the difficulties of establishing a space of investigation based on the idea of entertainment:

Entertainment is amusement. Its purpose is to create a relaxing, enjoyable environment in which to escape the stresses of daily life for a while. It has taken countless forms over the centuries, ranging from recreational amusement, such as jogging or painting, to passive entertainment, like watching television or listening to music. Entertainment can also take the form of everyday activities—gardening or cooking, for example. In fact, the list of activities that could be considered entertainment is virtually endless and differs from person to person. The realm of possibilities is so grand as to make it impossible to cover the subject thoroughly in one volume. (Hauptert, 2006, p.vii)

Due to the analytical obstacle imposed by the wide range of objects and activities encompassed by the word “entertainment” and the possible industries related to it, the author presents some criteria to narrow down the scope of the term: “In order to better approach the topic of entertainment, I have taken the liberty of narrowing the definition

and selecting a few representative examples. For the purposes of this book, my definition of entertainment is *spectator* entertainment.<sup>15</sup>” (Hauptert, p.vii, emphasis added)

In the process of turning the excessively broad lexical definition of “entertainment” into a precisifying definition, Hauptert establishes other criteria for narrowing down the area of study: in his analysis “entertainment” entails a social dimension (it has to be collectively enjoyed by a group of people), a mass dimension (it has to be consumed by a large public from different social strata) and industrial features (it has to be economically linked to a set of businesses producing, distributing and selling these products). (Hauptert, p vii-ix).

Among the many industries that fit these criteria, Hauptert recognizes that for analytical purposes he still needs to single out specific industries that are representative of the trends he wishes to analyze. The author chooses the strategy of substituting “breadth of coverage with depth in a small number of areas.” (Hauptert, p.vii). The six specific forms of entertainment Hauptert covers in his analysis are vaudeville, recorded sound, movies, radio, television and spectator sports. Hauptert then proceeds to an in-depth historic and economical analysis of these industries and their impact on American society in the twentieth century.

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<sup>15</sup> Although it constitutes Hauptert’s key criterion for narrowing down the kinds of entertainment he wants to investigate, the author does not provide an explicit definition of *spectator entertainment*. However, Hauptert seems to have proposed the term as an analogy with the well established expression *spectator sports*. According to the Collins English Dictionary, spectator sports are those that attract “more people as spectators than as participants” – definition available at <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/spectator+spor> accessed on 19 July 2010. That is, spectator sports are characterized by the presence of observers in their matches, which means that activities like hunting or scuba diving are excluded from the group. By analogy, *spectator entertainment* would include kinds of entertainment characterized by the presence of audiences who enjoy watching or “consuming” a certain entertainment product. Through the analogy, the author excludes entertainment activities such as gardening or drinking wine, which are not normally associated with the presence of spectators.

In addition to the historical approach adopted by Hauptert, his work is of particular interest due to his strategy of conceptualizing and reflecting on the term “entertainment” so that “entertainment industry” can become a term with analytical value in cultural analysis. Most studies on the “entertainment industry” treat the subject and choose their objects of analysis without further investigating the meaning, scope and boundaries of entertainment as a subsystem of a larger cultural spectrum<sup>16</sup>. Hauptert, on the other hand, tries to “contain” the all-encompassing extensional meaning embedded in the lexical definition of “entertainment” by developing a precisising definition – one that can be more useful and specific in a cultural analysis<sup>17</sup>. He departs from a semantically plain lexical definition of entertainment (“X = d1 + d2” or “entertainment is...”), and through precisising definition techniques he trims down the scope of its extensional meaning. Hauptert is particularly successful in his enterprise when he uses the “industrial” and “mass dimension” of “entertainment industry” in this operation.

As my thesis proposes to apply mobility studies in the cultural subsystem I am naming the *entertainment industry*, it is also methodologically imperative to delimitate the borders of such a subsystem prior to the actual analysis. For my own definition of the entertainment industry, I will follow Hauptert’s methodology, focusing on its industrial

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<sup>16</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, when the entertainment industry is considered a “subsystem” of a larger cultural spectrum, this simply means that the entertainment industry constitutes a distinctive section of today’s cultural life. The use of the word “system” does not intend to make reference to the concept of “system” as developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in his *General Systems Theory* (Bertalanffy, 1968). Nor does it refer to its subsequent appropriations and specific developments in sociology such as those carried out by Talcott Parsons and Niklas Luhmann. The word “system” in this thesis is employed as a word in its common usage, that is, a set of elements that form part of a complex whole; and the term “subsystem” as a smaller part contained in this whole. Therefore, the entertainment industry is regarded here as a subsystem within the larger system of contemporary culture.

<sup>17</sup> In many ways, Hauptert’s strategy is similar to Moser’s systematization of the concept *cultural mobility*. The latter proposes three areas of investigation – locomotion, mediamotion and artmotion – in which mobile phenomena can be analyzed while the former aims at narrowing down the extensional meaning of *entertainment*. In both cases, there is the necessary work of turning common language words into new analytical tools for their respective cultural analyses.

traits and adding some dimensions that are particularly important to the mobile aspects I wish to investigate.

Before turning to the industrial aspects of contemporary entertainment, I would like to address a different strategy commonly used to define “entertainment”. This strategy consists in establishing an opposition between “entertainment” and “art”. According to this approach, these terms define two different cultural subsystems. Instead of narrowing down the term “entertainment” – the strategy used by Hauptert above –, this second approach tries to define it in terms of exclusion from and opposition to “art” (“X = opposed to/not Y” or “entertainment = opposed to/not art”). A certain cultural object would belong to one domain or the other according to a series of antagonistic dichotomies that can be summarized in the following table<sup>18</sup>:

Art vs. Entertainment	
<u>Art</u>	<u>Entertainment Product</u>
Thought-provoking	Does not incite reflection
Its main concern is not economic	The product is conceived to earn large profits
Contemplation, reverence	Fun, amusement
It expresses the artist’s subjectivity and originality	Homogenized aesthetic patterns
Restricted access	Directed at the largest possible audience

<sup>18</sup> I have drafted this opposition based on Levine’s book *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Levine, 1988) and several informal electronic forums on the net, mostly “art vs. entertainment”: [www.angelfire.com/movies/oc/tirades/artent.html](http://www.angelfire.com/movies/oc/tirades/artent.html) (accessed on 12 February 2010)

Some of these binary oppositions require a careful reflection because they reinforce an old axiology that tends to divide cultural objects into two groups with different cultural status. This status would be justified because “art” presents the ability to make you think, reflect on the world you live in, while “entertainment” would only cause spasmodic reactions like laughter or fear; the integrity of the “artistic” product is assured by a non-dependence on economic factors while the “entertainment” product’s main *raison d’être* would be to generate profits; the reverence with which “art” products are regarded gives them a certain respectability<sup>19</sup> while “entertainment” products are “just for fun” (fun and amusement not being considered respectable traits in a cultural object); an “art” product expresses the artist’s originality and subjectivity (art would be the subjective expression of the artist) while an “entertainment” product is homogenized so that it pleases crowds; the high social and economic status that restricted “art” audiences have is commonly transferred to the cultural artifacts and activities they consume – by analogy and opposition “entertainment” products are considered inferior because they serve unsophisticated mass audiences.

The pitfalls produced by this dichotomy usually result in an axiology that tends to produce hierarchic binarisms: “good” vs. “bad”, “superior” vs. “inferior”. Additionally, the criteria presented in the table above are inconsistent for establishing cultural boundaries because art and entertainment are not mutually exclusive. The analysis of some contemporary movies can further the argument. Blockbuster movies like *Transformers*

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<sup>19</sup> Within the artistic cultural system there are some groups and movements that were developed by deconstructing the reverence and respect with which art is traditionally regarded. Avant-garde and Pop Art, for example, use a great deal of irreverence and disrespect to deconstruct what is considered the *status quo* in “high art”. These movements exist to a great extent to defy the supposed norm, that is, the seriousness usually associated with the contemplation of artistic products. Their existence proves both that there is a general perception of reverence towards art – avant-garde and pop art exist to defy this perception – and that this reverence can easily be deconstructed from within the “art system”.

(Bay, 2007) or art films like *Prospero's Books* (Greenaway, 1991), for example, can be easily placed on one side or the other of the table. However, many other examples can defy this oversimplistic dichotomy.

*Transformers*, directed by Michael Bay – one of the most successful blockbuster Hollywood directors –, is a typical “entertainment” product, according to the characteristics highlighted above. The plot is simple: an ancient war re-erupts on Earth between two clans of extraterrestrial machines that have the power to metamorphose into humanoids or automobiles. The heroic *Autobots* and the evil *Decepticons* try to possess a secret object capable of granting ultimate power to its holder. Such an object accidentally ends up in the hands of a young teenager who allies with the *Autobots* to defeat the *Decepticons*. Based on the highly popular toy line released in 1984 – followed suit by the successful TV animated series – *Transformers, the Movie* was one of the biggest worldwide box office hits in the summer season of 2007. Not taken as a “serious” feature movie by most critics, the old “good vs. evil” plot was received as another element to attract the largest possible audience – fans and non-fans of the toy line and the animated TV series. These audiences were mesmerized by the high-tech special effects – another element usually associated with big box office revenues when summer blockbusters are

released. The movie was received and treated by audiences and movie critics as an entertainment blockbuster<sup>20</sup>.

On the other side of the spectrum we can cite *Prospero's Books* by Peter Greenaway (1991). Based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Greenaway's movie enjoys from the very beginning the prestige of being an adaptation of a play by one of the most canonic and celebrated authors in Western literature. The plot revolves around Prospero, a sorcerer who takes control of an island inhabited by a spirit, Ariel and a monster, Caliban. The protagonist uses his magic powers both to control Ariel and Caliban and to take revenge on his enemies who had confined him to exile on the island. The source material is full of sub-themes – revenge, the notion of justice, forgiveness, masters and servants etc. – and symbolisms – Ariel and Caliban being among the most discussed figures in post-colonial criticism. Peter Greenaway imprinted his own artistic view on Shakespeare's play by creating elaborate visual conceits and unconventional narrative structures that can be considered challenging for the average moviegoer. The special effects, the camera techniques, the costumes and the art direction were conceived to produce an ambitious baroque extravaganza that demands artistic and cultural literacy from audiences. As a result, the screening of *Prospero's Books* was restricted to the “art movie” circuit, mainly composed of critics, art lovers and literature enthusiasts.

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<sup>20</sup> The popular website [www.rottentomatoes.com](http://www.rottentomatoes.com) gives *Transformers* a 54% popularity rate among critics. <[www.rottentomatoes.com/m/transformers\\_the\\_movie](http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/transformers_the_movie)> (accessed on 12 February 2010) It is interesting to notice that being regarded as “just for fun” causes very different impacts on the way the movie was received by critics. The positive reviews are the ones that emphasize that the movie takes up its role as an “entertainment” film. And because it does so it is satisfying for fans and for spectators just “looking for fun”. The famous critic Richard Roeper concludes: “It is a big, cool, dopey, noisy, non-stop action powerhouse. It is also too long by a half hour and it left my ears ringing, but it is a lot of fun” <[http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/transformers\\_the\\_movie/comments.php?reviewid=1653326](http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/transformers_the_movie/comments.php?reviewid=1653326)> (accessed on 12 February 2010). On the other hand, the negative reviews stress that the movie has no coherent or stimulating plot and that the special effects that were supposed to be “just for fun” are only mind-numbing. Rex Reed of the New York Observer writes: “Sadly, the movie itself is so mind-numbingly moronic that I just couldn't force myself to care.” <<http://www.observer.com/2007/bay-bombs-again>> (accessed on 12 February 2010).

While *Transformers* and *Prospero's Books* can easily be labeled as “entertainment” and “art” movies respectively, there are many other examples that seem to incorporate aspects from across the spectrum. *The Matrix* (Wachowski, 1998) is an interesting example of a movie that does not fit into a mutually exclusive and hierarchical order of cultural products. Released in 1998, the science fiction film written, produced and directed by the Wachowski brothers was initially regarded as another summer blockbuster: it was an action-packed thriller, the leading actor was an international movie star – Keanu Reeves – and its release was accompanied by a gigantic marketing campaign. The movie was a runaway box office success and ended up being the fifth biggest domestic hit and the fourth worldwide in that year<sup>21</sup>. Amidst the enormous buzz, movie critics and academics alike were surprised by the mind-twisting plot that discussed what reality was – an old philosophical theme that at least since Plato has provoked human thinking and imagination. *The Matrix* brought metaphysical themes to mass audiences, along with direct references to scholarly publications – Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981), for example – , and innumerable religious and cultural allusions: the Bible, Hinduism, Alice in Wonderland, the Wizard of Oz, etc. There have been extensive scholarly publications reflecting on the issues raised by the movie such as *The Matrix and Philosophy: Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (Irwin, 2002) or *Taking the Red Pill: Science, Philosophy and Religion in The Matrix* (Yeffeth, 2003). *The Matrix*'s official website also published a collection of essays that discuss its various philosophical, technological and religious aspects<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Source: [www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=matrix.htm](http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=matrix.htm) (accessed on 20 February 2010).

<sup>22</sup> *The Philosophy of the Matrix*. Available at [http://whatisthematrix.warnerbros.com/rl\\_cmp/new\\_phil\\_fr\\_intro.html](http://whatisthematrix.warnerbros.com/rl_cmp/new_phil_fr_intro.html), accessed on 23 July 2009.

*The Matrix* is an “entertainment movie” that presents a great deal of the directors’ artistic originality: the greenish photography, the black leather costume design and the “bullet time” technique are just some examples of how the movie defined new aesthetic patterns that have deeply influenced science fiction and pop culture since its release. *The Matrix* is an example of a blockbuster movie that challenges the dichotomic “entertainment vs. art” paradigm mentioned above. It is an entertainment movie that combines amusement and reflection and whose artistry and originality are recognized by critics and scholars from different fields of study.

Many other examples could be given, but *The Matrix* shows that an empirical observation challenges the criteria normally used to conceive “art” and “entertainment” as two mutually exclusive cultural spheres. This means that blockbusters can be entertaining and at the same time present characteristics usually associated with “art movies”. It is also important to notice that many artistic products – especially those related to *artmotion* – also present a certain degree of amusement for audiences that could be easily linked to the idea of “entertainment”. There is a certain kinetic pleasure involved in the aesthetic experience produced by many installations that cannot be overlooked. The “entertainment side” of these artworks can be recognized in a visit to expositions like *Caught in the act* in which audiences expect to be surprised by an unforeseen technological effect, in which people smile when tables move as we approach them, when we have to walk through futuristic tunnels that produce specific lights and sounds as we move or when the spectator has to spin a brightly colored *wheel of fortune* as if he were inside the famous TV show. These artistic experiences are often accompanied not only by smiles, but also by exclamatory remarks: “That was cool!”,

“That was so interesting!”, “Wow, I loved this one”. Some of these installations prove that artistic experiences do have effects of pleasure and enjoyment closely related to the idea of entertainment. When it comes to the entertaining function of art, Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) goes even further in this argument.

The most influential German playwright and theater director of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Brecht strongly advocated that entertainment and instruction should not be mutually exclusive in artistic production. On the contrary, Brecht believed that instruction and amusement were both indispensable functions of theater. Brecht’s thoughts on the topic can be dated back to his essay entitled “Theater for pleasure or theater for instruction” (Brecht, 1964, p.69-77). The essay was unpublished in his lifetime and, according to Brecht’s translator John Willett, “its exact date and purpose are unknown”, although some bibliographers and specialists suggest that it was written *circa* 1935 (Brecht, p. 76). Even though there are no clear indications of the exact date of its writing, it is clear that in the mid-1930s the pleasure vs. instruction opposition was already one of Brecht’s main concerns in the development of his philosophy of the theater. The leading figure in the theatrical movement known as *epic theater*<sup>23</sup>, Brecht warned his peers about the dangers of focusing on the instructive function of theater by neglecting – or even worse, rejecting – its entertaining function. In his considerations on the developments of epic theater, Brecht writes:

The stage began to be instructive. Oil, inflation, war, social struggles, the family, religion, wheat, the meat market, all became subjects for theatrical representation.

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<sup>23</sup> Epic Theater was the theatrical movement closely associated with Brecht’s dramatic theory and practice from the 1920s onward. According to the Encyclopædia Britannica, epic theater is a “form of didactic drama presenting a series of loosely connected scenes that avoid illusion and often interrupt the story line to address the audience directly with analysis, argument, or documentation”. (Encyclopædia Britannica’s entry for “Epic theater”, available on <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/189683/epic-theatre>, accessed on 24 August 2010).

[...] The theater became an affair for philosophers, but only for such philosophers as wished not just to explain the world but also to change it. So we had philosophy, and we had instruction. And where was the amusement in all that? Were they sending us back to school, teaching us to read and write? Were we supposed to pass exams, work for diplomas?

Generally there is felt to be a very sharp distinction between learning and amusing oneself. The first may be useful, but only the second is pleasant. So we have to defend the epic theater against the suspicion that it is a highly disagreeable, humourless, indeed strenuous affair.

Well: all that can be said is that the contrast between learning and amusing oneself is not laid down by divine rule; it is not that has always been and must continue to be. (Brecht, 1964, p.71-72).

Brecht continues his argument by deconstructing the question that names the essay. For Brecht, it was not a question of choosing between a “theater for pleasure” OR a “theater for instruction”. It was about developing a theater in which pleasure AND instruction are combined so that it can offer “pleasurable learning, cheerful and militant learning.” (Brecht, p.73).

Some years later, Brecht returned to the theme in a lecture delivered to theater students in Stockholm in May 1939. In his talk “On Experimental Theatre” (Brecht, 1964, p. 130-135), the author reflected on the undesired divorce between instruction and amusement in some of the experimental productions of his time. Brecht mentioned the productions of Erwin Piscator, one of the most prominent directors of the time, as well as one of his own dramatic pieces, *The Threepenny Opera*, as plays that present a tension between the ability to entertain and instruct:

In Piscator’s productions or in *The Threepenny Opera* the educative elements were so to speak *built in*: they were not an organic consequence of the whole, but stood in contradiction to it [...]. The play [*The Threepenny Opera*] has a double nature. Instruction and entertainment conflict openly. [...] At one (later) stage of the experiments the result of any fresh increase in educative value was an immediate decrease in ability to entertain (‘This isn’t theatre, it’s secondary-school stuff.’). (Brecht, p. 132)

Brecht’s concern in the passages cited above was quite evident: by neglecting or refusing its entertaining function, theater ran the risk of disconnecting itself from its

audience, of becoming uninteresting, disagreeable, strenuous and overly didactic. Of course, the epic theater proposed by Brecht is one of transformation, of social and political engagement, but not at the expense of theater's entertaining function.

While in these early considerations on the topic Brecht advocated a balance between the entertaining and the educative purposes of theater, later on, in 1948, the author went even further and blatantly stated that between these two functions, the former prevailed over the latter.

Let us therefore cause general dismay by revoking our decision to emigrate from the realm of merely enjoyable and even more general dismay by announcing our decision to take up lodging there. Let us treat the theatre as a place of entertainment, as is proper in an aesthetic discussion, and try to discover which type of entertainment suits us best. [...] 'Theater' consists in this: in making live representations of reported or invented happenings between human beings and doing so with a view to entertainment. At any rate that is what we shall mean when we speak of theater, whether old or new. [...] we should still have to say that the 'theater' set-up's broadest function was to give pleasure. It is the noblest function that we have found for 'theater'. [...] it has been the theater's business to entertain people, as it also has of all the other arts. [...] it needs no other passport than fun, but this it has got to have. (Brecht, p. 180)

These are some of the opening remarks in "Short Organum for the Theatre", Brecht's manifesto on Aristotelian theater, which is today generally considered his most important theoretical work. At the age of 50, Brecht cemented in the *Short Organum* most of the theoretical principles on theater he had developed elsewhere: his refusal of traditional Aristotelian theater, the need to develop in the spectator a certain distance from the play – what he called *alienation effect* –, the establishment of a theater for "the scientific age" and so on. Among the many key issues discussed by Brecht, it is interesting to notice that he returned to the entertainment vs. instruction opposition, but now with a new and somewhat more extreme perspective. Here entertainment is considered theater's *main* function. It is clear that, for Brecht, art and entertainment were

not opposed to each other or mutually exclusive. On the contrary, entertainment is art's *noblest* function, to which all other virtuous purposes – educating, provoking thought, reflection, critical consciousness – are conditioned. Accepting Brecht's authoritative argument means realizing that a relational opposition between art and entertainment is not only false, but also flawed in its own internal structure.

### **3.2 The Entertainment Industry: towards a definition.**

Since the faulty dichotomy “art vs. entertainment” has been rejected, it is necessary to go back to the strategy of establishing a definition of the “entertainment industry” to be used in this thesis. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines “industry” as:

1. a: systematic labor especially for some useful purpose or the creation of something of value; b : a department or branch of a craft, art, business, or manufacture especially : one that employs a large personnel and capital especially in manufacturing; c : a distinct group of productive or profit-making enterprises <the banking industry>; d : manufacturing activity as a whole <the nation's industry><sup>24</sup>

This economic definition of industry as the ensemble of manufacturing or technically productive enterprises involved in the making of goods refers to the economic model that became dominant in Europe and North America from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century on, when the Industrial Revolution replaced mercantile and feudal economic models. In its original acceptance, *industry* referred to the ensemble of enterprises that started producing goods on a large scale through factories that appeared as a result of the technological advancements of the time - for example, extraction of raw materials (primary economic sector) and manufacturing (secondary economic sector). From this first acceptance the word “industry” expanded to refer to the businesses and enterprises

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<sup>24</sup> “Industry” entry from Merriam-Webster online: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/industry> accessed on 22 February 2010

involved in the production of other types of goods – for example services and cultural artifacts (tertiary and quaternary sectors) (Fourastié, 1947). It is within the latter sectors that I will focus the cultural subsystem I have been calling the *entertainment industry*<sup>25</sup>.

My definition of “entertainment industry” will rely on two lines of reasoning that have been constructed in this chapter and that are essential for my theoretical framework:

- 1) On the one hand, if *entertainment* is a term whose scope is too large and vague, on the other hand, *industry*, in the economic sense of the word, can help us to narrow it down. The “industry” in *entertainment industry* can give us solid bases to define a space of analysis in which we are dealing with the aggregate of technically productive enterprises that manufacture entertainment-related products. This means that while several activities can be linked to the idea of “distraction”, “diversion”, or “fun”, only some of these are actually closely related to an industry whose enterprises produce goods and services for the entertainment of the masses. This means that among the long and heterogeneous list of entertainment activities mentioned beforehand – drinking wine, reading a book, taking a photograph, visiting a friend, reading a book, fishing, watching a movie, gardening, riding a horse, solving crossword puzzles, singing, cooking, etc. – only some are clearly part of a

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<sup>25</sup> For an analysis of immediately pre-industrial forms of entertainment and their transition to entertainment industries in England and the United States, see *Leisure Industries – an overview* (Gratton and Taylor, 1987) and *For Fun and Profit – the Transformation of Leisure into Consumption* (Butsch, 1990). They both show how leisure and work were not exclusive concepts in those pre-industrial societies: “However, people of the 17<sup>th</sup> century would not have identified leisure as we do today [...]. In 17<sup>th</sup> century, rural, agricultural Britain, there was no such clear distinction between work and leisure” (Gratton and Taylor, 1987, p.5). “In the American colonies and early republic, work, leisure and the household formed an unbroken web of life in small communities” (Butsch, 1990). After describing the main pre-industrial forms of leisure in their countries, the authors analyze the impact of the Industrial Revolution on people’s habits: the separation between leisure and work, the appearance of distinctive leisure activities to corroborate new social distinctions and the birth of new forms of entertainment following new technological advancements.

complex industrial system. Some of the economic sectors traditionally associated with the idea of “entertainment industry” include television, movies, musical theater, spectator sports, radio, video games, music, circus, books, magazines, theme parks, concerts, disco clubs, gambling, etc. However, although all these entertainment spaces satisfy the industrial aspect I have used as a delimitating criterion, special emphasis will be given to blockbuster movies, contemporary video games, theme park attractions and, in particular, *aparelhagem* parties. These products, specially targeted at young urban audiences, will be singled out because they all belong to cultural spaces which use new technologies to develop a particular taste for the engagement of the senses. This particular engagement of the senses – a defining trait in the contemporary entertainment industry – will be called “aesthetic mobility” – a notion to be developed in the next chapter.

2) What industries from all sectors have in common is that they all imply large scale production, that is, they produce goods to be consumed by the masses. The use of the term *industry* helps identify a specific cultural realm defined by a mass dimension that is not found in other cultural circles. That is, there are industrial aspects in the making of certain entertainment products that are not found, for example, in the realm of what is called “High Art” – museums, galleries, installations, etc. It is important to emphasize in my argument that the cultural subsystem I call the “entertainment industry” is different from the artmotion space not because entertainment goods are less “artistic” than artmotion products – as argued before, art and entertainment are

not mutually exclusive, that is, their boundaries are constantly blurred or simply non-existent. What justifies the differentiation are the industrial characteristics shared by blockbuster movies, theme park attractions, video games, *aparelhagem* parties, TV series, etc. that are not present in a Duchamp exposition at MOMA or an installation artwork by famous artists like Janet Cardiff or Ilya Kabakov, for example – it is crucial to underline this point to avoid both the imprecision and the value judgment commonly embedded in the “entertainment vs. art” approach as discussed above. Although access to galleries, museums and installations has significantly increased over the last decades and “art” has moved out of the indoor space of museums and galleries (e.g. land art<sup>26</sup>, street performances and installations by famous artists), it is still not comparable to the mass dimension of the entertainment industry products mentioned earlier.

Keeping those two principles in mind, I propose a definition of the “entertainment industry” for the purposes of this thesis: when I use the term “entertainment industry” I will be referring to *the ensemble of large-scale contemporary cultural products especially enjoyed by young urban audiences and whose mass production and consumption as well as industrial characteristics set them apart from “high art” cultural artifacts.*

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<sup>26</sup> According to the Columbia Encyclopedia, Land Art is “an art form developed in the late 1960s and early 70s by Robert Smithson, Robert Morris, Michael Heizer, and others, in which the artist employs the elements of nature in situ or rearranges the landscape with earthmoving equipment. The resulting work, often vast in scale, is subject to all natural changes, such as temperature variations, light and darkness, wind, and erosion.” [http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/land\\_art.aspx](http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/land_art.aspx) accessed on 22 February 2010. Another specialized website particularly emphasizes the “out of museum” trait of Land Art: “Land Art is a form of art which involves using physical landscapes to create art, forcing people to view the art in context, and taking the provenance of art out of the museum and into the outside world.” <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-land-art.htm> accessed on 22 February 2010.

### **3.3 Scholarly approaches on “entertainment”: debates and confrontations.**

With the advent of the Industrial Revolution – especially the Second Industrial Revolution in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century/early 20<sup>th</sup> Century – Europe and the United States rapidly developed incipient industries based on technologies that not only reinvented old forms of entertainment but also created new ones reaching out to audiences that were inconceivable only a century earlier. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when some of these industries had already achieved an advanced degree of development, the group that would eventually be known as the *Frankfurt School* began an extensive investigation of the turbulent social, cultural and political conditions of western capitalist societies of the time. Two of the leading figures of the group, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer published in 1944 the groundbreaking *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944). The book consolidated some of the fundamental tenets they had defended in their critical social theory in previous years. In their uncompromised criticism of modern societies, Adorno and Horkheimer tried to understand why 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment, which was supposed to free men from fear and domination by means of reason and rationality, did not give rise to more just and harmonious societies. On the contrary, western societies in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed wars, totalitarianism (fascism, Nazism, soviet socialism) and capitalist class domination.

The six sections of the book (The concept of Enlightenment, Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment, Juliette or Enlightenment and Morality, The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception, Elements of Anti-Semitism: Limits of Enlightenment and a final section of notes and drafts) create a sophisticated theoretical framework to

unveil the contradictions and mechanisms that caused the presupposed failure of the Enlightenment project in modern societies. In reference to the book, J.M. Bernstein says:

Its central claim is that the very same rationality which provides for humankind emancipation from the bondage of mythic powers and allows for progressive domination over nature, engenders, through its intrinsic character, a return to myth and new, even more absolute forms of domination. (Bernstein, 1991, p.4)

In section 4 of the book (*The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception*), Adorno and Horkheimer identify *mass culture* and *culture industry* as one of these key forms of domination: culture industry manipulates the masses, producing the effects necessary to maintain the economic and social *status quo* in capitalist societies.

From a conceptual point of view, the first important observation is that Adorno and Horkheimer's *culture industry* does not correspond exactly to what I have been calling the *entertainment industry*. Although the entertainment business (namely films, radio, music and magazines) is at the core of Adorno and Horkheimer's reflections, their analysis of mass culture has a more encompassing scope: they consider architecture, landscaping and the automobile industry, for example, as objects of analysis because they are all part of the mass system of domination. All these elements constitute a "system which is uniform as a whole and in every part" (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944, p.1). This idea of the culture industry as a *homogeneous* system of domination that only reproduces sameness is predominant in their reasoning and can be found throughout the chapter: "Under monopoly all mass culture is identical" (p.1), "The result is the circle of manipulation and retroactive need in which the unity of the system grows even stronger." (p.1), "The ruthless unity in the culture industry is evidence of what will happen in politics." (p.2) "Even the technical media are relentlessly forced into uniformity" (p.3), "The constant pressure to produce new effects [...] serves merely as another rule to

increase the power of conventions [...]. Every detail is so firmly stamped with sameness that nothing can appear which is not marked at birth [...].” (p.5), “In view of the ideological truce, the conformism of the buyers and the effrontery of the producers who supply them prevail. The result is a constant reproduction of the same thing.” (p.8), “[...] the irreconcilable elements of culture, art and distraction are subordinated to one end and subsumed under one false formula: the totality of the culture industry. It consists of repetition. That its characteristic innovations are never anything more than improvements of mass reproduction is not external to the system.” (p.9).

The conception of the culture industry as a unified, uniform, and monolithic bloc that reproduces the same aesthetic patterns for mass domination has been one of the most criticized points in Adorno’s argument. By conceiving the culture industry as a homogeneous, unified structure, Adorno’s approach does not allow for exploration of the possible fractures, ruptures and contradictions that can be verified within the system:

Adorno’s critics have turned his version of the unifying and pacifying character of the culture industry back onto the theory itself: it is his theory that unifies and pacifies the culture industry which in reality is more dynamic, diverse and conflictual than the theory allows. (Bernstein, 1991, p.17-18)

This critique can be taken even further; by homogenizing the culture industry, Adorno misses the possibility of applying the same dialectical analysis he used to understand the evolution of Enlightenment in modern societies. That is, the same dialectical movement found in modern societies – refusing and returning to myth – can be found within the cultural industry – mass culture objects may also present a dual dynamics of both reinforcing and fighting domination. In the essay “Critical Theory and the Culture Industries: A Reassessment”, Douglas Kellner (1984-85) defends the idea that the social representations provided by the culture industry already constitute a potential

field for reflecting, expressing and articulating social reality. This representation “may deflate or undermine the ideological illusions of their own products and however unwittingly engage in social critique and ideological subversion.” (Kellner, p.203).

A brief glance at the complex and diverse array of culture industry products seems to confirm the existence of dissonant voices within the industry’s own structure. The hip hop movement in the United States constitutes one of the most remarkable cases. Born in the black slums of New York City in the mid-1970s, hip hop is a kind of youth culture composed of three main elements: break-dancing, graffiti and rap music (Rose, 1994, p.2). In the 1980s, the hip hop movement found its way from the Bronx streets into the culture industry: hip hop lifestyle and themes became sources of inspiration for the American fashion, movie and music industries. Of these industrial appropriations the most commercially successful and enduring manifestation of the hip hop movement has certainly been rap music. In the 1980s, mainstream labels began to invest in rap artists who were until then unknown to the general public. To this date, rap music has captured important percentages of domestic music sales in the United States (Rose, 2008, p.3-4). Although “rap music” refers generically to the music associated with the hip hop youth movement, “rap” actually corresponds to a myriad of musical tendencies and styles whose songs deal with a wide range of subjects: everyday life in the slums, violence, exclusion, politics, oppression, social and political issues, sex, sexism, gangsterism, and so on. In her seminal book entitled *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*, Tricia Rose (1994) calls attention to the diversity and contradictions rap artists and audiences engage in. Some of them support the work of “gangster rappers” – groups that represent, sing and often glamorize gangsterism – but at

the same time acknowledge their negative influence on young generations. Female rappers often criticize the misogynous treatment usually given to women in rap videos and lyrics, but at the same time these women collaborate with the male rappers that produce these videos striving for success in the industry. Political rappers who are very critical of the United States' perpetuating of racial and economic discrimination also spread and support very conservative ideas about socio-political strategies to fight crime, drugs and community poverty and instability.

Rap music brings together a tangle of some of the most complex social, cultural, and political issues in contemporary American society. Rap's contradictory articulations are not signs of absent intellectual clarity; they are a common feature of community and popular cultural dialogues that always offer more than one cultural, social, or political viewpoint. These unusually abundant polyvocal conversations seem irrational when they are severed from the social contexts where everyday struggles over resources, pleasure, and meanings take place. Rap music is a black cultural expression that prioritizes black voices from the margins of urban America. (Rose, 1994, p.2).

For Tricia Rose, in societies where frontal attacks on dominating groups are strategically unwise or successfully contained, oppressed groups use dance, language and music “to mock those in power, express rage and produce fantasies of subversion” (p.99). According to the author, these are “not safety valves that protect and sustain the machines of oppression. Quite to the contrary, these dances, languages, and musics produce communal bases of knowledge about social conditions, communal interpretations of them and quite often serve as the cultural glue that fosters communal resistance.” (p.99-100). In tune with Douglas Kellner's position on mass culture, Tricia Rose sees the potential of rap music to engage, though sometimes indirectly, in social critique and ideological insubordination:

Not all rap transcripts directly critique all forms of domination; nonetheless, a large and significant element in rap's discursive territory is engaged in symbolic and ideological warfare with institutions and groups that symbolically,

ideologically, and materially oppress African Americans. In this way, rap music is a contemporary stage for the theater of the powerless. On this stage, rappers act out inversions of status hierarchies, tell alternative stories of contact with police and the education process, and draw portraits of contact with dominant groups in which the hidden transcript inverts/subverts the public, dominant transcript. Often rendering a nagging critique of various manifestations of power via jokes, stories, gestures, and song, rap's social commentary enacts ideological insubordination. (p.100-101).

In spite of hip hop's contradictions and internal tensions, Tricia Rose sees in the movement a strong cultural channel through which underprivileged black communities can express their dissatisfactions and fight social and racial inequalities. Tricia Rose does recognize, in an Adornian fashion, that when resistant popular cultural manifestations are appropriated by the culture industry, there is a movement of absorption and incorporation that tends to control and manipulate manifestations against the *status quo*<sup>27</sup>. However, differently from Adorno, Tricia Rose does not conceive the appropriation of rap by the music industry as a blatant uniformization and homogenization of popular culture:

Yet, at the same time, these mass-mediated and mass-distributed alternative codes and camouflaged meanings are also made vastly more accessible to oppressed and sympathetic groups around the world and contribute to developing cultural bridges among such groups. Moreover, attacks on institutional power rendered in these contexts have a special capacity to destabilize the appearance of unanimity among powerholders by openly challenging public transcripts and cultivating the contradictions between commodity interests ("Does it sell? Well, sell it, then.") and the desire for social control ("We can't let *them* say *that*"). Rap's resistive transcripts are articulated and acted out in both hidden and public domains, making them highly visible, yet difficult to contain and confine. (p.101)<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> For comparative purposes, the author uses British studies in the 1980s that evaluate how subversive identities and meanings in punk music were "manipulated and absorbed by dominant institutions, particularly the media." This process is called "incorporation" (Rose, 1994, p.101)

<sup>28</sup> Influenced by the critical lyrics of the African-American rap group *Public Enemy*, among others, politically engaged rap became a global phenomenon from the 1980s on. Groups and artists like *Racionais MCs*, *Planet Hemp* and *Gabriel, O Pensador* in Brazil, *Advanced Chemistry* in Germany or *MC Solaar* in France adapted their critiques to their own social and political realities. In Brazil, urban violence, social inequalities and poverty is a common theme while in Germany and France the social tensions originated by recent immigration are one of the main concerns in rap production.

Considered the first major academic work on rap, Tricia Rose's analysis gains epistemological power by not simply rejecting the music industry as a compact system of power domination. On the contrary, she is interested in mapping how the "voices from the margins" featured in rap music, with all their contradictions and tension, are incorporated by the music industry. In the chapter entitled "Prophets of rage: Rap Music and the Politics of Black Cultural Expression" (p.99-145) the author seeks to decode the constant struggle between dominant and subordinate groups in commercially successful rap in the 1980s and early 1990s, the nuances in the relational positions of power – black/white, male/female –, the complex dynamics of the music industry's incorporation and resistance, refusal and embracement of rap and vice-versa<sup>29</sup>.

There are other aspects of Adorno's treatment of the culture industry that seem to conflict with the analytical approach I intend to use for the understanding of the contemporary entertainment industry.

Firstly, in Adorno's theoretical framework, mass audiences are portrayed as collectivities without agency that *passively* consume the deceiving pleasures offered by the culture industry:

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<sup>29</sup> For an updated discussion on rap music see *The Hip Hop Wars: What we talk about when we talk about hip hop and why it matters* (Rose, 2008). Fourteen years after her groundbreaking *Black Noise*, Tricia Rose revisits the subject by analyzing the recent evolution of commercially successful hip hop in the United States. The author is highly critical of the "gangsta rapper" image that has been prevalently used and exploited by mass-media outlets – television, film and above all radio and recording industries – over the last decade. Black gangstas, pimps, hoes, and praise of violence which were only part of a bigger spectrum of representations in the 1980s have become central in commercial rap in the last decade. However, her criticism does not suggest that the recording industry should be discarded or that it is a uniform and compact body of exploitative images that only produces sameness: "Throughout the *Hip Hop Wars*, I have deliberately labelled much of what I have criticized about hip hop's ascent into mainstream stardom as "commercial" even though many progressive artists have commercial contracts or distribution deals with major labels. Artists such as Mos Def, Common, Talib Kweli, Lupe Fiasco, Nas and The Roots are visible in the commercial realm of hip hop, and most if not all have record contracts or some kind of distribution deals with major labels. [...] My pejorative use of the term "commercial" is meant to draw attention to the power of Viacom, Universal, Sony and other massive media conglomerates in elevating one thin slice of what constitutes hip hop over all other genres [...]. But I have not intended to suggest that nothing creative and community-enabling can or does take place through commercial outlets." (Rose, 2008, p. 242).

The step from the telephone to the radio has clearly distinguished the roles. The former still allowed the subscriber to play the role of subject, and was liberal. The latter is democratic: it turns all participants into listeners and authoritatively subjects them to broadcast programs which are all exactly the same. (Adorno, 1941, p.2)

*Passiveness* has a central role in Adorno's conception of the masses' interaction with the entertainment product. In this interaction "no independent thinking must be expected from the audience: the product prescribes every reaction" (p.9). According to Adorno, the stronger the culture industry becomes, the more it can manipulate the consumers' needs, "producing them, controlling them, disciplining them" (p.13). Here the supposed homogenization, pacification and submission of the masses are openly condemned because they produce individuals who are not able to think critically and who become mere receptacles of the ideologies imposed by the culture industry.

It is interesting to note that the same reasoning used by Adorno – about how the culture industry reinforces class relations of power – has been largely used by some critics of U.S. cultural imperialism around the world. Whereas in Adorno the culture industry is used to reinforce class domination, critics of U.S. cultural imperialism analogously see in the exportation of American movies, music and TV shows a powerful instrument of U.S. cultural domination on a global level. Both critiques assume that audiences passively consume these entertainment products and that the distraction provided by them covers a deeper agenda of manipulation and alienation. Despite their different applications, the argumentative logic is the same: entertainment products are part of a bigger scheme in which dominating parties perpetuate their power.

In his book *Cultural Imperialism: a Critical Introduction*, John Tomlison (2002) investigates the reception process around the world of specific products commonly related to the culture industry and U.S. cultural imperialism. Tomlinson first analyzes a

famous study by Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelard that aims to disclose the imperialist nature of Disney comic books: *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic* (Dorfman and Mattelard, 1975). The book was written in Chile in 1971 during the brief socialist government of Salvador Allende. Although it was eventually banned after the *coup d'état* that brought General Pinochet to power, the book was translated to several languages and became a classic of anti-imperialist cultural critique. Its main argument is that beyond the seeming innocence of Disney comic books, there is a hidden agenda of ideological manipulation and cultural domination. Disney's comics would actually carry strong American capitalist cultural values that are absorbed by the masses around the world, thus extending U.S. economic and political imperialism into the worldwide cultural arena. Dorfman and Mattelard present a large and persuasive list of ideological themes in Disney comics to prove their point: obsession with money and consumerism, depiction of exotic places – that is, Third World countries – full of treasures to be discovered and taken, racial and cultural stereotypes of the peoples who inhabit these places, representation of class relations as justified, natural and unchangeable, explicit anti-communist and anti-revolutionary propaganda and so on.

Tomlinson acknowledges the importance and political significance of Dorfman and Mattelard's "enraged, satirical and politically impassioned" book (p.42) in a crucially turbulent historic moment in Latin America, but he raises questions about their main argument. The first issue is that by the very nature of Dorfman and Mattelard's argument – which is based on interpretation – there is room for disagreement. Tomlinson notes that other cultural critics from different places and times – that is, with different worldviews – have interpreted Disney comic books in radically different ways. The figure of Uncle

Scrooge constitutes a good example. Donald Duck's famous millionaire-miser uncle is read by Dorfman and Mattelard along Marxist lines: his wealth reinforces the idea that capitalist class-structural relations are "natural" and that success comes along with shrewdness and entrepreneurship. However, Uncle Scrooge has been interpreted differently by other critics:

[...] three other critics have given this theme three quite different interpretations. One reads the Scrooge character as a deliberate mockery of the absurdity of 'money-fetishism', another extends this to see a 'closet critique of capitalism' in the stories, with Scrooge as a 'biting parody of the bourgeois entrepreneur in the competitive stage of capitalism', while a third sees the whole discourse of money as subservient to the larger theme in the stories of the 'ways in which human beings deceive and destroy themselves' (p. 43)

Tomlinson does not attempt to disallow Dorfman and Mattelard's claims or call their text's literary and cultural value into question. What he does emphasize, as traditional hermeneutics has thoroughly theorized, is that the act of textual interpretation is subject to disagreement, arguments and disputes. Therefore, an interpretation that works in a specific historical and socio-cultural frame cannot be universally applicable. By putting *How to Read Donald Duck* into perspective, Tomlinson challenges the idea that there is *one true absolute* reading of Disney's comic books – the *truth* that was hidden before it was finally disclosed by Dorfman and Mattelard.

Tomlinson's second criticism – and here his assessment is harsher – is related to Dorfman and Mattelard's account of the impact Disney comic books have on Chilean society. Tomlinson argues that the simple presence and circulation of Disney comic books in the Chile and an interpretation of them is not enough evidence of how the books were read by the population:

A text does not become culturally significant until it is read. Until it is read, it has the same status as imported blank paper: a material and economic significance,

but not a directly cultural significance. At this level of analysis, then, reading the imperialist text becomes the crucial issue in judging cultural imperialism. (p.42)

Since the sheer presence of Disney comic books cannot deterministically imply cultural domination, it would be necessary to investigate how – if at all – they transmit the values identified by the authors and how the social vision they “offer” is absorbed by foreign audiences. Tomlinson’s suspicion lies in the fact that Dorfman and Mattelard’s study is based on the *assumption* that Chilean audiences will read and absorb capitalist ideology through contact with Disney comic books, but the actual interaction between text and readers is never really investigated.

Tomlinson recognizes, however, that *How to Read Donald Duck* is not intended to be a scientific and rigorous social investigation of the reception processes at work when Chilean audiences read Disney comic books. It is rather a political manifesto written in an essayistic style that has had enormous influence on anti-imperialistic movements around the globe. However, beyond its internal coherent logic, there is no sustainable evidence that complex and heterogeneous foreign audiences necessarily absorb Disney comics along the Marxist lines proposed by Dorfman and Mattelard.

Since Dorfman and Mattelard’s interpretation of Disney comic books – as compelling and significant as it may be – does not advance the understanding of how they are really received by foreign audiences, Tomlinson turns to another product that has traditionally been identified with American cultural imperialism: the TV show *Dallas*. Broadcasted between 1978 and 1991, *Dallas* was one of the most popular American soap operas of all time and was exported to several countries around the world. The main characters were the Ewings, a wealthy Texas family in the oil and cattle industries that had to deal with greed, vengeance, setups, sex, passion, power and family matters during

the show's fourteen seasons. Like Donald Duck, *Dallas* was highly criticized due to its supposed ideological influence and power to manipulate audiences. The images of skyscrapers, expensive clothes, luxurious automobiles, extravagant settings and the rush for money and power were all seen as evidence of the ideological effects the show had on audiences worldwide.

Tomlinson notes that most of these cultural critiques were again based on the assumption that American TV products automatically have an ideological manipulative effect on audiences whenever and wherever they are shown without actual investigation of how this occurs (p. 45). However, encouraged by developments in British critical media theory in the 1980s, some scholars began to develop analyses based on how audiences reacted to the TV show, without assuming that it had an inherent ideological property. Tomlinson cites two of these studies. The first is Ien Ang's analysis (1985) which revolved around the massive international success of *Dallas* and the negative reaction of cultural commentators who believed the soap opera was blatant evidence of the threat posed by American lifestyle and values toward national identities.

Ang placed an advertisement in a Dutch women's magazine asking readers to answer a brief survey in which they would describe what they liked and disliked about the show. Beyond the expected fascination with money, power and other "capitalist American values", the author obtained a much more complex set of reactions. Some viewers expressed conflicting feelings oscillating between a distaste of the ideological values of the show and the pleasure in watching it. Some reacted to these "guilty pleasure" feelings by assuming an ironic attitude towards the show. Others refused to feel

guilty about it by making popular statements such as “there’s no accounting for taste”.  
(p.46).

The second study analyzed by Tomlinson was the famous empirical research conducted by Katz and Liebes (1985) with American and Israeli audiences. Using a more formal and rigorous method for collecting data than Ang, Katz and Liebes’s work was a large-scale study that aimed at comparing *Dallas*’s reception amongst different ethnic groups in Israel and the United States. They noticed that instead of homogeneous and passive reactions, the audiences tended to respond to the show in a myriad of different ways. In many cases, watching *Dallas* not only did not mean adhering to capitalist American values, but it actually had the opposite effect, that is, it served to reassure one’s own identity. Arabs, for example, criticized the show’s “moral degeneracy” and Russians often mentioned that the situations depicted were evidence of “rotten capitalist” values.  
(p.47)

In his criticism of the traditional cultural critique of mass culture products, Tomlinson is careful not to go to the other extreme and celebrate their consumption around the world. However, he is also wary of approaches that portray audiences as homogeneous and passive receptacles of industrial cultural products. For him, audiences are active in the interaction with these products, and the process of meaning construction is seen “as one of negotiation with the text in a particular cultural context” (p. 47).

Empirical analyses such as those led by Tricia Rose on rap or John Tomlinson on cultural imperialism do not deal directly with Adorno’s theorization of the culture industry. However, they make a strong case against totalitarian models of cultural critique marked by opposing poles: on the one side, a powerful, compact and manipulative

industry and on the other side the homogeneous, passive and subordinate masses. They show that by avoiding such an approach, one can observe contradictions, nuances and complexities that are part of today's mass culture production and reception.

Finally, in addition to these particular criticisms of Adorno's treatment of the culture industry, there is another important element in his theorization that needs to be analyzed. Following Adorno's line of reasoning, *technology* is key to the internal mechanisms that govern the culture industry; an important tool for the system to exercise its domination over the masses:

[...] The result is the circle of manipulation and retroactive need in which the unity of the system grows even stronger. No mention is made of the fact that the basis on which technology acquires power over society is the power of those whose economic hold over society is the greatest. A technological rationale is the rationale of domination itself. (Adorno, 1941, p.2)

For Adorno, technology's sole purpose is to technically facilitate advertising so that a product (ideas, goods or images) can make a deep psychological impact on the masses:

Advertising and the cultural industry merge technically as well as economically. In both cases the same thing can be seen in innumerable places, and the mechanical repetition of the same culture product has come to be the same as that of the propaganda slogan. In both cases the insistent demand for effectiveness makes technology into psycho-technology, into a procedure for manipulating men. (p.22-23).

Therefore, by using technology, the culture industry supposedly reinforces the power of dominating groups over the masses that passively receive the bombardment of advertising for its cultural products. However, when it comes to new technologies, Adorno's vision is challenged again by today's cultural landscape and practices. If on the one hand the technology involved in big entertainment industries – like blockbuster movies or video games – is controlled by a few companies in the world, technology as a

means of cultural production has also arrived to the masses in many different ways and forms. A good example is the so called “*fan film*”. A fan film is an unauthorized amateur film, based on pop-culture characters, created by fans for non-commercial viewing. Fan films are an old phenomenon which dates back at least to the 1920s<sup>30</sup>, but it was in the late 1970s, when the first science fiction conventions started to be established, that fans began to exchange more intensively their homemade productions based on the fictional universe of their favorite movies (Young, 2008). In the 1990s two technological phenomena boosted the production and circulation of fan films around the world.

The first was the ever-growing availability of household camcorders. Their digitalization made it easier to shoot home movies and dispose of unwanted footage by simply pressing a button – as opposed to the strips of film from the old 1970s and 1980s cameras. Along with digital camcorders, personal computers gave fans all over the world the possibility of having their own home editing programs. What once was restricted to professionals who had access to specific and expensive machinery was now available to anyone who could afford an editing program in a little box. Moreover, PCs also gave access to animation programs that opened up a large new array of possibilities for fan film productions. While digital camcorders and editing programs facilitated the production of fan films, a second major technological innovation had an enormous impact on their distribution, namely, the internet. Just as many other fields, the internet redefined the scope and accessibility of fan films. What was then exchanged through Betacam and VHS tapes – and later CDs and DVDs – in science fiction conventions was now posted online and instantly made available to fans around the world.

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<sup>30</sup> For a more detailed study on Fan Film see Young, Clive (2008). *Homemade Hollywood: Fans Behind The Camera*, Continuum Books, New York / London.

Fan films today are produced in all kinds of formats and vary enormously in technical and artistic quality. Some of them are live-action feature movies, others are short animated films; some are *faux* previews for movies that will never be produced, and others are simply new movies created by mixing and matching scenes of real movies with innumerable editing tricks<sup>31</sup>.

The fan film phenomenon deserves an investigation of its own. A rigorous historical approach would have to treat the issue beginning with the so-called fan fiction<sup>32</sup> which goes back to a much earlier date – the famous unauthorized sequel of Don Quixote by Avellaneda appeared in 1614, for example. From the market point of view, an important question arises: does this disorganized and heteroclitic body of cultural products represent any threat to their mainstream counterparts? Or are they an excellent way of getting free publicity? These are some of the ways to approach and analyze the phenomenon – all of them beyond the objectives set for this chapter. When it comes to fan films, it is important to recognize, however, that new technologies can play a very different role from that portrayed by Adorno: they can actually be tools for the democratization of the audiovisual fictional production. Instead of turning the audiences into passive receivers, they can open up new avenues of interaction with the culture industry.

The critical theory developed by Adorno and other members of the Frankfurt School have been widely influential in Western scholarly thinking since the 1930s. However, as I have argued, it has also been – directly or indirectly – seriously challenged

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<sup>31</sup> To view some of these fan films, see [www.fanfilms.net](http://www.fanfilms.net)

<sup>32</sup> According to Merriam-Webster.com **Fan fiction** (alternately referred to as **fanfiction**, **fanfic**, **FF**, or **fic**) are “stories involving popular fictional characters that are written by fans and often posted on the Internet” available at <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fan+fiction?show=0&t=1305546458>, accessed on 16 May 2011.

by many scholarly theories on culture, mass media and technology in a debate that continues to this day<sup>33</sup>. The text *Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception* itself was born within an ongoing internal intellectual debate. First published in 1944, it was to a certain extent a response to Walter Benjamin's work on mass media, more specifically the classic essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (Benjamin, 1936)<sup>34</sup>. Adorno and Benjamin began their collaboration when the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research was established in the late 1920s. Due to Hitler's rise to power in 1933, the institute moved to Geneva where it remained until 1935. It then moved out of Europe and settled in New York at Columbia University. While most of the prominent members of the Institute fled to the United States, Walter Benjamin – who had always been a member of the Institute's "outer circle" – escaped to France. In the meantime, he continued his collaboration with Adorno and Horkheimer through the publication of essays and the exchange of letters. Many were the points of intersection and divergence between Benjamin and his colleagues established in New York. Out of their prolific collaboration, I will isolate, for the sake of my analysis, some of their divergent points in key issues such as the depiction of the masses, their contact with culture industry products and the role of technology in this interaction.

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<sup>33</sup> For a detailed discussion of the contemporary debate on Adorno, see Bernstein (1991, p.1-25). Bernstein shows how the postmodernist re-evaluation of the character and potentialities of mass culture has often taken the form of criticism towards Adorno's theory on the culture industry. Bernstein, however, supports the idea that Adorno's critical theory is still applicable to the present culture industries and his essay is an attempt to deconstruct some of these most common criticisms.

<sup>34</sup> According to J. M. Bernstein (1991, p.4), Adorno's essay "On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of listening" (Adorno, 1938) is largely regarded as his first response to Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (Benjamin, 1936). Although most of Adorno's tenets on the culture industry were then presented in several essays, it was not until 1944 when the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* was published that these principles were articulated in a lengthy and solid general critical theory.

Benjamin refuted and criticized radical positions in which mass culture products were treated as low forms of cultural manifestations produced solely to divert the masses.

Quoting the French author Georges Duhamel, Benjamin argues:

[...] Duhamel has expressed himself in the most radical manner. What he objects the most is the kind of participation which the movie elicits from the masses. Duhamel calls the movie “a pastime for helots a diversion for uneducated, wretched, worn-out creatures who are consumed by their worries; a spectacle which requires no concentration and presupposes no intelligence which kindles no light in the heart and awakens no hope other than the ridiculous one of someday becoming a ‘star’ in Los Angeles.” Clearly, this is at bottom the same ancient lament that the masses seek distraction whereas art demands concentration from the spectator. That is a commonplace. (Benjamin, 1936. p.10)

In this passage we can observe how Walter Benjamin opposed Duhamel’s distinction between art and mass culture based on a binary system of values in which the former occupies a superior position whereas the latter is only a non-respectable form of distraction for general audiences – a faulty dichotomic scheme refuted at the beginning of this chapter.

Benjamin also rejects an analytical system in which mass culture products – movies in this case – are pre-judged as pointless diversions for “wretched, worn-out creatures who are consumed by their worries”.

Benjamin’s criticism of Duhamel’s position also implies that the negative pre-judgment of the distractions sought by the masses does not advance the understanding of the complex cultural phenomena that were taking place in his time, i.e., the advent of new technologies and new forms of interaction with mass products.

Benjamin’s interest in investigating these new phenomena and their complexities prevented him from accepting Duhamel’s oversimplification of mass audiences as

“helots<sup>35</sup>, uneducated, wretched, worn-out creatures” that passively engage in cultural experiences that require no concentration or intelligence. Here we begin to enter more directly into the divergences between Benjamin’s investigation of the age of mechanical reproduction and Adorno’s analysis of the culture industry. In Adorno’s case, as we have discussed before, the culture industry was part of a larger system of domination of the masses. Because Adorno’s main purpose was to raise critical awareness against this domination, his uncompromising critique also tended in principle to attribute a negative value to culture industry products, their interaction with the masses and the technologies associated with them. As Benjamin’s insight on the reproducibility of the work of art was not necessarily subject to a cultural critique of the domination of the masses, his analysis and value judgments tended to be more nuanced and subtle.

Benjamin’s main argument is that the increasing capability of mechanical reproduction has changed man’s relationship with cultural products. Its major consequence is the loss of the “aura” of the work of art, which was associated with its uniqueness. Reproducibility undermines the traditional and ritualistic reverence towards the work of art. But mass culture products can replace the lost aura with new kinds of cultural dynamics:

The film responds to the shriveling of the aura with an artificial build-up of the “personality” outside the studio. The cult of the movie star, fostered by the money of the film industry, preserves not the unique aura of the person but the “spell of the personality,” the phony spell of a commodity. So long as the movie-makers’ capital sets the fashion, as a rule no other revolutionary merit can be accredited to today’s film than the promotion of a revolutionary criticism of traditional concepts of art. We do not deny that in some cases today’s films can also promote revolutionary criticism of social conditions, even of the distribution of property.

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<sup>35</sup> According to *dictionary.com*, a helot is “1. a member of the lowest class in ancient Laconia, constituting a body of serfs who were bound to the land and were owned by the state. Compare Perioeci, Spartiate. 2. (lowercase ) a serf or slave; bondman”. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/helot> accessed on 23 June 2010.

However, our present study is no more specifically concerned with this than is the film production of Western Europe. (p.7)

According to Benjamin, the cult of the movie star personality is artificially created by the movie industry as a commercial response to the shriveling of the aura in mass produced cultural artifacts. This cult of the movie star is considered phony by Benjamin, for whom as long as the movie industry continues to feed on this kind of artificiality, films will not fulfill their revolutionary potential. Its only “revolutionary merit” would be the upheaval of traditional concepts of art. However, it is important to notice that this is not a generalized criticism of the movie industry. Benjamin even acknowledges that films can also “promote revolutionary criticism of social conditions, even of the distribution of property”. Although his study is as little concerned with this specific kind of production as is Western Europe film production, it is clear that the film industry for Benjamin is not monolithic, but rather plural and capable of producing different effects on society according to its use – as opposed to the unique and harmful effects of the culture industry as portrayed by Adorno.

Finally, technology for Benjamin is also not necessarily part of a larger system of domination but it is also an element that may have different and complex effects on society. In fact, Benjamin goes beyond the ideological effects of new technologies and *avant la lettre* tries to understand how new technologies shape new kinds of interaction between audiences and cultural products from a mediatic point of view. He analyses, for example, how new printing technologies led an increasing number of readers to become writers: “It began with the daily press opening to its readers space for ‘letters to the editor’” and today there is hardly a “gainfully employed European who could not, in principle, find an opportunity to publish somewhere [...] comments on his work,

grievances, documentary reports, or that sort of thing.” (p.7). Benjamin’s observation on the insertion of the masses in cultural production due to the impact of new technologies is a precursor of the fan film debate which would be developed some decades later.

Benjamin’s current relevance in this particular debate is to a great extent the result of his rather nuanced attitude towards mass culture and its internal complexities and subtleties.

As we have seen throughout this chapter, the discussion of entertainment, art, the culture industry, mass culture, the entertainment industry and new technologies has always been controversial. From Brecht to Adorno to Benjamin, these discussions have always been permeated by different degrees of biases, opinions, power relations and value systems. I have tried in this chapter to present some of these debates by positioning myself and adopting approaches I believe are more gainful from an epistemological point of view – approaches that will help advance the understanding of the contemporary entertainment industry and more specifically of *aparelhagem* parties.

In the upcoming chapters, I will defend the thesis that in the *aparelhagem* phenomenon in Belém do Pará, technology has been used not only for commercial reasons, but also to fight the strong socio-cultural stigma these parties have long faced in local society – which means the masses that produce them have an active role in the commercial and ideological mechanisms at work in the *aparelhagem* industry. I will argue that technology made possible the appearance of an industry that uproots the passive/active, dominating/dominated paradigms portrayed by Adorno. The role of new technologies in the *aparelhagem* industry, the social impact of media mobility in contemporary entertainment products, their power to bring social awareness to the masses or even the discussion of whether this is a *sine qua non* condition for its cultural

validation will be further discussed later on in this thesis. What is certain is that the old discussion of the *culture industry* as conceived by the Frankfurt School, though not dead, has given way to other scholarly perspectives and theoretical frameworks in which culture industry products, rather than being attacked, must be investigated and analyzed.

By applying a new methodological approach – that of cultural mobilities – to the study of the contemporary entertainment industry, my attempt will be to bring a fresh perspective to two important fields of contemporary cultural analysis that have not yet dialogued. The notions of “cultural mobility” and “entertainment industry” will certainly benefit from each other when placed side by side to understand our contemporary cultural landscape. On the one hand, the introduction of the entertainment industry universe into the cultural mobility analytical framework will fill a gap in mobility studies, that is, it will cover a cultural arena largely unexplored by the mobility debate. On the other hand, to consider the entertainment industry in terms of mobility will bring new insights and epistemological gains to better understand the production and reception of entertainment in today’s mobile world.

#### ***4. Cultural mobility and the entertainment industry: applications and interfaces***

##### **4.1 Aesthetic mobility: focalizing on the mobile nature of entertainment products**

In previous chapters the terms *cultural mobility* and *entertainment industry* were discussed and submitted to a process of semantic delimitation so that they could form part of an analytical apparatus for the study of contemporary cultural objects and phenomena. For the vast debate on cultural mobility, Moser's systematization and division into three different areas of investigation were adopted: *locomotion*, *mediamotion* and *artmotion*. For the "entertainment industry", Hauptert's strategy of proposing a precisifying definition for the term was adopted, that is, some restrictive criteria were used to narrow down its scope. In spite of their differences, both methodologies have the objective of bringing "order" to cognitively approach a very heteroclitic *corpus*, to turn unmanageable, vague, all-encompassing terms into more precise tools for the analysis of specific aspects of contemporary cultural production and reception.

In addition to the semantic delimitation of the terms, special attention was given to the analysis of specific objects that could highlight the mobile aspects of contemporary cultural landscape. In the case of *artmotion*, for example, the so-called "installations" were singled out for analysis because they point to new mobile tendencies in today's art scene. For the same reason, I have previously stated that for the analysis of the contemporary entertainment industry, special emphasis will be placed on CGI blockbuster movies, theme park attractions, video games and *aparelhagem* parties. These cultural objects present sophisticated and complex mobile characteristics that also point

to strong trends in contemporary entertainment industry. These trends seem to be particularly related to a phenomenon I will call “aisthesis mobility”.

The use of the adjective “aisthesis” aims at emphasizing sensorial aspects that are not central when the term “aesthetic” is used. According to the *Britannica Online Encyclopedia*, “aesthetics” is the

philosophical study of the qualities that make something an object of aesthetic interest and of the nature of aesthetic value and judgment. It encompasses the philosophy of art, which is chiefly concerned with the nature and value of art and the principles by which it should be interpreted and evaluated.<sup>36</sup>

As the Britannica’s definition confirms, *aesthetics* is commonly seen as synonymous with “philosophy of art”. *Art* here is understood in its more restrictive and conventional sense, that is, as related to “traditional” artistic expressions such as music, literature, sculpture and painting, for example. Cultural products outside this artistic realm – such as those found in the entertainment industry – are usually left out by the philosophical investigations that have traditionally been developed in aesthetics. However a return to the origins of *aesthetics* when it was still an incipient branch of philosophy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century can open up possibilities for the investigation of contemporary cultural objects beyond the restricted circle of the fine arts.

Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762) introduced the term *aesthetics* in his 1735 thesis *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (Baumgarten, 1954 [1735]). He proposes the adoption of the term based on an opposition between sense and thought drawn by ancient Greek philosophers:

The Greek philosophers and the Church fathers have always carefully distinguished between the *aistheta* and the *noeta*, that is, between objects of sense and objects of thought, and while the latter, that is, “what can be cognized through

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<sup>36</sup> “Aesthetics” entry from Britannica Online Encyclopedia:  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/7484/aesthetics> accessed on 28 August 2010.

the higher faculty” of mind, are “the object of logic, the aistheta are the subject of the episteme aisthetike or AESTHETICS,” the science of perception (Baumgarten, 1954, p.86)

In his reflections, a young Baumgarten, at the age of 21, tries to contribute to the philosophical debate on the study of poetry by evoking a long established opposition between aistheta and noeta, the former referring to “objects of sense” and the latter to “objects of thought”. Baumgarten was then entering into the ancient philosophical debate on the theory of knowledge. On the one hand there was the empiricist tradition that since Aristotle had advocated the idea that knowledge arose from experience via the interaction of the senses with the world (lower cognitive faculty). On the other hand there was the rationalist philosophical tradition that conceived knowledge as a result of reason, thought and intellect (higher cognitive faculty). While British philosophy had a strong empiricist tradition, mainly due to the influential works of John Locke (1632-1704), 18<sup>th</sup> century German philosophy was deeply influenced by key rationalist philosophers such as Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716). Baumgarten endeavored to find a place for the investigation of poetry in the long-established empiricist philosophical tradition of *lower cognitive faculty*. The objective was not to discard or refute the well established rationalism, or theory of *higher cognitive faculty*, developed by Leibniz. On the contrary, part of Baumgarten’s strategy was to use the philosophical rigor – and prestige – found in rationalist thought to develop his own philosophical theory of perception for the analysis of poetry.

Karl Aschenbrenner, in his introduction to the translated version of *Meditationes philosophicae*, explains Baumgarten’s objectives:

Aesthetics is to be the science which will investigate perception for the purpose of describing the kind of perfection which is proper to it. It will have its counterpart in the science of logic which will perform the same office for thought.

Baumgarten, like Wolff and other rationalists, takes cognition to comprise a higher and a lower part, thought and perception. (Aschenbrenner, 1954, p.4)

According to Aschenbrenner, Baumgarten's genius was to evoke the old contrast between "aistheta" and "noeta" to propose a timely theory of perception that could be used for the philosophical investigation of poetry. To a certain extent, Baumgarten's "new" science of perception was a complement to the influential rationalism of Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) and Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716), which showed little interest in the arts. Aschenbrenner highlights how appropriate it was to propose such a theory of perception in that particular historic moment because "the early eighteenth century was an age of flourishing critical activity that saw the beginning or the renascence, in Germany, of one of the world's major literatures." (Aschenbrenner, 1954, p.5). Aschenbrenner suggests that Baumgarten's proposition could give the arts the philosophical recognition that was denied by the rationalist tradition.

Fifteen years later, through the publication of *Aesthetica*, Baumgarten (1761 [1750]) expanded and systematized the ideas presented before in *Meditationes philosophicae*. However, while in the latter the word *aesthetics* had appeared in the last section of the work, in *Aesthetica* it occupied a central position, thus calling attention to this incipient branch of philosophy. For almost three centuries, Aesthetics, as a branch of philosophy, has constituted a space of prolific debates on the nature of beauty and taste, and has become itself an object of scrutiny amidst these debates. Thirty one years after the publication of *Aesthetica*, Kant, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, expressed his reservations against the newly created branch of philosophy by criticizing Baumgarten's project and methodology. Kant criticized Baumgarten for having used a philosophical

approach deeply influenced by the rationalist tradition to analyze art, which, by nature, can only trigger an epistemic process through the empirical contact with the senses.

The Germans are the only people who presently have come to use the word *aesthetics* to designate what others call the critique of taste. They are doing so on the basis of a false hope conceived by that superb analyst Baumgarten. He hoped to bring our critical judging of the beautiful under rational principles, and to raise the rules for such judging to the level of a lawful science. Yet that endeavor is futile. For, as far as their principal sources are concerned, those supposed rules or criteria are merely empirical. Hence they can never serve as determinate *a priori* laws to which our judgment of taste must conform. (Kant, 1996 [1781], A22, note 23, p.74)

According to Kant, due to this incongruence – applying rational principles to the critical judging of the beautiful –, there could be only two alternatives to be followed.

The first would be to stop using the name *aesthetics* to refer to the critique of taste and to use it instead for the doctrine of sensibility – thus truly following the division of cognition into *aistheta* and *noeta* as set forth by the ancients. The second alternative would be to engage in a speculative philosophical project by applying a transcendental meaning to the name *aesthetics*. Kant adopts the second alternative and proposes a complex philosophical maneuver in which he isolates *sensibility* from any conceptual understanding related to it, so that nothing but empirical intuition remains. Kant's objective was to create a *transcendental aesthetics* that could stand in contrast to the investigation of the principles of pure thought that he called *transcendental logic*. Nine years later, Kant returns to the theme in his *Critique of Judgment* (Kant, 2008 [1790])<sup>37</sup>.

In this third and final installment, Kant completes his critical project by discussing the mechanisms and conditions of judgment. According to Kant, investigating judgment is a

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<sup>37</sup> Between the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and the *Critique of Judgment* (1790), Kant also published the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788). While the first and the third critique would influence the aesthetic debate by proposing the investigation of themes such as “transcendental aesthetics” and “aesthetic judgment”, the second critique would impact the field of ethics and moral philosophy by discussing issues such as the “nature of morality” and “moral rightness”.

necessary complement to his Critique of Pure Reason: “A critique of pure reason, i.e., of our faculty of judging on *a priori* principles, would be incomplete if the critical examination of judgment [...] were not dealt with separately” (Kant, 2008 [1790], p.5). In *Critique of Judgment* there is a section entitled *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, in which Kant investigates the judgment of taste and insists that this investigation can only be carried within the scope of aesthetics: “The judgment of taste [...] is not a cognitive judgment, and so not logical, but is aesthetic-which means that it is one whose determining ground cannot be other than subjective.” (Kant, p.73). This statement shows how important it was for Kant to methodologically recognize the primacy of subjective perception in the study of aesthetics.

In spite of their different methodologies, both Baumgarten and Kant start with the basic differentiation between *aistheta* and *noeta* to construct their analytical framework. They appropriate the rationalist and empiricist traditions for their particular uses of the term *aesthetics*, thus advancing their philosophical propositions on how perception plays a role in the construction of knowledge (Baumgarten) or in the judgment of taste (Kant). Despite their different appropriations of the term *aesthetics*, both Baumgarten and Kant aim at constructing a general theory of perception. However, in the following decades, as *aesthetics* became an independent branch of philosophy, the central position that perception once occupied in the debate faded away. As stated by Moser and Klucinskas in their introduction to *Esthétiques et Recyclages Culturels*:

[...] le sens restreint que Kant accordait au mot « esthétique » a été, en grande partie, neutralisé. Durant la période entre 1790 et 1810, en Allemagne, le sens du mot glisse irrévocablement vers celui de « philosophie de l’art », et le projet d’une science de la perception s’estompe. De plus en plus, la tâche de l’esthétique sera de penser philosophiquement l’idée de l’art. *Elle passe d’un discours sur la*

*perception subjective à celui sur un objet.* (Moser and Klucinskas, 2004, p.6, emphasis added)

In their historical overview of the development of aesthetics, Moser and Klucinskas observe that this new branch of philosophy became the space *par excellence* for the discussion of the beautiful in the arts, more specifically in the fine arts (Moser and Klucinskas, p.6). The authors also highlight that by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in spite of a proliferation of different approaches and perspectives in different countries, the object of aesthetics remained relatively stable and circumscribed to the realm of the fine arts (Moser and Klucinskas, p.6-7). To this day, aesthetics is still closely related to the idea of “philosophy of art”, as seen in the Britannica’s definition given above. As the definition suggests, aesthetics usually implies “the philosophy of art, which is chiefly concerned with the nature and value of art and the principles by which it should be interpreted and evaluated.”<sup>38</sup>

However, as observed by Moser and Klucinskas, the artwork, once a relatively stable object of study in aesthetics, faced a general “identity” crisis in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Moser and Klucinskas, p.7). From modern avant-garde manifestations – *Dada* in France, for example – to post-modern artistic movements – *Language poetry* in the United States, for instance –, the traditional object of art was continuously challenged. *Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965-1975* (Goldstein and Rorimer, 1995) is a good example of how artists deeply reevaluated the concept of “art” in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this book the authors examine ground-breaking Conceptual artists<sup>39</sup> who questioned the form, purpose and

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<sup>38</sup> “Aesthetics” entry from Britannica Online Encyclopedia:

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/7484/aesthetics> accessed on 28 August 2010.

<sup>39</sup> According to Britannica Online Encyclopedia, Conceptual art was an avant-garde artistic movement characterized by artworks “whose medium is the idea (or concept), usually manipulated by the tools of language and often documented by photography. Its concerns were idea-based rather than formal.”

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/131001/conceptual-art> accessed on 22 November 2010.

meaning of the work of art in the 1960s and 1970s especially – but not exclusively – in the United States. The fifty-five artists depicted in the book – including Michael Asher, John Baldessari, Joseph Kosuth and Dan Graham, among others – had one characteristic in common: they all experimented with a variety of materials, media and techniques that deeply questioned the formal and conceptual definitions of art.

As the title of the book suggests, it was a time when the object of art itself began to be reconsidered: What is art? What is an object of art? Where are its boundaries? Since *aesthetics* had chosen the work of art as its privileged object of study, the validity and utility of aesthetics as a field of investigation also started to be questioned. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, some aestheticians reacted to these tendencies by trying to “defend and protect” the traditional space of the fine arts from avant-garde movements. In 1979, in an International Conference on Aesthetics in Poland entitled *Crisis of Aesthetics?*, Harold Osborne opposed the idea that conceptual artworks were art at all and assessed the role of the aesthetician in such a cultural landscape:

The situation requires a thorough overhauling of our existing and traditional concepts of fine art, separation of what is central from what is peripheral, and the elucidation of principles to serve as a guideline to what can be embraced and what must be repudiated as irrelevant (Osborne, 1979, p.220)

Two years later, John Hoaglund, in a short essay entitled *A Crisis in Aesthetics?*, goes further in his claims regarding the aesthetician’s task in examining the avant-garde of his time: “So it might still make sense for us to scrutinize the avant-garde more closely to distinguish what is fine art from what is not and to bend more effort toward providing a basis for the distinction of the good artwork from the poor.” (Hoaglund, 1981, p.102). Hoaglund stresses the importance of “teaching aesthetic discrimination in the classroom”, to show students how to distinguish a mediocre work of art from a good one;

furthermore, students should be “afforded to understand why the poor piece is poor and the good piece good” (Hoaglund, p. 103). Through the remarks of aestheticians such as Osborne and Hoaglund, it is possible to observe how aesthetics turned from a theory of subjective perception to a discourse on art, as stated by Moser and Klucinskas above. In the representative examples of Osborne and Hoaglund, as their privileged object of study is destabilized by avant-garde movements, the aesthetician assumes a defensive tone against this menace and attempts to assert the authoritative power of aesthetics to distinguish between what is art and what is not art, what is *good* art and *mediocre* art.

However, as the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, new technologies and ideologies inevitably shaped a new cultural landscape in which new cultural objects reconfigured the space once traditionally occupied by the fine arts. Mass media, mass culture and pop culture defied the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the traditional object of art. Towards the end of the 1980s the theoretical developments of Cultural Studies began to criticize the aesthetic discourse. According to Moser and Klucinskas in their above-mentioned article, Cultural Studies critique towards aesthetics had two complementary objectives. Firstly, it denounced the aesthetic discourse as naïve and outdated, a discipline that did not keep up with the rapid transformations experienced in the art scene and cultural life of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Secondly, these critiques were used to validate pop art, popular culture and mass cultural artifacts as objects of study: "À l'encontre de l'esthétique philosophique, les *Cultural Studies* tentent de découvrir une nouvelle dynamique culturelle, des formes des représentations qui circulent entre les diverses cultures populaires et de masse, les cultures marginales et les cultures savantes [...]" (Moser and Klucinskas, 2004, p.7).

At the turn of the century, it was time for philosophy itself to reflect on the limitations and impasses that aesthetics as a field of studies had reached. In his article entitled “The End of Aesthetic Experience”, Richard Shusterman recognized that by 1999 the traditional aesthetic experience had come under increasing critique, and he reflects on why it had lost its appeal (Shusterman, 1999, p.29). Shusterman defends the idea that the aesthetic experience in its traditional sense, in spite of all the criticisms, should be kept as a necessary part of human experience in contemporary society:

Perhaps our informational evolution has already gone too far, so that an evening of beauty at the Met can do nothing to counter a life on Wall Street's chaotic trading floor. Perhaps aesthetic experience, and not just the philosophical value of its concept, has almost reached its end. How could philosophy do anything to forestall its total loss? (Shusterman, 1999, p.41)

In the book *Adieu à l'Esthétique*, Jean Marie Schaeffer (2000) offers a much more provocative diagnosis for the crisis of aesthetics at the turn of the century. For the author, the intense debate on aesthetics that took place in France in the 1980s and 1990s revolved around themes that went beyond the traditional issues discussed by aesthetics as the philosophy of art. The aesthetic debate was detached from the artistic and philosophic niche it once inhabited and began to echo in the public sphere outside the professional philosophy circles (Schaeffer, 2000, p.1-3). However, Schaeffer does not celebrate this phenomenon as a renovation of aesthetics as many contemporary philosophers had advocated. On the contrary, Schaeffer believes that these were signs that the philosophical doctrine once known as aesthetics had simply emptied out and that, justifying the book's provocative title, it was time to say goodbye to it.

In addition to the somewhat nostalgic approach of Shusterman or the fatalist diagnosis of Schaeffer, many other alternatives were proposed. Among these options, Moser and Klucinkas point to a route that is particularly interesting for my thesis. It

consists in “returning to the roots of the concept by conceiving aesthetics [once again] as a theory of perception” (Moser and Klucinkas, 2004, p.10, my translation). More specifically, this strategy represents a return to Baumgarten’s project of developing a science of sensorial perception. Baumgarten’s careful choice of the word *aesthetic* took in consideration its etymology from the Greek *aisthētikós*, meaning “things perceptible by the senses<sup>40</sup>”. Therefore, a return to Baumgarten means restoring the primacy of the “aisthesis”, that is, of the senses – and their role in human interaction with the world – in the aesthetic debate. According to Moser and Klucinkas, this strategy produces two important consequences. First, it produces a transhistoric and transcultural enlargement of aesthetics as a field of studies. Second, it allows for establishing points of contact with younger disciplines like *Media Studies* which since the 1960s has stressed the importance of understanding our culture through the study of contemporary media and its interaction with the five human senses (Moser and Klucinkas, p.10).

An example of the powerful possibilities of such a maneuver can be found in the thought-provoking article “Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered” by Susan Buck-Morss (1992). In this article the author proposes a reconsideration of aesthetic issues raised by Walter Benjamin in “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”. However, Buck-Morss is interested in analyzing aspects of Benjamin’s text that exceed the limits of aesthetics as a philosophical doctrine. The author’s strategy to provide a renewed aesthetic consideration of Benjamin’s essay is precisely in a return to the empiricist origins of the word:

[...] it will be helpful to recall the original etymological meaning of the word “aesthetics” because it is precisely to this origin that, via Benjamin’s revolution,

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<sup>40</sup> T. F. HOAD. "[aesthetic](http://www.encyclopedia.com)." *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*. 1996. *Encyclopedia.com*. <<http://www.encyclopedia.com>>. accessed on 02 September 2010.

we find ourselves returned. *Asthetikos* is the ancient Greek word for that which is “perceptive by feeling”. *Aisthesis* is the sensory experience of perception. [...] It is a form of cognition achieved through taste, touch, hearing, seeing, smell – the whole corporeal sensorium. (Buck-Morss, 1992, p.6)

By reactivating the original etymological meaning of the word, the author creates an analytical platform in which she can easily circulate between areas such as the Social Sciences, Philosophy, Psychology and Media Studies. Buck-Morss goes even further in her transdisciplinary reconsideration of Benjamin’s essay. Through the idea of the sensorium<sup>41</sup>, she also incorporates in her analysis biological aspects that were once restricted to the domain of neurology and physiology. By doing so, Buck-Morss promotes the dialogue of neuro-science and philosophy, two areas of knowledge that, according to her, have inexplicably established few channels of communication (Buck-Morss, p.11-15)

For my own purposes – that is, the study of products from the entertainment industry – a return to *aisthesis* also represents a maneuver with powerful epistemological advantages. This is so because video games, theme park attractions, CGI blockbuster movies, etc. trespass the boundaries of what is considered “art”, and therefore are normally excluded as objects of study of traditional aesthetics. By going back to the sensory aspects of human interaction with cultural objects, it is possible to establish links between artifacts belonging to the “art” space and products from the entertainment industry. In this return to the etymological roots of aesthetics, the examination of the sensory interaction with the cultural object supersedes the discussion of whether an object

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<sup>41</sup> According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, sensorium means: 1. the parts of the brain or the mind concerned with the reception and interpretation of sensory stimuli; broadly : the entire sensory apparatus 2. a: ability of the brain to receive and interpret sensory stimuli. b: the state of consciousness judged in terms of this ability <a clouded sensorium> <the sensorium remained clear> available at <http://mw1.merriam-webster.com/medical/sensorium>, accessed on 24 November 2010.

is “art” or “not art”. Its socio-cultural status becomes less relevant. For the study of mobility issues in cultural objects, this maneuver entails the possibility of investigating side by side the sensorial mobile aspects of products as diverse as an installation of a prestigious artist or a theme park attraction in Orlando. As a matter of fact, this will constitute one of the main arguments in this chapter: the sensorial engagement at work in some kinds of artistic installations, especially those that rely on technological apparatus to cause a sensation of mobility/movement, and the sensorial experience in some entertainment products – theme park attractions, for example – present many striking parallels and points of intersection. These remarkable parallels reinforce this thesis’s main argument that contemporary entertainment products should be analyzed under the paradigm of cultural mobility, and more specifically, in terms of aisthesis mobility<sup>42</sup>.

To highlight this return to the *aisthesis*, with the primacy of the sensory perception of the world, I will focus on the *aisthesis mobility* found in many products from the entertainment industry. That is, under the construct *aisthesis mobility*, I will concentrate on mobility issues in which the engagement of the senses plays a pivotal role in the production of movement during the entertainment experience.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> The return to the aisthesis as a methodological move is parallel to the adoption of mobility as a basic trait for understanding contemporary cultural production. In both cases there is the possibility of establishing bridges between cultural phenomena and objects that are not usually investigated under the same theoretical framework. While the latter has an even greater possibility of application – mobility can be used to analyze tourism, diasporas, media movements, installations, etc. – the former will be used here to specifically build points of intersection between artmotion artifacts and entertainment products – the hypothesis is that the sensorial engagement at work in both cases presents aisthesis similarities.

<sup>43</sup> Aisthesis here is simply used as an adjective referring to the primacy of the sensorial aspects in analyzing a cultural object. There is no direct reference to the aisthesis-poietic model of semiotic analysis in which the complex process of creation (poietic process) is a point of departure for the complex process of reception (aisthesis process) (Nattiez, 1990, p.17). This model of analysis will certainly present intersections with my own analysis. However, since Nattiez does not necessarily emphasize the mobile aspects of these processes, I will not further analyze or use this model. I will instead appropriate the word “aisthesis” so that I can use it in my own systemic model of analysis.

In addition to the potential bridges that can be established between artmotion/kinetic art and the entertainment industry, the focus on these aesthetic aspects will bring another methodological advantage to my analysis. To investigate all levels, types and processes of cultural mobility and their impact on the production and reception of entertainment products would be an excessive task for a doctoral thesis. Focusing on the *aesthetic* aspects of these products and highlighting their mobile nature is a more manageable assignment. Therefore, *aesthetic mobility* will constitute a focal point of investigation through which cultural mobility studies can be applied to the analysis of entertainment industry products.

At this point some questions inevitably come up: How can one study mobility at the level of aesthetics? What kind of aesthetic mobility will be focused on such an analysis? To answer these questions, it is imperative to systematize an operational model of investigation for the analysis of my *corpus*. In this model, I will focus on two traits that capture some of the most relevant aesthetic mobility aspects in the production and reception of artifacts from the entertainment industry. These traits will be called *kinesthetics* and *intermediality*.

In the first aspect to be analyzed, under the term *kinesthetics*, I will investigate a characteristic that is present to different degrees in most contemporary entertainment artifacts: an exacerbated taste for visual acceleration and velocity. Movies – *The Matrix* (Wachowski, 1998), *City of God* (Meirelles, 2002), *Run Lola Run* (Tykwer, 1999), etc. –, TV programs – the so-called “MTV aesthetics” –, computer games – the groundbreaking *Doom* or almost any game based on blockbusters – and even cartoons for small children –

*Spongebob, Pokémon, etc.* – present frantic editing and a vertiginous use of imagery and sounds.

In the second aspect to be examined, under the term *intermediality*, I will describe the strong inter-mediatic mobility that is prevalent in contemporary entertainment experiences. For analytical reasons, I propose to divide and analyze the intermedial phenomenon in two different subcategories. I will call the first subcategory *franchise media crossover*. Here I will examine the widespread transposition of a particular character or storyline from one medium to another: computer games become feature movies (*Tom Raider, Resident Evil*), comic books become feature movies (*Sin City, Spiderman, etc.*), feature movies become theme park attractions (*Jurassic Park, Harry Potter*), theme park attractions become feature movies (*Pirates of the Caribbean*) and so on. The second subcategory will be called *remediation* and it will denote the transference of certain aesthetical elements from one *medium* to another. For example, the popular TV series for children *Dora the Explorer* simulates aesthetic elements from computer systems. The cartoon simulates mouse pointers, mouse clicks and the computer screen layout. A common feature of the episodes is Dora's interaction with the viewer, asking him or her to point out a certain element from a series of pictures shown on the screen. After a few seconds, an arrow similar to a mouse pointer appears on the screen and the viewer can see it moving towards the correct element. Once the mouse pointer reaches the correct element, the viewer hears a mouse click as if the TV show were in a Windows-like environment. In this example, a TV show explicitly *remediates* the sounds, the shapes and the visual composition of another medium, namely, a computer operating

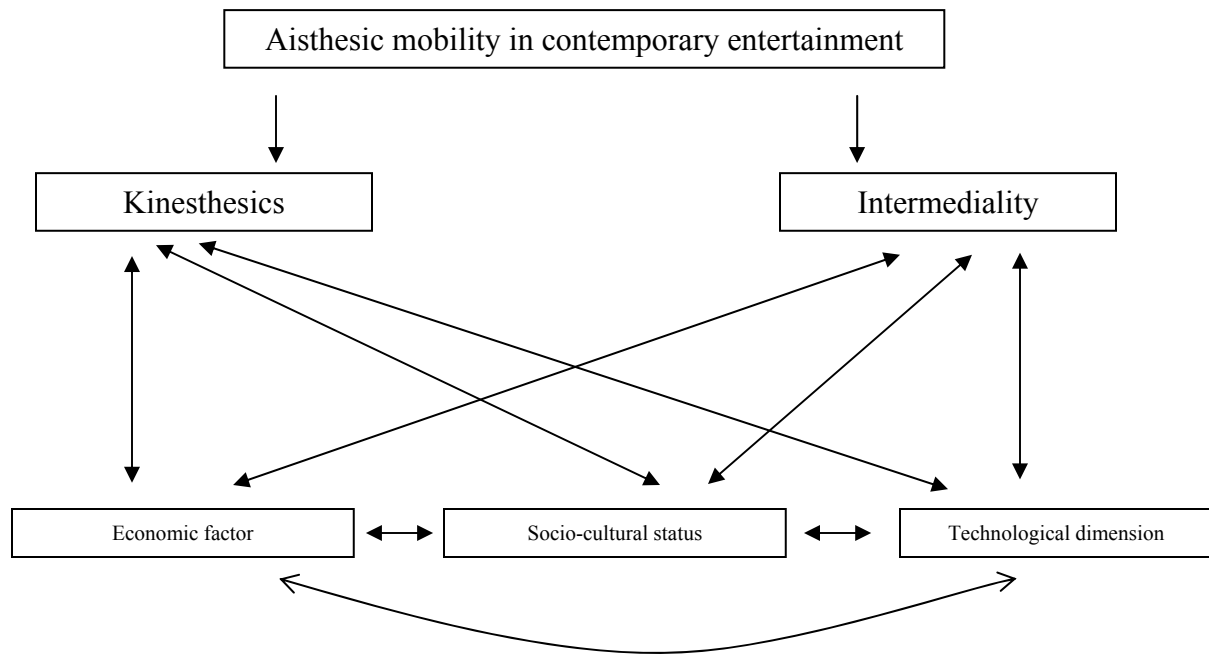
system. Despite the relative simplicity of this didactic example, a deeper theoretical and empirical analysis of the phenomenon later in this chapter will reveal its complexities.

Finally, in my empirical observations, some recurring aspects have arisen, aspects that need to be further developed for a better understanding of the *corpus* proposed. I will investigate relevant correlations between aisthesis mobility and other factors related to the contemporary entertainment industry such as:

1. the economic dimension that drives this industry
2. the socio-cultural status of certain entertainment products and
3. the technological aspects involved in the production and reception of these products.

Most recent theorization of new media has given primacy to technological, social or economic factors; however in my proposed model these aspects will be brought up as ways to better understand the role of *aisthesis mobility* in contemporary entertainment. This means that the study of new media technologies in the production and reception of entertainment products, the economic reasoning behind their manufacturing and even – as I will argue later – their socio-cultural status will be studied in relation to the aisthesis mobile characteristics of these entertainment products. Sensorial issues will remain my primary concern in the development of the thesis, but they will be connected to economic, technological and social factors that are paramount to understanding how aisthesis mobility shapes contemporary entertainment practices.

Graphically represented, the systemic model I propose can be articulated as follows:



The theoretical framework and reflections on the various levels of this model will now be further discussed.

#### **4.2 Kinesthetics**

In chapter 1, the neologism *mediamotion* was presented as part of a larger model for the analysis of today’s cultural mobility. I stated then that the typical mediamotion situation, according to Moser, is a person in front of a screen: “The human being can remain physically still; it is the mediated world that is in movement on the screen. This mediated world, in motion, then stimulates, interacts with our *sensory system*” (Moser, 2004, p.27, my translation, emphasis added). In Moser’s analytical framework, mediamotion was contrasted with locomotion. In the locomotion experiences, the movement occurs through physical mobility. Mediamotion movement happens through the interaction of the human sensorial apparatus with the media device, without

necessarily any physical mobility from the spectator. In the contemporary entertainment industry, this basic mediamotion feature can still be applied: while playing computer games, watching CGI blockbusters or riding a theme park attraction, the spectator may have cognitive access to another reality through his sensorial engagement with a mediatic apparatus rather than through physical mobility. However, in addition to this basic feature, there are certain aesthetic traits that characterize contemporary entertainment production and reception.

Under the term *kinesthetics* (kinetic aisthesis) I will investigate one of the most remarkable of these traits: the taste for sensorial acceleration, for the engagement of the senses in a rapid (preferably immersive) bombardment of images and sounds. In the didactic mediamotion example given in chapter 1, I stated that “a person in Ottawa who watches a documentary about African lions on Discovery Channel in his living room has some sensorial access to a specific universe of images and sounds without actually traveling to Africa”. In contemporary entertainment, this sensorial access to another universe of images and sounds is usually achieved through great velocity and acceleration. A CGI blockbuster like *Jurassic Park* (Spielberg, 1993) will enhance the aesthetic experience with frenetic camera movements, chases, frantic noises and enhanced sensorial acceleration and stimulation. It is important to stress that mobility, immersion and aesthetic intensity are three different traits commonly found in contemporary entertainment products. Intensifying one of these elements does not necessarily mean the intensification of the other two traits. Watching a movie, for example, implies a certain kind of virtual mobility (mediamotion). Simply turning up the volume does not automatically result in an increase of the sensation of mobility. Also,

one can be in a movie theater, by definition an immersive environment, and still enjoy a “slow movie”. My argument is that there is a tendency in contemporary entertainment to manipulate these three elements and combine them to exacerbate their overall effect on audiences. Blockbusters, for example, must be fast paced (frantic editing) *and* engage the senses intensively (bombardment of spectacular visual effects and high decibels), preferably in immersive environments (3D or IMAX technology, for instance). Although I am particularly interested in analyzing the different kinds of mobility found in entertainment products, the actual observation of these products shows that movement, immersion and aesthetic intensity are intricately blended.<sup>44</sup>

In a typical kinesthetic entertainment experience, there can be many kinds of movement. As the following illustrations will show, these entertainment practices can be purely mediamotion experiences, that is, the body can remain physically still and there is the perception of movements through the interaction with different media platforms. Sometimes, however, these practices will demand actual locomotion from their audiences, that is, participants have to move their bodies in order for the entertainment experience to take place. At other times, the entertainment practice will rely on very sophisticated combinations of mediamotion and locomotion in which not only bodily

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<sup>44</sup> I do not suggest that mobility, immersion and aesthetic intensity are exclusive of entertainment products. On the contrary, they are very often present in artistic installations. The description of *Volume* by the United Visual Artists (UVA, 2006) can illustrate the use of these three elements in artworks. UVA is a group of artists based in London who created the installation *Volume* at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 2006. In this installation, audiences have to walk through columns of light that are positioned in the center of a garden. As audiences walk, the columns respond with spectacular light and sound effects. The lights also respond to touch, and the more audiences walk to the center of the installation, the more immersed they feel in the artwork (footage of the installation available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUllsoTLohY&feature=related>, accessed on 27 May 2011). The movement of the body, the sounds, the immersion amidst the pillars and the intensity of the bright lights at night contribute to the artistic experience. Therefore, art installations and entertainment products present striking similarities regarding the use of mobility, immersion and aesthetic intensity. However, the acceleration of the mobile experience, the search for immersive technologies and the exacerbation of aesthetic intensity are pursued by the entertainment industry according to an economic rationale that is specific to this cultural subsystem. These specificities will be further discussed in this chapter.

motion and activation of the senses produce the perception of movement, but the entertainment machinery itself moves in different ways to increase the sensation of mobility.

Most computer games, blockbuster movies or theme park attractions today engage their audiences in entertainment practices characterized by extreme sensorial acceleration and intensity on several levels. Many examples could be analyzed to further illustrate this kinesthetic phenomenon. In the realm of TV, the term “MTV aesthetics” has become common to refer to this kinesthetic trend: fast-paced, vertiginous, fragmentary use of imagery and sounds. The objects depicted move fast, camera movements put the viewer in a state of constant motion and the *montage* techniques exacerbate the sensation of mobility one has in front of the screen. MTV commercials and shows, for example, frequently use velocity, frantic editing and instantaneous changing of images to promote their products. In computer games, first-generation titles like *Pong* or *Pac-man* presented a much lower level of instantaneity than any first-person shooter game on the market today. In the cinematographic realm, movies like *The Matrix* (Wachowski, 1998), *Cidade de Deus* (Meirelles, 2002) or *Run, Lola, Run* (Tykwer, 1999) exploit the speed of the image to the utmost level.

In her book *Neo-baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment*, Angela Ndalianis (2004) describes her feelings as she first viewed the movie *The Matrix* (Wachowski, 1999):

During my first viewing of *The Matrix* [...] I found my senses bombarded by imagery, movements, and sounds that plunged me into a state of disorientation and overstimulation. Not only was an array of framing effects and camera movements employed (from high-velocity pans, tracks, and fast-paced edits to 360-degree camera somersaults), but there was motion, and there was lots of it! Bodies, cameras, sound, and visual effects – everything moved and moved fast.

Like so many contemporary action extravaganzas, *The Matrix* reflects a concern with the kinesthetic that once primarily belonged more exclusively to the realm of the theme park attraction. Rather than vision's remaining focused on specific sections of the screen, the speed of the images, and the accompanying sounds that animated these images, invited my eyes to scan the screen restlessly in its entirety, speedily searching for significant details that might appear and vanish before my eyes had captured them (Ndalianis, 2004, p. 155).

The vertiginous display of images, sounds and movements set in motion by these cultural objects has been analysed by Angela Ndalianis (2004), who refers to the phenomenon as “special-effects spectacles” constructed upon a very particular “architecture of the senses”. Ndalianis’s book is founded on a basic premise: some of the key aesthetic concerns of the 17<sup>th</sup> century baroque are also part of the aesthetic experiences provided by many contemporary entertainment products. According to the author, these shared aesthetic features are so striking that they justify the argument that contemporary entertainment clearly constitutes a cultural space of neo-baroque aesthetics. One of these shared features is the collapse between the real and the unreal, the world and the theater, reality and performance. While in the 17<sup>th</sup> century baroque the blurring of representation and reality was achieved through architectural tricks or *tromp l’oeil* effects, contemporary entertainment uses state-of-the art technology to collapse the boundaries between the universe of the spectacle and the world of the spectator. To illustrate her argument, Ndalianis proposes comparative analysis of historical works of art – the ceiling of the Church of St. Ignazio in Italy, for example – with contemporary entertainment products – theme park attractions, for instance.

The ceiling of the Church of St. Ignazio, constructed between 1626 and 1650, and painted by the Jesuit brother Andrea Pozzo, uses perspectival projection to give the church’s visitors the illusion that they are seeing the dome of a cupola that does not really exist. Pozzo creates an optical illusion and uses architectonic techniques to prevent the

viewer from distinguishing the borders between the real, physical walls of the church and the simulated walls of the painting. In another part of the ceiling, he uses some of the same techniques in a fresco that gives viewers the illusion that floating figures of saints are moving upward into the sky. On the other hand, the theme park ride *Star Tours* (1987) uses late twentieth century technology to give audiences the illusion that they are inside the universe of the movie *Star Wars* (Lucas, 1977) riding through space. This theme park attraction combines flight simulator and film technology to put spectators *inside* the illusion of moving through the sky. As the audiences look at the images on the screen – which also uses perspectival projection to create an optical illusion – the seats move according to the motions on display, giving audiences the physical sensation of “acceleration, deceleration, and movements, left and right, up and down” (Ndalianis, 2004, p.194). Disney and Lucasfilm, of course, possessed technological means that were unthinkable to Andrea Pozzo, but in both cases the “tricks” had the objective of blurring the boundaries between fiction and reality.

Although my thesis does not specifically address neo-baroque features in contemporary entertainment, Ndalianis’s book is central to my argument that entertainment products use technology mainly to engage the senses in mobile aesthetic experiences. The engagement of the sensorial apparatus in the entertainment experience occupies an important position in Ndalianis’s analysis. But while Ndalianis’s “architecture of the senses” seeks to provide a platform of comparison between historic and neo-baroque cultural manifestations, my objective is to analyze the sensorial aspects of entertainment products within the analytical framework of contemporary cultural mobility. In this sense, while Ndalianis draws comparisons between contemporary

entertainment products and historic Baroque artifacts (*Star Tours* and the Church of St. Ignazio, for example), I will rather focus on comparing entertainment industry products among themselves – video games, *aparelhagem* parties, theme park attractions – highlighting the mobility aspects that connect them. Outside the realm of the entertainment industry, my interest will be in establishing comparisons not with historic works of art, but with contemporary artmotion products, pointing out similarities and differences regarding their mobile nature and cultural status.

In her comparative analysis, Ndalianis gives special attention to contemporary theme park attractions. The emphasis on these products is justified by the fact that they explore in an exacerbated fashion what she considers a remarkable neo-baroque characteristic: the assault of the sensorium and the use of motion to blur the boundaries between representation and reality. The point of intersection with my own analysis resides in my interest in investigating mobility issues in entertainment products through an aisthetic perspective. In this regard, theme park attractions are *par excellence* the entertainment industry products with which several mobility aspects can be exemplified and analyzed. In addition to the “assault on the sensorium”, as Ndalianis puts it (Ndalianis, p.193), and the intense sensorial acceleration I highlight in my own kinesthetic analysis, these products also fully encapsulate their audiences in their environment. The result is an experience of sensorial immersion that amplifies the mediamotion potentiality of giving cognitive access to another reality without performing an actual physical displacement there.

In 1987, as noted by Ndalianis, *Star Tours* started the popularity of the “ride-the-movies” theme park attractions (Ndalianis, p.194). In this ride, the principle of using

technology to fully encapsulate the senses of audiences was already at work. From *Star Tours* (1987) to *Terminator 2: 3D* (1996), to *The Amazing Adventures of Spiderman* (1999), to *Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey* (2010), “ride-the-movies” theme park attractions have taken the sensorial immersion of audiences to increasing levels of sophistication. As new technological advancements took place, not only did their environments become more immersive, but they also incorporated new forms of motion.

In 2010, *Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey* constituted the quintessential experience of sensorial immersion, acceleration and collapse between reality and representation among ride-the-movies theme park attractions. The queue itself, having become paradigmatic in this kind of attraction, is part of the entertainment spectacle. Since *Terminator 2: 3D* the queues are much more than a way of organizing the access to the actual ride. They serve to plunge the spectator into the movie’s universe, themes and storylines, providing audiences with aesthetic experiences as if they were inside the fictional worlds. The *Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey* experience starts outside the building that houses the actual ride. At *Islands of Adventure* theme park in Orlando, there is a large section known as the Wizarding World of Harry Potter where all shops, attractions and restaurants simulate a village of medieval origins. This village is Hogsmeade, the little British all-wizard town, near which Hogwarts Castle is located. Hogwarts is the famous School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, the setting of Harry Potter’s adventures in the franchise books, movies and video games. In a reference to the Harry Potter movies *Prisoner of Azkaban* (Cuarón, 2004), *Order of the Phoenix* (Yates, 2007) and *Half-Blood Prince* (Yates, 2009) in which the village is seen under heavy layers of

snow, “Florida’s Hogsmeade” also simulates a winter season. As in the movies, the roofs of the buildings in the Wizarding World of Harry Potter are covered in snow.

“Florida’s Hogsmeade” entails two complex layers of fictional visual representation. First Hogsmeade is a fictional place imagined by J.K. Rowling in her books as part of the Harry Potter storyline, a little village lost somewhere in Great Britain. Then “Florida’s Hogsmeade” is built as a version of this village not so much inspired by J. K. Rowling’s books, but clearly based on the movie’s representation of the village, which is always seen as a cold, snowy place. As for the sensorial experience, this constitutes an interesting choice of representation since Florida’s extremely hot and humid summer is diametrically opposite to Hogsmeade’s severely cold and snowy winters as seen in the movies. The result is a sensorial shock between the visual representation of the snow on the roofs and the stifling heat felt by the body in Florida’s weather. Far from collapsing the boundaries between reality and representation, this sensorial shock, on the contrary, rather suggests the idea of “fake representation” – as experienced in so many attractions in entertainment cities like Las Vegas and Orlando. However, things begin to change once one enters the queue for the Wizarding World of Harry Potter’s main attraction: the ride *Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey*.



Hogwarts entrance gate seen from behind; photo property of popculturegeek.com, retrieved October 9, 2010, from <http://www.flickr.com/photos/popculturegeek/5013696993/sizes/m/in/photostream/>, all rights reserved.



The Wizarding World of Harry Potter; photos property of popculturegeek.com, retrieved October 9, 2010, from <http://www.flickr.com/photos/popculturegeek/5013696993/sizes/m/in/photostream/> and <http://www.flickr.com/photos/popculturegeek/5013697637/sizes/m/in/set-72157624884466291/>, all rights reserved.

Once one enters the medieval Hogwarts Castle, the temperature immediately drops, but the outstanding art direction, the statues, the objects, the architecture, the darkness, the smell and the lighting do not evoke an air-conditioned place, but a real medieval castle in winter. Standing in line, audiences are mesmerized by the beautiful collections of paintings, mostly traditional portraits of revered, serious medieval figures.

Observing one of these paintings at first seems like a traditional artistic experience of wandering through a museum and contemplating classic works of art. But while absorbed in the static contemplation of the paintings, the spectators are surprised by the portrayed figures that suddenly begin to move and talk directly to them.



Talking paintings on the walls of the queue for the Forbidden Journey; photos property of popculturegeek.com, retrieved October 9, 2010, from <http://www.flickr.com/photos/popculturegeek/5014304028/#/>, all rights reserved.

The talking paintings are recurring objects in the Harry Potter books and movies. They work like “echoes” of the portrayed people who can talk to passers-by, greet them and provide advice. The transposition of the idea to *Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey* is made on such a high level of technical perfection and virtuosity that it is impossible to know which of the paintings are “real paintings” and which are illusory. When they are all still, no visual difference can be detected with the naked eye. When they are talking, some paintings laugh and tell jokes, others warn spectators about the dangers they will soon face, others curse Harry Potter and others remain still – and audiences waiting in line never know if or when the figures will start moving.

Spectators, even those who are not familiar with the Harry Potter story, are transported to his world and have sensorial experiences as if they were inside Harry Potter’s universe. As Ndalianis insistently argues, audiences today can experience illusive levels of interaction with entertainment products that could only be achieved with limitations by 16<sup>th</sup> century baroque artists. As I have argued before, entertainment products like *Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey* play with the limits between art and entertainment, incorporating features from traditional artistic experiences, contemporary artmotion and the entertainment industry. The talking paintings successfully cross over limits between the traditional and the technological, the serious and the irreverent. From a mediatic point of view, the talking portraits transport audiences between at least two media forms: painting and film. Aisthesically speaking, audiences have to transit between the oil canvas and the film screen in an unexpected case of remediation – the illusion of paintings remediating film, or the other way around, film remediating painting.

The sensorial immersion continues in the queue when the characters Dumbledore, the headmaster of Hogwarts – played by actor Michael Gambon –, Harry Potter and his best friends Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger – played by actors Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint and Emma Watson – suddenly appear on balconies that seem to be a continuation of the actual building. They are projections of the actors, but their proportions, their voices, and the way they are projected on the walls make it difficult to distinguish the boundaries between the projected movie and the real building. In one of the most inspired moments, Ron tries to perform a magic trick that goes wrong making snow fall down onto the visitors – a reference to Ron’s old, chipped magic wand as seen in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (Columbus, 2002). The winter theme that begins with the fake snowcapped roofs outside the building culminates in projected snowflakes falling on the spectators in line inside the castle. The difference is that by the time audiences are at this point in line, they are already completely immersed in the Harry Potter universe, and the snow is perfectly integrated with the ensemble of sensorial experiences they have had so far.

But the truly kinesthetic experience, that is, a nearly hallucinatory experience of sensorial acceleration, assault of the senses, sensorial immersion and the blurring of representation and reality occurs during the actual five-minute ride of the attraction. As it happens in other attractions of this kind, audiences come in contact with heat, water, blasts of air and constant motion of their seats, which move according to the images and situations depicted. In *The Forbidden Journey*, audiences encounter giant spiders that spit venom at them, dangerous firebreathing dragons breathe – riders can actually feel heat on their faces – and, in the most impressive special effect spectacle, audiences take part in a

Quidditch match. In the Harry Potter universe, a Quidditch match is a rough semi-contact sport, similar to hockey with several balls and ring shaped goals, enjoyed by wizards worldwide. However, Quidditch is played in the air with participants riding on flying broomsticks. In the Harry Potter series, Quidditch match scenes are spectacularly portrayed, providing audiences with some of the most electrifying moments of the movies. In the theme park attraction, the Quidditch match is also fantastically portrayed; the difference is that through state-of-the art technology, the use of Imax-like screens, sensorial immersion and robotic arm benches, audiences are placed *inside* the match, flying broomsticks after Harry Potter, participating in his Quidditch match and receiving instructions from him.

The revolutionary feature of *The Forbidden Journey* is that participants ride in a bench mounted on a track that moves facing the screens. In all other movie rides mentioned above, audiences sit on benches lined one behind the other – as in a traditional movie theater – and wait for the show to begin. Once the show is over, the bench stops, the lights are turned on and audiences leave their seats. In all movie rides built before *The Forbidden Journey*, there is always a best seat for the spectator to experience the greatest sensorial immersion, usually the front seat in the center – if the spectator is in the back seat, his/her peripheral vision is “contaminated” by the audience in front of him. In *The Forbidden Journey*, due to the brand new architecture of the moving benches, the sense of mobility and immersion is much greater because the seats move continuously, so that audiences never sit down, stop and wait for the beginning of the show. Once they are on the benches, the seats are already moving. Furthermore, there are no back seats, so that one’s peripheral vision is almost completely encapsulated on all sides. In traditional

simulators, lights are turned on and the benches stop moving for audiences to leave the building at the end of the ride. *The Forbidden Journey* is different because the benches continue to move and audiences are “ejected” to the outside world after the mesmerizing and disorienting immersion into the Harry Potter universe. The result is an unprecedented level of sensorial immersion and a brand new fashion of “moving” inside theme park attractions, which were partly responsible for turning the much anticipated *The Forbidden Journey* into an enormous commercial success for Universal Studios<sup>45</sup>.

In the contemporary entertainment industry the taste for sensorial acceleration and frantic *montage* techniques is widespread in a significant number of products, and the sensorial immersion developed by theme park attractions is also being gradually more explored in other forms of media. In CGI blockbusters, for example, the resurgence of 3D fad in mainstream cinema in the late 2000s, with *Avatar* (Cameron, 2009) leading the list of the most commercially successful movies of all time, indicates that sensorial immersion is a feature in demand in contemporary entertainment. The sensorial immersion provided by 3D technology can at least partially explain the movie’s great success. Not only did audiences love it, but even critics who wrote harsh reviews about the simplistic plot recognized the technological virtuosity of the movie and its overwhelming ability to plunge audiences into another universe<sup>46</sup>. In addition to *Avatar*

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<sup>45</sup> For a description of the inauguration of *Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey*, its much hyped anticipation and the reaction of awestruck fans, see the travel section of the New York Times, June 10, 2010, available at <http://travel.nytimes.com/2010/06/13/travel/13Harry.html?pagewanted=1&ref=travel>, accessed on Oct. 09 2010.

<sup>46</sup> *Philadelphia Weekly* movie critic Sean Burns stated: “Four hundred million or so dollars later, *Avatar* lands with a thud. I guess there’s a part of me that admires the film’s 3-D presentation, performance-capture technique and computer animation—you’re never unaware of how much work went into the film. And if you’re not already impressed, characters keep reminding you that you’re watching something amazing. This is groundbreaking, next-level technology, and I was bored out of my goddamn mind.” Available at <http://www.philadelphiaweekly.com/screen/reviews/Avatar-79565587.html>, accessed on Oct. 09 2010.

(Cameron 2009), other 3D blockbusters that achieved great box office success include *How to Train your Dragon* (Deblois, 2010), *Up* (Docter, 2009) and *Toy Story 3* (Unkcrich, 2010), to name only a few of the very commercially successful titles that contributed, about the same time as *Avatar*, to the surge of 3D movies.

Sensorial immersion has thrived in theme park attractions for decades and has been propelled in movie theaters through the resurgence of 3D technology in the late 2000s. Following this strong commercial trend, the television industry also entered a technological race to produce 3D TV sets. Sony and Panasonic, seeking to capitalize on the growing demand for immersive illusions in the entertainment industry, began a commercial war for the release of their 3D TV sets in 2010. According to a September 2009 CNN article, in addition to Sony and Panasonic, Mitsubshi and JVC were reported to be working on similar projects<sup>47</sup>. *The N.Y. Times* also reported that Toshiba had promised to enter the race by producing the first 3D TV set that would not require the use of special glasses<sup>48</sup>. Commenting on these new trends in another CNN report, Robert Perry, executive vice-president at Panasonic, declared that TV had finally “become real” and that 3D immersive technology was the natural next step for the TV industry: “You’re in it. It is the next frontier”<sup>49</sup>, Perry claimed. In the interview, Perry went as far as stating that the 3D transition was as revolutionary as the shift from black-and-white to color television.

Theme parks, movies and the TV industry are not the only entertainment industries that have heavily invested in immersive technologies for the enhancement of

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<sup>47</sup> Source: [http://articles.cnn.com/2009-09-18/tech/3D.home.television\\_1\\_3-d-tv-glasses-tv-makers?\\_s=PM:TECH](http://articles.cnn.com/2009-09-18/tech/3D.home.television_1_3-d-tv-glasses-tv-makers?_s=PM:TECH), accessed on Oct. 09, 2010.

<sup>48</sup> Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/05/technology/05toshiba.html>, accessed on Oct. 09, 2010.

<sup>49</sup> Source: [http://articles.cnn.com/2009-09-18/tech/3D.home.television\\_1\\_3-d-tv-glasses-tv-makers?\\_s=PM:TECH](http://articles.cnn.com/2009-09-18/tech/3D.home.television_1_3-d-tv-glasses-tv-makers?_s=PM:TECH), accessed on Oct. 09, 2010.

the aesthetic mobility experience. The video game industry has also developed technologies to explore mobility and immersive illusion in innovative ways. In the multibillion-dollar market of video games, the fierce competition among Nintendo, Sony and Microsoft took an unexpected turn at the end of 2006. According to the magazine *Gamer*, “Nintendo’s *Wii* took the world by storm when it was released in November 2006, and since then has been played by millions of gamers worldwide” (Eddy, 2010). *Wii* is a home video game console that has given Nintendo the lead in the market war against Sony’s *Playstation* and Microsoft’s *Xbox*. Nintendo’s revolutionary idea was simple. The *Wii* remote was a handheld pointing device that could detect movement in three dimensions. These movements were read by the console, which translated them into actions inside the video games.

This kind of game was termed *motion game* because the bodily motions to control the action in the game went beyond the simple manipulation of buttons and joysticks. The whole body had to move as if the player’s body were inside the game universe, in an interesting variation of what I have been calling locomotion. In traditional locomotion, the body has to move from a point A to a point B for the mobility experience to take place. In the *Wii* experience, the body still needs to move from a point A to a point B, but this movement is usually performed with the upper part of the body, while the remote is held in one of the hands. At this incipient stage of motion game technology, the feet can remain stationary and the movements depend entirely on the remote in the player’s hand. In popular *Wii* games like boxing and tennis, for example, or on the *Wii Fit* console, players simulate the movements of their respective characters on screen, but while the characters move in all directions in the game universe, the players remain in more or less

at the same spot in their living room. Nonetheless, the players' bodies have to move, as if they were inside the game, giving the sensation that their bodies are immersed in its fictional world. This new kind of locomotion experience took the world of video games "by storm" as stated in the abovementioned article, and the special kind of immersion provided by the motion game turned Nintendo's *Wii* into the world's best selling game console. Upon release in 2006, due to its great demand, the *Wii* was virtually impossible to find anywhere and for the following three years –especially near the holiday season – Nintendo was unable to supply the market with enough consoles. In May 2008, the famous tech news website CNET.com published a report on the *Wii* commercial phenomenon. The website investigated the reasons for the continuing shortage of the console one year and a half after its release. At the time, Nintendo released a statement to the press:

No home console has ever sold so fast for so long. We planned for big numbers--but not necessarily historic ones. We're doing everything we can. In fact, Nintendo recently forecast that for the fiscal year that began April 1, 2008, worldwide shipments for *Wii* will increase to 25 million from 18.61 million this past fiscal year. This summer, Nintendo will raise production to 2.4 million systems per month.<sup>50</sup>

In December 2009, three years after its release, *Wii* sales had not faded away. On the contrary, according to the magazine Eurogamer, that Christmas it broke its own previous records for best selling console in a single month in the United States<sup>51</sup>. The enduring success achieved by the console can be partly explained by the release of accessories and devices that added new features or improved existing ones in the *Wii* line of products. An example is the *Wii MotionPlus*, an expansion device for the *Wii* remote

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<sup>50</sup> Available at [http://news.cnet.com/8301-17938\\_105-9945902-1.html](http://news.cnet.com/8301-17938_105-9945902-1.html), accessed on Oct. 09, 2010.

<sup>51</sup> Source: <http://www.eurogamer.net/articles/wii-and-ds-thrash-competition-in-us>, accessed on Oct. 09, 2010.

released in 2009, that was able to capture complex movements in a more accurate fashion. The presentation of the device on the official website can summarize Nintendo's strategy to stay on top of the video game market:

#### What is Wii MotionPlus?

The Wii MotionPlus™ accessory takes the motion-sensing controls of the Wii console to new levels of precision, sensing gameplay movements with greater accuracy than ever before. Designed to attach easily to the Wii Remote controller, Wii MotionPlus brings every twist of the wrist or turn of the body to life, faithfully replicated on the TV screen. See the swing of a golf club or the slash of a sword revealed in vivid 1:1 movement—Wii MotionPlus elevates Wii gameplay to a level of realism that you never thought imaginable<sup>52</sup>.

By improving the capture of body movements through the development of new technologies, Nintendo was able to maintain the interest of players avid for experiencing growing levels of illusive immersion.

Sony and Microsoft, attempting to keep pace with Nintendo, announced in 2009 the release of their own motion game consoles. Sony's *Move* and Microsoft's *Kinect* – their names revealing the mobility nature of their projects – were conceived to provide players with more advanced motion game technologies. The strategy, of course, was to rival Nintendo's front-runner in the video game market war. In this fierce competition, another revolution was delivered by Microsoft. According to the magazine *Gamer*, Microsoft "has created a controller-less device that follows the movements and sounds of gamers via a visual sensor" (Eddy, 2010, p.54). This means that in Microsoft's hands-free creation the player's interface with the game did not depend on the remote, that is, all the interaction between the game and the gamer depended entirely on the player's body movements. As the magazine states, Microsoft's *Kinect* turned the player's "entire body

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<sup>52</sup> Available at <http://www.nintendo.com/wii/console/accessories/wiimotionplus>, accessed on 30 October 2010.

into one big controller” (Eddy, p.56), pointing to new tendencies in which body motions were taken to new levels of participation inside the game’s universe<sup>53</sup>.

The launch of Sony’s *Move* and Microsoft’s *Kinect* proved to be a wise commercial move, as the sales of their consoles strongly increased in 2010 and 2011, threatening *Wii*’s position as the absolute leader in the video game market (Gaudiosi, 2011). The significant commercial success of *Move* and *Kinect* was led by the latter, which broke sales records just two months after entering the market. According to the Guinness World of Records, *Kinect* sold 8 million units from 4 November 2010 to 3 January 2011, figures that make it the best-selling electronic device in history breaking the records once held by Apple’s iPhone and iPad<sup>54</sup>.

Regardless of the final outcome in the war among Nintendo, Microsoft and Sony, the marketing strategies in the release of products with names such as *Wi MotionPlus*, *Kinect* and *Move* are overwhelming evidence that mobility aspects have occupied a central position in the universe of video games. In addition to *Wii*, *Kinect* and *Move*, the success of products like *Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey*, *Avatar* and the race in the TV industry to manufacture 3D sets show that it is imperative to correlate their kinesthetic characteristics with the economic logic that drive their respective industries.

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<sup>53</sup> By evoking both “kinetic” and “connect”, the console’s name also indicates how actual body motion was used in the complex interaction body/machine, gamer(s)/game. That is, the connections body↔machine, gamer(s)↔game and the kinetics of the body are indivisible in the console’s conception.

<sup>54</sup> Source: <http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/09/microsoft-sells-10-million-kinects-breaking-record/?scp=3&sq=kinect&st=cse>, accessed on 22 March 2011.

#### 4.2.1 Kinesthetics and the economic dimension of the contemporary entertainment industry

In the systemic model proposed above, I point out the importance of considering the possible interconnections between *kinesthetics* and the economic logic of the entertainment industry. From the perspective of reception, contemporary entertainment consumers have experienced an escalation in the strong aesthetic experience provoked by the vertiginous display of images, sounds and movements set in motion by contemporary entertainment products. Now, from the point of view of production, how does this trend affect the making of these cultural artifacts? It seems that there is a dynamics of reciprocal reinforcement of reception and production when it comes to the economic and commercial logic that drives the entertainment industry. Movie previews are a good example of this reciprocal reinforcement. The previews released for any recent CGI blockbuster – *Spiderman 3* (Raimi, 2007), *Pirates of the Caribbean* (Verbinski, 2003), *King Kong* (Jackson, 2005), *Iron Man 2* (Favreau, 2010), etc. – present the same structure. They first show some images extracted from the movie through a very fast-paced *montage*. This sequence of images becomes even more accelerated as the preview bombards the screen with special visual and sound effects. The images and sounds continue to assault the senses in a *crescendo* that is shortly interrupted by a punch line (sometimes a humorous one) that is followed by an even faster and hallucinating sequence of images and sounds that culminate in a *finale furioso*<sup>55</sup>. The velocity at which the images are shown literally means that the spectator will miss entire scenes in the blink of an eye, confirming Ndaliansis' (2004) subjective perception of her first viewing of the

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<sup>55</sup> See, for example, any of the recent *Iron Man 2* (Favreau, 2010) or *Spiderman 3* (Raimi, 2007) previews available on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOzuBOefL8I> and [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c\\_zgfl9Fjio](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_zgfl9Fjio), accessed on 22 March 2011.

movie *The Matrix*: “Rather than vision remaining focused on specific sections of the screen, the speed of the images, and the accompanying sounds that animated these images, invited my eyes to scan the screen restlessly in its entirety, *speedily searching for significant details that might appear and vanish before my eyes had captured them*” (Ndalianis, p. 155, emphasis added).

Because of their commercial nature, movie previews can illustrate the double reinforcement I mentioned earlier: the industry wants to offer the ultimate kinesthetic experience to moviegoers, a formula associated with bigger numbers in the box office; at the same time, by watching these previews, moviegoers *expect* to have the ultimate kinesthetic experience, reinforcing the trend that is being followed by the industry.

Another example can reveal the complex interfaces between kinesthetics and the commercial logic of the entertainment industry. In his Hollywood directorial debut, the acclaimed Brazilian director Walter Salles made a “slow” psychological thriller (*Dark Water*, Salles, 2005), portraying the difficulties and fears faced by a single mother trying to rebuild her life. However, the studio sold the film as a fast-paced supernatural horror movie and the preview shown in movie theaters was full of screams, special effects and sequences in a profusion of images displayed by the second!<sup>56</sup> The discrepancy between what was offered by the preview and the film itself resulted in a resounding failure at the box office. The marketing strategy attracted moviegoers who expected to undergo a certain aesthetic experience, and who left the cinema disappointed. On the other hand, the campaign failed to attract the smaller audiences who would be willing to watch a “slow” Walter Salles movie.

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<sup>56</sup> *Dark Water* (Salles, 2005) trailer available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yD7KTyW3GsU>, accessed on Oct. 09, 2010.

In the realm of TV, Aguinaldo Silva, one of the most famous soap-opera writers in Brazil, has declared in an interview to *VEJA* magazine that in the 1980s he could write four-page long dialogues, but that now the dialogues have to be shorter and faster, otherwise audiences lose their interest (Silva, 2005, p.9). In an interview entitled “Under the Pressure for Success”, Aguinaldo Silva says that what Brazilian TV audiences reject changes according to the time the soap-opera is being broadcasted. When he co-wrote the groundbreaking *Roque Santeiro* (Gomes, 1985-1986), the long dialogues and arguments between the lead characters, Viúva Porcina and Sinhozinho Malta, did not bother viewers. On the contrary, *Roque Santeiro* was one of the most successful Brazilian soap-operas of all time. But twenty years later, when Aguinaldo Silva wrote another runaway success, *Senhora do Destino* (Silva, 2004-2005), he had to adapt to the new times: “Today, the scenes have to be more fast-paced, otherwise viewers lose interest” (Silva, 2005, p. 67. my translation). Aguinaldo Silva points out the fact that to be successful today, soap-operas must have a more accelerated *montage* than before; the dialogues have to be shorter and the scenes have to change in shorter periods of time, otherwise the spectator “loses interest”. Apparently, Brazilian audiences have also developed a kinesthetic taste and want to see in their traditional soap-operas some of the fast-paced kinesthetic patterns that dictate contemporary entertainment. Aguinaldo Silva’s interview suggests that both production and reception of contemporary entertainment products follow principles of mutual reinforcement: audiences seem to develop a taste for the kinesthetics, demanding and expecting fast-paced narratives and sensorial acceleration; entertainment producers reinforce this tendency by manufacturing products they identify with commercial success; when audiences consume these new products the circular

reinforcement starts once more. This logic also seems to encompass another important aspect in the production and consumption of contemporary entertainment goods, namely, the development of new media technologies.

#### 4.2.2. Kinesthetics and technology

Assuming that there is a link between *kinesthetics* and economic success, one cannot forget the technological dimension involved in the equation. It has already been highlighted above that the technological search for sensorial immersion is one of the strong trends in contemporary entertainment industries: state-of-the-art immersive theme park attractions, 3D CGI blockbusters, new video game conceptions and the industrial projects for the manufacture of 3D TV sets confirm this tendency. When it comes to sensorial acceleration, these industries continue to develop technological features that strongly engage the senses and mesmerize audiences. A real “technological obsession” seems to drive the making of these products.

A brief glance at the DVD extra features of the movie *The Matrix* (Wachowski, 1998) shows the technological fixation behind the movie. Large part of the extra features is dedicated to explaining - in all its complexity and virtuosity - the principles used in a new cinematographic technique called *bullet time*. This technique allowed for the revolutionary motion shots seen for the first time in *The Matrix*, its famous 360-degree camera somersaults that were exhaustively recycled and parodied elsewhere (*Shrek*, Adamson, 2001, *Underworld*, Wiseman, 2003, *Charlie's Angels*, McG, 2001 etc). The professionals involved in the making of the *bullet time* technique present a strong sense of pride in the development of the new technology. The *bullet time* technique eventually

became one of the trademarks of the movie and was extensively used to *sell* it to young spectators worldwide, an audience fascinated by new technological visual advancements.

It is important to avoid here a techno-deterministic approach, as it would represent a reduction of the wider system in which theme park attractions and movies like *The Matrix* are inserted. In his introduction to *Into the image*, Kevin Robins (1996), like many other theoreticians, stands up against technocentrist approaches to describe today's cultural production:

In the chapters that follow, I seek to distance myself from the new technoculture – which has now become the prevailing orthodoxy – for what I consider to be its narrowness and conformity of vision. I am against this obsessive and exclusive concern with technological innovation, and against the uncritical esteem and reverence it shows towards mere technological novelty (Robins, p.4)

The systemic model I propose also tries to prevent a techno-reductionist approach by inserting the technological dimension into a broader system in which aesthetic mobility occupies a central position. In this model my interest is to study the mobile nature of the relation between the engagement of the senses, technology and other key aspects – such as the economic factor – in the intricate dynamics and functioning of contemporary entertainment products. From the illustrations presented so far, a general system of *feedback loops* can be deduced in an expanded version of the circular reinforcement mentioned above: technology in contemporary entertainment is largely used to achieve a particular engagement of the senses, characterized by what I have called *kinesthetics*, which has a connection to the commercial success of these products, which stimulates the search for new technologies that can amplify vertiginous aesthetic mobile experiences starting the cycle anew. Therefore, kinesthetics, commercial success and new entertainment technologies are developed in a system whose back and forth movements of its elements feed on their reciprocal impact.

### **4.3 Intermediality**

In Media Theory, there has been a growing interest in investigating the diverse ways that media are combined in the production of contemporary cultural artifacts. This interest has led to the development of a myriad of concepts that aim at investigating the phenomenon: intermediality, media convergence, repurposing, remediation, transmedia practice and media-crossover are just some of the terms that have been proposed to describe more or less the same phenomenon. Each of these terms is developed and used by different scholars, academic groups and business project teams according to their own needs and purposes. A thorough review of all these ongoing studies on media cultural practices, as well as the differences, intersections and inter-relations among them, would demand a thesis of its own. However, a brief overview of each term is imperative because it will help to understand how some of them will be used in the analytical model I propose for the investigation of aisthesis mobility in the entertainment industry.

a) Intermediality: This term has been constructed in analogy to the long established concept of “intertextuality”. Just as intertextuality was understood as the possible intersemiotic relations between texts, “intermediality” would denote the relations between distinct media systems (Wolf, 1999). In the first conference of the Centre de Recherche sur l’Intermedialité (CRI) in 1999 at the Université de Montréal, Jurgen Ernst Müller defended the creation and use of the new term in a paper entitled “L’intermedialité, une Nouvelle Approche Interdisciplinaire”. For the author, there were many zones of intersection between intertextuality and intermediality, but the former was used by most researchers in a very restrictive way to study the interrelations among

verbal texts. Therefore, the notion of intermediality would be necessary to open up the fruitful intertextual debate to other mediatic interactions (Müller, 2000, p.106).

Although Müller's article was published in 2000, the author showed that intermediality as a concept had already been circulating in Germany since the late 1980s. In spite of its young existence, Müller stated that the concept was born out of works that presented a very heteroclitic body of methodological and theoretical approaches (Müller, p.106-107). Müller's objective was, to a certain extent, to present an overview of what the concept had offered up to that point and systematize the possible applications it could have in the future in other established fields of study like semiotics, pragmatics and aesthetics. Müller emphasized that although intermediality as a concept was then a relative novelty in academic circles, as a phenomenon it was as old as the existence of media themselves. By drawing examples from ancient to contemporary times, the author proposed a deep genealogical history of the arts –music and poetry, for example – being performed through different platforms like theater and cinema (Müller, p.108-112). This approach allowed the author to come to the following conclusion:

Si nous entendons par "intermédialité" le fait qu'il y ait des relations médiatiques variables entre les médias et que leur fonction naît entre autres de l'évolution historique de ces relations ; si nous entendons par "intermédialité" le fait qu'un médium recèle en soi des structures et des possibilités d'un ou de plusieurs autres médias, cela implique alors que la conception des médias en tant que « monades », de « sortes isolées » de médias est inappropriée. Ce qui ne signifie pas pour autant que les médias se plagient mutuellement, mais qu'au contraire, ils intègrent à leur propre contexte des questions, des concepts, des principes qui se sont développés au cours de l'histoire social des médias et de l'art figuratif occidental (Müller, p.112-113)

It is interesting to notice that this deep historical interrelation among media is the cornerstone of another concept named *remediation*; a concept proposed by two North-American authors, Richard Grusin and Jay Bolter (1999).

b) Remediation: The same year the Centre de Recherche sur l'Intermédialité (CRI) organized its first conference in Montreal, Richard Grusin and Jay Bolter published in the United States the book *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Bolter and Grusin, 1999). The book's main argument can be summarized in the idea that *all media remediate other media*. Bolter and Grusin emphasize that this is a universal trait of media (at least up to this historical moment). The idea that a medium always reforms or remediates other media is insistently repeated throughout the text. The authors adopt a categorical position: "No medium today, and certainly no single media event, seems to do its cultural work in isolation from other media" (Bolter and Grusin, p.15). In their analysis of contemporary digital media, the authors emphasize that the emergence of new forms of mediatic experience depend on their remediation of earlier forms of media. Therefore, there is no break with the past; on the contrary, new media can only emerge through their interplay with earlier media. Our culture can only conceive a particular medium as it interacts, challenges, reforms, reinforces and/or refutes other media. However, Bolter and Grusin do not develop a genealogy of linear history: "[...] ours is a genealogy of affiliations, [...]" and in this genealogy, older media can also remediate newer ones" (Bolter and Grusin, p.55). As examples, the authors state that television refashions itself to look like the World Wide Web (the CNN visual remediates the hypermediatic WWW environment), film incorporates computer graphics within its expression (all CGI films that dominate the market, for example), etc. What is important to stress is that "no medium, it seems, can now function independently and establish its own separate and purified space of cultural meaning". (Bolter and Grusin, p.55).

c) Repurposing: Also discussed by Bolter and Grusin, *repurposing* is a rather limited facet of remediation. It refers specifically to the migration of a certain character or narrative from one medium to another (Batman and Superman franchises, for example). It is an economic aspect of remediation that has a direct impact on the social and material reality of our everyday cultural experiences. *Repurposing* is a term used by the entertainment industry and it consists of

pouring a familiar content into another media form; a comic book series is repurposed as a live-action movie, a televised cartoon, a video game, and a set of action toys. The goal is not to replace the earlier forms, to which the company may own the rights, but rather to spread the content over as many markets as possible. Each of those forms takes part of its meaning from the other products in a process of honorific remediation and at the same time makes a tacit claim to offer an experience that the other forms cannot. [...] For the repurposing of blockbuster movies such as the Batman series, the goal is to have the child watching a Batman video while wearing a Batman cape, eating a fast-food meal with a Batman promotional wrapper, and playing with a Batman toy. The goal is literally to engage all of the child's senses. (Bolter and Grusin, 1999, p.68)

As we can see in the example given, the definition of “repurposing” as proposed by the entertainment industry emphasizes a certain type of media mobility usually focused on a story or a character – and its potentiality for profit. What is stressed here is the content itself, and its mediatic mobility is seen, in this case, as a means of maximizing its profit possibilities. The same phenomenon is studied by Angela Ndaljianis under another term, namely, *franchise media cross-over*.

c) Franchise Media-Crossover: Angela Ndaljianis (2004, p.34-49) also addresses the repurposing phenomenon, but uses a different terminology. She refers to it as “media crossover”. However, Ndaljianis concentrates on products such as films, cartoons, comic books and computer games and does not go as far as including toys, hamburger wrappers or garments in her analysis – products that are certainly present in the notion of “repurposing”. The economical aspect here is also central, but Ndaljianis is more

interested in exploring the narrative consequences of such media migrations. Narrative is a key element in Ndalians' elaboration of the term "media crossover" since the author stresses how the intense seriality produced by these crossovers creates a corresponding proliferation of *quasi*-parallel narratives. The prefix "quasi" is justified because all the different Batman, Superman or Aliens series develop their own plotlines, which to a certain degree are parallel and autonomous from each other but at the same time dependent and inter-connected. This basic idea of *franchise media-crossover* leads us to the concept of transmedia storytelling / transmedia practice.

d) Transmedia Storytelling / Transmedia Practice: The term *transmedia* has gained great popularity in both academic circles and entertainment industries. Very close to Ndalians' *franchise media-crossover*, *transmedia storytelling* also began by focusing on the proliferation of franchise storylines through different media platforms. Transmedia would refer to the phenomenon by which the same fictional universe "travels" from one medium to another: "A transmedia project develops storytelling across multiple forms of media in order to have different "entry points" in the story; entry-points with a unique and independent lifespan but with a definite role in the big narrative scheme."

(Lacobacci, 2008). In academia, the term *transmedia storytelling* was popularized by Henry Jenkins, who used it as the theoretical backbone for the creation of the Comparative Media Studies Program at MIT in the 1990s. In an article published in the MIT Technology Magazine entitled "Transmedia Storytelling", Jenkins (2003) stated that while in the 1990s transmedia was an important academic concept because it investigated the adaptation of successful franchises that crossed media, in the 2000s it turned into a central notion because major companies in the entertainment industry started using the

term and conceiving their projects from the very beginning with this single idea in mind – “the construction and enhancement of entertainment franchises” (Jenkins, 2003). As theoretical and business transmedia analyses evolved, they began to include the analysis of fan participation in the storytelling creation, thus establishing points of intersection with the fan fiction phenomenon discussed on chapter 2 of this thesis<sup>57</sup>. In the late 2000s, going beyond the narrative issues traditionally discussed by transmedia storytelling, specialists have been simply using the term *transmedia* or *transmedia practice*<sup>58</sup>.

e) Media Convergence: This is the term initially used by business communication project teams to refer to the convergence of different media into single communication outlets. According to *Britannica Online Encyclopedia*, media convergence is the “phenomenon involving the interlocking of computing and information technology companies, telecommunications networks, and content providers from the publishing worlds of newspapers, magazines, music, radio, television, films, and entertainment software. Media convergence brings together the “three Cs”—computing, communications, and content.<sup>59</sup>” The classical example is the development of computing systems for cellular phones in the last decades. Initially, cellular phones were computational systems that allowed for combining mediamotion and physical locomotion. But as computational systems and communication technology evolved,

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<sup>57</sup> For a current overview of transmedia practices from a business standpoint, see Jeff Gomez’s, CEO of Starlight Runner Entertainment, interviews and lectures online:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfH8WwCISx0> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Om5Gml6Vrw>, accessed on 22 March 2011.

<sup>58</sup> See *Transmedia Practice: Theorising the Practice of Expressing a Fictional World across Distinct Media and Environments* (Dena, 2009) in which the author advocates the use of the term “transmedia practice” to change the focus from end-point products to the continuous process of reinventing storylines through different media platforms.

<sup>59</sup> Entry for “Media Convergence”, *Britannica Online Encyclopedia*, available at <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1425043/media-convergence>, accessed on 26 November 2010.

cellular phones began to increasingly incorporate different kinds of media. In addition to being a portable telephone set, cell phones also became digital cameras, camcorders, electronic appointment books, alarm clocks, internet devices, text message gadgets, visual voicemails, media players, gaming machines, GPS devices, etc. The pinnacle and turning point of media convergence in cellular phones was the release of the iPhone by Apple Inc. in 2007 – for the first time, so many different media had come together in a single cellular phone device.

In academic circles, Henry Jenkins also used the term *convergence* in a more encompassing way in his book *Convergence Culture – Where Old and New Media Collide* (Jenkins, 2006).

By convergence, I mean the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want. Convergence is a word that manages to describe technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes depending on who is speaking and what they think they are talking about. [...] In the world of media convergence, every important story gets told, every brand gets sold, and every consumer gets courted across multiple media platforms.  
(Jenkins, 2006, p.2-3)

As we can observe above, Jenkins defines media convergence in a very different way from the one commonly used by the technology communication industry. Jenkins' definition is very close to the idea of transmedia storytelling – both terms commonly associated with the author.

The list of correlated terms and concepts could be expanded: cross-media (Petersen, 2006), Transmedial Worlds (Klastrup and Tosca, 2004) and Transmedial Narratology (Ryan, 2005) are some examples. The existence of so many closely related concepts and terms can be partially explained by the fact that all these inter-, trans- and cross-media phenomena are ongoing and ever-growing processes in the contemporary

entertainment industry. As a result, there is a constellation of loosely interconnected terms and concepts that describe these new inter- trans- cross-mediatic experiences. Although it is a field of studies that is still being constructed, the proliferation of similar terms and concepts in the last decade undoubtedly shows that our contemporary media experiences have to be analyzed under the notion of mobility/movement<sup>60</sup>. The very choice of prefixes such as inter-, trans-, cross- and re- is evidence that we now seek to understand how contemporary media are crossed, transferred, recycled, transposed and interconnected to each other.

For my own analytical purposes, I will use *intermediality* as the concept that encompasses the other concepts and terms. This decision is based on two factors. Firstly, the term has an established tradition of studies in French and German media scholarship – *intermédialité* and *Intermedialität*, respectively. Secondly, although there is no single and definitive definition of *intermediality*, the concept has been consistently used by most researchers in a broader sense than the other terms. I will apply the term *intermediality* to a large spectrum of intermedial phenomena as proposed by Silvestra Mariniello in the first international conference of the Centre de Recherche sur l'Intermédialité (CRI):

On entend l'intermédialité comme hétérogénéité; comme conjonction de plusieurs systèmes de communication et de représentation; comme recyclage dans une pratique médiatique, le cinéma par exemple, d'autres pratiques médiatiques, la bande dessinée, l'Opéra comique etc.; comme convergence de plusieurs médias; comme interaction entre médias; comme emprunt; comme interaction de différents supports; comme intégration d'une pratique avec d'autres; comme adaptation; comme assimilation progressive de procédés variés; comme flux d'expériences sensorielles et esthétiques plutôt qu'interaction entre textes clos;

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<sup>60</sup> In this case, we are dealing with a kind of mobility that differs from the movements discussed under the term *kinesthesics*. While in *kinesthesics*, the discussion revolved around particular *perceptions of movement* (accelerated, over-stimulating, etc.), in the intermedial phenomenon, as I will argue, there is an intense *movement of perceptions*. That is, aesthetic experiences that were associated with specific entertainment practices now have to “move” around different platforms in all sorts of complex media combinations and transferences.

comme faisceau de liens entre médias; comme l'événement des relations médiatiques variables entre les médias [...] (Mariniello, 1999)

Under the intermedial phenomenon, I will focus more particularly on two movements, namely, *Franchise Media Crossover* and *Remediation*. In empirical analyses of objects, both movements are inseparable, but they are exposed here separately only due to the fact that each one adds subtle different dimensions to the intermedial sensorial experience as discussed below.

#### 4.3.1 Franchise media crossover and aisthetic mobility.

The first movement is extensively discussed by Ndalianis who refers to the phenomenon as “media crossover” (Ndalianis, 2004, p.31-41). The examples given by Ndalianis abound: Superman and Batman began as comic books in the 1930s, turned into feature movies in the 1940s and TV series in the 1960s. In 1978, *Superman* (Doner, 1978) was released as a major Hollywood production followed by two sequels in 1980 and 1983. In 1989, *Batman* (Burton, 1989) also became a blockbuster movie followed by three sequels. On TV, in addition to the 1960 live action series, these characters were portrayed in innumerable animated cartoons. In the *Alien* and *Predator* series, the crossover followed a different path: they first appeared as characters of feature motion pictures and then migrated to comic books and computer games.

Ndalianis shows through her analysis that this intense phenomenon of media crossover contributes to the effect of what she calls *polycentrism* in the developed narrative lines. There is no linearity in the production of the series and each piece retakes, reinvents, transforms and stretches the franchise, producing multiple narrative centers. The most recent productions of Batman and Superman illustrate the polycentrism Ndalianis refers to. Released in 2005, *Batman Begins* shows the origins of the hero. The

director Christopher Nolan recreated the Gotham universe, modifying several key elements of past Batman productions, reinventing some of the characters, adding new features and nuances to their stories, rearranging the codes previously established for the character and his world. The same applies to the Warner Brother TV series *Smallville* which also shows the origins of a superhero, in this case Superman. Just as *Batman Begins* did on cinema, the TV series mesmerized Superman fans, also introducing new premises to the narrative. The result was a complex tension between “fidelity” to the previous established narrative centers of these superheroes (they had to be recognized by their fans) and innovation, transformation and regrouping of these narratives finally leading to new axes of narration – they could not be simple repetitions of what had been done before.

In her analysis, Ndalianis emphasized the economic aspect of the franchise media crossover. The author showed how major media companies – Warner Brothers, Time Inc., CNN, HBO, DC Comics, etc. – merged and affiliated in all sorts of complex commercial transactions that resulted in the proliferation of the media crossover phenomenon: “Late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first century seriality is the outcome of a marketing strategy that aims at squeezing from a product its fullest marketing potential” (Ndalianis, 2004, p. 40-41). A brief glance at the Hollywood’s entertainment industry confirms Ndalianis’ statement. After being released in movie theaters, blockbusters targeted at young audiences almost invariably become computer games. Some recent examples include the franchises *Madagascar*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Shrek*, *The Twilight Series* and *Star Trek*, to name just a few. They are then exploited on the DVD market and finally on TV broadcasts. They sometimes even originate parallel

animated series (the series *Animatrix* stems from the Matrix franchise, the name itself revealing the intermedial character of the product: *animated + Matrix*). The multimillion-dollar Harry Potter franchise originated in traditional print media (books), migrated to the cinema and the corresponding computer games were released with gigantic marketing campaigns; and of course, as shown above, the theme park attraction was a very successful addition to the franchise. Tomb Raider and Resident Evil began as computer games and then became cinema blockbusters. Boosted by the enormous success of movies such as *X-Men* (Singer, 2001) and *Spiderman* (Raimi, 2002), the 2000s saw a veritable boom of comic books transplanted to the big screen.

It is clear from the examples mentioned above that some forms of contemporary entertainment are experiencing the exacerbation of the intermedial phenomenon in which comics, blockbusters and computer games derive from each other in all sorts of combination<sup>61</sup>. Undoubtedly, as Ndalians demonstrates, the phenomenon is economically driven. Again, as in the previous section (“kinesthetics”) it is not possible to fully understand this aspect of contemporary entertainment mobility without considering its economic dimension. However, the analysis cannot be restricted to the economic dynamics of the entertainment industry. Franchise media crossover has a direct impact on the aesthetic experience one has with the entertainment product.

Here are two examples from recent cinematographic productions. In *Spiderman 2*, in the opening credit sequence, the director Sam Raimi (2004) retells the story of the first

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<sup>61</sup> It is interesting to notice that with the evolution of the transmedial concept in the entertainment industry, there is now a tendency to develop large projects in which the storylines to be explored in all different platforms are conceived altogether from the very beginning. With the eventual popularization of such a production model, it will no longer be possible to trace a genealogy of the products, that is, “what product originated what” will become irrelevant. See Jeff Gomez’s lecture at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Om5Gml6Vrw>, accessed on 26 November 2010.

movie, reproducing it on the big screen in the format of comics. Thus, while the audience has the traditional experience of reading the credits, it also has to “read” the comics that retell the story of the first movie. The intermedial experience is remarkable. People sitting in front of the screen have the sensation of touching the paper, of hearing the pages being turned. They recognize the color and texture of the comic book and yet know and feel that they are having a cinematic experience: the dark room, the surround sound, the giant screen, etc. are all elements that sensorially belong to the movie theater universe. The two sets of sensorial references are combined and the result is a new and *hybrid* mediatic experience. The same can be said of the groundbreaking *Sin City* (Rodriguez, 2005). Based on the comic books created by legendary artist Frank Miller in the early 1990s, *Sin City* introduces a new aesthetics to moviemaking. The director Robert Rodriguez called Frank Miller himself to co-direct the movie. The result is a never-before-seen transposition from comics to cinema. The movie uses the same hyper-condensed narration of the comic books, and reproduces almost frame by frame the *noir* and ultra-violent atmosphere conceived on paper by Miller, exploring new possibilities in the process of artistic cinematographic creation.

A product like *Lego Batman – the Video game* can also illustrate this intricacy of moving intermedial sensory experiences in contemporary entertainment practices. Since the 1980s, the video game market has been invaded by dozens of games starring Batman, each of them based on a different source. Released in 2008 by Traveler’s Tales Inc. and Warner Brothers, one of these game versions, *Lego Batman – the Video Game*, was not inspired by any particular Batman movie or comic book. As the title reveals, it was based instead on the Batman Lego sets that had been released with enormous commercial

success two years earlier. Targeting both the audiences that had once played with Lego bricks and the new Batman Lego set fans, the video game proved to be a great success propelling the launch of similar products like *Lego Harry Potter Years 1-4* (Magrino, 2010). From the promotional material to the actual gaming experience, the entire project is built on a complex system of references to other Batman storylines across different media platforms. The front cover of the disc shows the characters in “Lego style” in outfits that recall the 1989 Tim Burton version of the film franchise (see picture below). We have here a familiar character in a video game product portrayed as seen in the 1989 movie, but with a Lego visual. Therefore, there are at least three different media platforms that are immediately visually evoked by the picture. On the back page we can see Batman and other characters in strips talking through dialogue balloons in a clear allusion to the comic books – thus adding a fourth media to the set of sensorial references evoked. Video game, movie, comic book and toy are all combined in a single disc cover.



Front cover of *Lego Batman – the Video game*, photo property of Traveler’s Tales TT Games Inc. and Warner Brothers, retrieved November 26, 2010, from <http://www.covershut.com/Wii-Covers/22043-LEGO-Batman-Front.html>, all rights reserved.

*Lego Batman – the Video game* also has a promotional trailer that explores its intermedial nature<sup>62</sup>. The trailer follows the same kinesthetic fast-paced editing principles as any traditional movie trailer. But while in the traditional movie preview there is little reference to different kinds of media, in the *Lego Batman – the Video game* trailer intermediality occupies a central position. There is a combination of the visual screen layout typically used for video games, the soundtrack and the trailer voice-over typically heard in movie previews, and, of course, the Lego visuals that can be observed in the portrayal of the characters and in the final scene when Batman is covered by Lego bricks that are stacked in front of him. Finally, users have to put their Lego talents into practice to play the actual game – characters have to stack “virtual” Lego bricks to construct objects in order to overcome obstacles and perform tasks.

<sup>62</sup> Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KL-yQ2GtsM>, accessed on 26 November 2010.

The important aspect here is not only to describe how the Franchise Media Crossover is at work in contemporary entertainment, but to recognize how it demands a new kind of engagement of the senses from audiences; one in which different sensorial experiences that once belonged to particular media practices now have to be activated in all sorts of intermedial combinations. The sounds of putting Lego bricks together, the tactile experience and the visual practice and talent necessary for arranging the bricks are transported to the video game experience. The familiarity of the voice heard in trailers and the typical visual and aural experience of the movie preview is recycled to another media, the video game. Therefore, these industries not only transfer, reinvent and expand storylines and narratives from one medium to another – as focused in the media-crossover and transmedia storytelling analyses. They also transfer whole “sets” of sensorial experiences usually associated with one medium to other media practice.

#### 4.3.2 Remediation and aisthesis mobility.

The second intermedial aspect to be discussed is extensively developed by Bolter and Grusin (1999) in their book *Remediation*. As mentioned above, for the authors, a basic principle in our cultural history is that *all media remediate other media*<sup>63</sup>. As a direct application of their argument in the analysis of our corpus we can mention “first-person-shooter” computer games, which remediate part of the cinematic language. In this case, players become characters in a cinematic narrative in which they cannot see the character they are controlling, but they can see what is happening around them through the character’s eyes. This technique was used in the provocative *Being John Malkovich* (Jonze, 1999), a comedy-fantasy movie, in which Schwartz, an office clerk played by

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<sup>63</sup> Arguably, all franchise media crossover is also a case of remediation. As stated before, they were presented here separately because of their complementary nature. Franchise media crossover concentrates on narrative and seriality while remediation focuses on the genealogical affiliations of all media.

John Cusak, finds a small door behind a filing cabinet. Upon entering the door, he finds himself in the mind of famous actor John Malkovich for fifteen minutes. After this period of time, Schwartz is ejected from the celebrity's mind into a hole beside a New Jersey highway. Before being ejected, the spectator sees everything through the eyes of the fictional character, Schwartz, who sees everything through the eyes of the "real" actor John Malkovich.

More recently, in the Brazilian movie *Meu Tio Matou um Cara* (Furtado, 2004), the opening credits simulate a first person shooter video game screen in a flagrant and explicit example of cinema remediating back computer games. In this movie, Duca, a young teenager, lives in a hypermediated world. He thinks and sees his universe through websites, digital cameras and video games. He uses his media literacy to solve mysteries and uncover lies. Duca's knowledge of video games, illustrated in the opening credits in which the movie turns into a giant video game screen, will be essential for him to save his uncle. As mentioned above, in their theoretical construction, Bolter and Grusin prudently avoid any evolutionist, progressionist views of remediation. As *Meu Tio Matou um Cara* illustrates (cinema remediating first-person-shooter games), remediation can occur in a multitude of directions: new media remediate old media, new remediate new, old remediate new, computer games remediate film, film remediates computer games, TV remediates the web, the web remediates TV, etc. Again, for our analysis the central issue is not remediation itself, but the impact it has on the aisthesis experience of consuming entertainment artifacts. In all intermedial examples mentioned above, the consumer has to come into contact with sensorial elements that belong to different media practices. He has

to “move”, to be constantly “in transit” from one set of sensorial perceptions to another, so that he can construct on a meta-level a new aesthetic experience.

Another important principle of remediation is what the authors call its “double logics of *immediacy* and *hypermediacy*”. *Immediacy* is related to the ability of effacing the presence of the media, that is, of making it transparent as if it had “disappeared”. Through this dynamics the person in contact with the media does not “realize” the act of mediation; the media itself becomes invisible and the person feels as though in direct contact with the object(s) being mediated. This transparency is achieved when the media interacts with our senses, causing then aisthesis immediacy.

*Hypermediacy*, on the other hand, is the counterpart of the logic developed for *immediacy*. The two concepts are counterparts because while *immediacy* emphasizes the transparency, the “invisibility” of the media, *hypermediacy* relies on the fascination with media, on the use of images, sound, texts, animation, video, colors, etc. for the establishment of the mediated experience. In contemporary computer systems, for example, the graphics filled with scrollbars, windows, menus, icons and toolbars constantly remind us of the mediating presence of the computer and are a good example of hypermediacy. Bolter and Grusin argue that, in hypermediacy, the fragmentation of space, the multiplicity of media and the heterogeneity of the graphical interface impede transparent immediacy. Although the concepts are seemingly incompatible, Bolter and Grusin defend the idea that our culture presents a strong imperative for both immediacy and hypermediacy. This is precisely what they call the *double logics of remediation*: “Our culture wants both to multiply its media and to erase all traces of mediation: ideally, it

wants to erase its media in the very act of multiplying them.” (Bolter and Grusin, 1999, p.5)

In the realm of entertainment products, one of the most remarkable examples of remediation – and its double logics of immediacy and hypermediacy – can be observed in the theme park attraction *Terminator 2: 3D* (1996). This theme park attraction, located at Universal Studios, Florida, takes up the story portrayed in the movie *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. The attraction begins when the audience arrives and waits in line. Several TV sets show mini-“documentaries” in which the company Cyberdyne<sup>64</sup> is portrayed as if it really existed. As the line moves, we become acquainted with the company’s history, some of their products (which include everyday household appliances) and some of their facilities.

Once we enter the attraction itself, we are welcomed by a uniformed Cyberdyne employee (a live actress) who explains a little more about the company’s future projects. During the explanations, Sarah and John Connor (Linda Hamilton and Edward Furlong, the actual actors of the movie *Terminator 2*) take control of the TV broadcast and warn the audience about the upcoming danger generated by Cyberdyne, that is, the creation of an intelligent machine that will destroy mankind (the audience is then taken inside the universe of the movie). The company regains control of the broadcast and the embarrassed host asks the audience to ignore the unfounded warnings just seen on the screen.

Audiences continue their walk, being led to the movie theater where Cyberdyne will perform a special 3D presentation of its latest technological achievements. During the presentation, a “real” Sarah and John Connor (look-alike actors) invade the stage and

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<sup>64</sup> Cyberdyne is the fictional company that creates the first self-conscious machine in *Terminator 2*.

the 700 people in the audience are then held hostage, caught in the shooting between Cyberdyne security and the rebels (Sarah and John) on stage. In the middle of the conflict, the mesmerized audience sees a giant T-1000 (the morphing villain from *Terminator 2*) emerge from the screen, slowly invading the “real” space of the audience (an effect achieved by the 3D glasses the audience is wearing). The villain T-1000 then decides to morph into a policeman (as in the movie) and literally escapes the screen space, becoming a “real” character on stage (performed by an actor, who is also a look-alike of the movie villain). Also coming from the screen space, the hero T-800 (a Schwarzenegger look-alike) invades the “real world” stage to rescue John Connor. Once more, the amazed audience sees the real live actors literally enter back into the fictional screen space. The fast-paced adventure continues on screen, and the attraction activates the viewers’ senses to again collapse the limits between representation and reality. For example, when there is an on-screen explosion the audience not only sees it in 3D, but can also smell the smoke and feel its heat. In the *grand finale*, when the morphing villain is destroyed, the scattered liquid from his explosion escapes from the screen and some “real liquid” is spilled onto the audience. Spectators leave the attraction soaked by the futuristic material used to construct the T-1000!

T2:3D not only serves to illustrate immediacy and hypermediacy, but combines in an overwhelming fashion all the types of motion described before. First, the audience needs to walk in order to visit the facilities of the company Cyberdyne (locomotion). This walk is crucial for the spectator to enter the spectacle (the body has to move around and witness the simulated reality of a high-tech company). Second, the audience, now sitting in the 3D movie theater, experiences several aspects linked to mediamotion: the mediatic

world parades in front of them and the complex technological apparatus of the attraction thoroughly “assaults” their senses in a frantic way (kinesthesics). Different media such as theater (live-action performances), cinema (3D spectacle) and television (during the walk) frantically alternate to astonish the audience, blurring the distinction between illusion and reality. As Bolter and Grusin advocate (1999, p.5), by the very act of using multiple kinds of media, this theme park attraction is able to erase the sense of mediation. That is, through a high level of hypermediatic mobility, immediacy is achieved.

Theme park attractions like *Terminator 2:3D* are not considered works of art and do not have the same cultural status and prestige as artistic installations. However, the general principle of mobility is the same: the spectator enters the “installation”, experiences the performance of the actors (which is by nature transitory, temporary, ephemeral) and has to pass through it, interact with it and have a specific aesthetic experience by means of a complex media apparatus. Entertainment products such as *Terminator 2: 3D*, *Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey* and motion video games show that complex and sophisticated kinds of mobility can be found in popular, “lowbrow”, industrial cultural artifacts. Cultural mobility in a myriad of complex forms is a fundamental trait of contemporary entertainment industries.

I have focused so far on some of the different types of mobility that have a direct impact on the way the senses are engaged during the consumption of entertainment products. From the examples explored, it was possible to conclude that both production and reception of these products are intricately entangled with the phenomenon of aesthetic mobility. In the next chapter, I will turn this analytical framework to a local Amazonian entertainment product, the *aparelhagem* party. By analyzing some aspects

related to the aisthesis mobility in *aparelhagens* and its cultural production and reception, and by comparing them to those found in global entertainment products, I will disclose aisthesis patterns that cross economic, geographic and cultural boundaries. Furthermore, I will show that when applied to a country with deep social inequalities like Brazil, the analysis derived from this investigative framework may yield new and unexpected results.

### ***5. Aesthetic mobility and the tecnobrega industry: the case of aparelhagem parties***

June 2009. It is a hot night in Belém do Pará, the second largest city in the Brazilian Amazon region, with a population of over 2 million, and I am about to attend my first *aparelhagem* party. Born and raised in Belém, I had always *heard* about the parties, but had never actually *been* to one of them. My family is a little restless; after all, *aparelhagem* parties have always been associated with the lowest classes of society in our city. For many people, *aparelhagem* parties are synonymous with bad taste, housemaids, criminals, cultural garbage, the illiterate and gangs.

Having a scholarly interest in these parties and making them the central case study of a doctoral thesis has drawn mixed reactions from my family, friends and colleagues in local academia. Some embrace the idea with enthusiasm and want to hear more about the possible correlations between global entertainment products and *aparelhagem* parties. Others raise their eyebrows and do not understand why I have decided to investigate this phenomenon. The most disapproving ones openly reprimand me and consider it, at best, a waste of time. In any case, the mention of studying the *tecnobrega* industry and more specifically the *aparelhagem* parties hardly ever causes indifference in local residents. Despite the controversy and relative uproar caused in my immediate circle of friends, family and colleagues, I proceed with the plan to attend an *aparelhagem* party.

The party would take place at a night club called *African Bar*, a downtown disco that used to be a popular spot for middle class youngsters in the 1990s. The location itself is surprising because *aparelhagem* parties had been confined, until very recently, to the poorest outskirts of the city – back in the early 1990s, hosting one of these parties in a

“middle class club” such as *African Bar* would have been inconceivable. In order to understand the stigma carried by *aparelhagem* parties from its origins, it is necessary to go back further in time and investigate a musical rhythm called *brega*, the most consumed type of music in Northern Brazil.

### **5.1 Tecnobrega in Pará: a brief history.**

The origins of the rhythm: *Brega* is a rhythm that originated in Northern Brazil during the late 1970s. The rhythm received musical influences from the American Rock and Roll (Elvis Presley), the *Jovem Guarda*<sup>65</sup> and Caribbean and South American rhythms (Cumbia, Calipso, etc.) (Neves, 2005). The rhythm was highly stigmatized as cultural garbage and was listened by the lowest social classes. Listening to *brega* was shameful because the rhythm was associated with bad taste, the poor and the uneducated. The value judgment of the rhythm was explicit in the very name used to describe it. The name *brega* literally means *tacky, cheesy* in Portuguese. However, the low classes continued to listen to these songs which were mainly distributed on cassette tapes and broadcasted by community radios targeting the poorest audiences. This is when the *aparelhagens* began to play an active role in disseminating the rhythm. At the beginning, the *aparelhagens* were simply sound systems that traveled from place to place, from one city to another, playing *brega* songs in open spaces known as *bregões*<sup>66</sup> or in clubs called

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<sup>65</sup> A popular Brazilian musical movement from the 1960s, also influenced by American Rock and Roll of the 1950s. Some of its most prominent singers include Erasmo Carlos, Wanderléa and the legendary Roberto Carlos.

<sup>66</sup> *Bregão* is the augmentative of *brega* (*brega* + the suffix *ão*). *Brega* refers either to the song or to the rhythm described above, and *bregão* refers to the club or open space where these songs are played in night parties.

*sede sociais*<sup>67</sup>. Residents of poverty-stricken neighborhoods listened to the rhythm on popular radio stations and their cassette players. On the weekends they listened to the same songs in *bregões* and *sede sociais* where *aparelhagens* were playing. *Brega* songs were usually romantic and naïve, with very simple lyrics and musical structure, danced to by couples on a dance floor. The dance developed in these parties was also named *brega* after the rhythm that by the early 1980s had already become one of the most popular kinds of music in poor neighborhoods in Belém.



An *aparelhagem* party in the early 1980s from the photograph book *Sonoro Diamante Negro* (Nascimento, 2010, p.14), all rights reserved. At the time, the only role of *aparelhagens* like the traditional “Diamante Negro” was to provide the sound equipment and the music for the couples to dance.

It is important to stress the “subaltern” aspect of the *brega* phenomenon, which began in a peripheral area of Brazil, the Amazon Region. The phenomenon was produced far away from São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, cities that have long functioned as national

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<sup>67</sup> For further information see <http://www.wix.com/culturaparaense/projetosonoros/historia> (accessed on 22 December 2010). In this website, the researcher Darien Lamén (University of Pennsylvania) posts his preliminary findings on the *sonoros*, sound systems that preceded the *aparelhagens* from the 1950s to the 1970s (Lamén, 2010).

cultural centers. Furthermore, within this peripheral cultural universe, it was consumed by the lowest local classes. Therefore, there are at least three layers of “subalternity” for the phenomenon. Firstly, on the international level, it is a Brazilian phenomenon, that is, these songs are cultural artifacts and practices produced in a “third world” country. Secondly, inside Brazil, the *aparelhagem* parties and *brega* songs were produced in a peripheral region, far away from the cultural centers that monopolized the production and distribution of cultural artifacts on the national level, namely, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Finally, in the Amazonian cultural reality, *bregas* were listened to by the lowest socioeconomic classes, and *bregões* were attended by housemaids, prostitutes and construction workers who looked for entertainment in clubs or open spaces featuring the sound systems known as *aparelhagens*.

The urban social milieu in which the rhythm was born and its stigmatization as “bad music” inevitably bring up issues of value. To like or dislike *brega* involves not only purely aesthetic criteria. It also involves social aspects related to the establishment of social distinctions, that is, different cultural tastes indicate different social classes (Bourdieu, 1979). These social aspects will be further discussed later on in this chapter. For now, it is important only to point out that this marginalized context, without any mechanism of official control, seems to have been determinant for the establishment of a radically informal chain of production from the 1980s on.

The 1980s and the “*brega pop*”: during the 1980s the rhythm became more and more popular and was rebaptized “*brega pop*” in reference to international pop music. The rhythm was still highly stigmatized, but it began to acquire greater economic importance. *Brega* singers and *aparelhagem* owners started to earn substantial profits in

an informal circuit based mainly on live spectacles and the commercialization of “pirate” cassette tapes. I place the word “pirate” in quotation marks because there has never been an “official” distribution circuit for the *brega* music. The *brega* hits could not be found in regular music stores. The songs could only be bought in *camelô*<sup>68</sup> tents. The *brega* industry created its own mechanisms of production and distribution within its “triple peripheral” context, completely detached from the official industry. The singers produced their hits in small studios, first using “pirate” cassettes and later on CDs to advertise the songs in the *aparelhagens*. Once successful, the songs began to play on radio stations, but it was mainly on the streets that a song became known. One could listen to successful *brega* songs in private parties, clubs (*bregões*), on speakers in the street, from the neighbor next door and of course wherever there was an *aparelhagem* party. Musicians, composers and bands soon understood that their model of production and distribution was very different from the mainstream phonographic industry. Since they had no access to the major music labels – all concentrated in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro – their objective was to achieve a hit so that they could attract large audiences to their own concerts. These artists never earned any direct profit from the sale of their cassette tapes or CDs. Those who made money from the sale of tapes and CDs have always been the street vendors, who can be found in any market in Belém. If *aparelhagens* started playing a song at the parties and it became a hit on the dance floor, it was soon available on the streets in the vendor tents. This informal chain of production and distribution continues to be the predominant model for the *brega* industry. The street vendors are still those responsible for providing the consumers with “pirate” CDs containing the latest hits. The bands are then hired for concerts, the street vendors sell more CDs, the popular radio

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<sup>68</sup> Street vendors who usually sell their products without any kind of legal license

stations get more listeners and the *aparelhagens* can attract bigger audiences. This enormous and powerful industry is still growing in a parallel circuit unknown to the “official” mainstream music industry (Viana, 2003). The economic boost in the 1980s provided the ideal conditions for the emergence of several competing *aparelhagens* in the 1990s, which began a technological race to provide their customers with the ultimate entertainment experience.

The 1990s and 2000s, from “*tecnobrega*” to “*cyber-tecnobrega*”: in constant evolution, by the mid 1990s, a new generation of musicians introduced more electrical guitars and synthesized sounds to the rhythm (Neves, 2005). This version of the rhythm was then baptized “*techno-brega*”. In this productive chain the *aparelhagens* acquired an even greater importance from the 1990s on. This is so because the *aparelhagens* began to transcend their original function, i.e., that of providing the sound equipment for the songs to be played in *brega* parties. While in the late 1970s/early 1980s they were just travelling sound systems, in the 1990s they began to explore new technological possibilities to intensify the aesthetic experience one has when attending these parties. That is, in addition to listening and dancing to the songs, *brega* enthusiasts started having their senses bombarded by amplifiers, giant TV screens, stroboscopic lights and laser beams. The “*aparelhagens*” became trademarks that started attracting thousands upon thousands of poor people who sought entertainment (dancing and drinking) absorbed by a media spectacle that completely encapsulated their senses. The *aparelhagens* were no longer simply one of many elements that contributed to make the parties possible. They became themselves the reason, the center and the main attraction of the parties.

In the 1990s, the fierce competition among *aparelhagens* grew more intense, giving rise to a truly technological race. The quality of an *aparelhagem* began to be measured by its capacity to offer the ultimate experience in lighting, loudness and media spectacle. The rhythm itself had to follow this escalating trend and needed to become even faster and more frantic. As a consequence, in the 2000s a variation of *tecnobrega* appeared: the “*cyber-tecnobrega*”. The vertiginous rhythm and dancing is now accompanied by a cybernetic and technological surrounding that evokes the sci-fi setting of *The Matrix* or *T2: 3D*. This futuristic setting co-exists with elements particular to the region (the Indian, other local rhythms, folkloric Amazonian dances, fruit, nature, etc.) in a complex cultural amalgam.

## **5.2 The *tecnobrega* industry today.**

*Aparelhagens* and DJs: Although *aparelhagens* and their DJs are at the center of the *tecnobrega* industry, many other agents are part of this circuit. Lemos and Castro (2008) provide a comprehensive description of such agents and their roles. As the *tecnobrega* industry is an informal commercial model, these agents, their definitions and exact functions are not always rigorously determined; that is, the same person can perform more than one role in the circuit. *Aparelhagem* owners and the DJs, for example, are sometimes the same person, but there are other types of combinations. Most often, *aparelhagens* are family enterprises in which the owner is usually the head of the family and the DJs and other employees are related to him (Lemos and Castro, 2008, p.69).

In 2006, there were hundreds of *aparelhagens* in the *tecnobrega* scene in Belém, but four were considered the major ones: Tupinambá, Rubi, Super Pop and Ciclone (Lemos and Castro, 2008, p.64). These *aparelhagens* are known to have the biggest and

most sophisticated sound and special effects equipment. The big *aparelhagens* usually have a main DJ (Super Pop, an exception, has two of them), but they also hire “secondary DJs” who sometimes come from smaller *aparelhagens*. Once a DJ starts becoming famous, the major *aparelhagens* try to attract him to their teams. The DJs are the stars of the *tecnobrega* industry and are responsible not only for the musical selection but also for the interactive participation of the audiences in *aparelhagem* parties. Due to their symbolic value and potential to attract large crowds, big *aparelhagens* fight for the best DJs, who usually migrate to the group that offers the highest bid – unless, of course, the DJ is part of a family enterprise and/or the owner of his own *aparelhagem*. In the *tecnobrega* star system, newly contracted DJs are gaudily announced by *aparelhagens* that hope to attract greater crowds and enlarge their fan base.

In addition to Tupinambá, Rubi, Super Pop, Ciclone and Príncipe Negro (a fifth *aparelhagem* which has recently attained the status of “a major one”), there are hundreds of other *aparelhagens* in the Belém metropolitan area with different degrees of importance and influence in the *tecnobrega* scene. Although “big, medium and small” are the categories used by the *tecnobrega* industry to classify *aparelhagens*, it is hard to determine the criteria used to group them. As noted by Lemos and Castro, MusiStar, an *aparelhagem* from Mosqueiro, a district on the outskirts of Belém, is considered big in its place of origin, but medium when compared to the four big *aparelhagens* of the capital (Lemos and Castro, p.72-73). By analyzing the financial data of dozens of *aparelhagens* in Belém, Lemos and Castro have proposed some parameters to determine their size. The first is the value of their fixed assets, that is, all the enterprise’s assets, equipment and property that cannot be easily converted into cash but that are essential for its

functioning. In 2006, when Lemos and Castro's team collected the data, big *aparelhagens* had an average of R\$81,000.00 in fixed assets, medium *aparelhagens* R\$34,129.37 and small ones R\$8,847.37 (Lemos and Castro, p.73). Another clear indicator of the size of an *aparelhagem* is the payment they receive for their presentations. The big ones charged a presentation fee that varied from R\$5,000 to R\$10,000 per performance, the medium ones an average of R\$1,000 and the small ones less than R\$500 (Lemos and Castro, p.76). The price of the entrance tickets can vary from R\$5 for the very small *aparelhagens* to a maximum of R\$15 for the big ones. The average ticket costs about R\$10, a very affordable and inclusive price for even the poorest population. Although the *tecnobrega* industry does not keep official attendance statistics, big *aparelhagens* like Super Pop can attract on special occasions up to ten thousand people in a single presentation (Documentário mostra explosão *tecnobrega* por dentro, 2009). Below these peak numbers, medium *aparelhagens* like Vetron can draw about three thousand people in a single night, and many smaller *aparelhagens* on the outskirts of Belém or in the countryside can gather from a few hundred to a few thousand *tecnobrega* fans. However, the most visible characteristic that sets "big *aparelhagens*" apart is their ability to provide sensorial experiences that are closely related to the concept of kinesthetics as discussed in chapter 3. The four big *aparelhagens* achieved such a status by investing in state-of-the-art visual and sound effects. Giant screens, special laser effects, stroboscopic lighting, frantic professional dancing, deafening sound and even trembling of the ground are some of the resources used by the major *aparelhagens* in their parties – for a detailed description, see the section "Aparelhagem parties: a kinesthetic experience" below.

Tupinambá, Rubi, Super Pop, Ciclone and Príncipe Negro – the “big” ones – control a vast share of the market. Due to the concentration of power and influence in the hands of few *aparelhagem* owners and their star DJs, smaller *aparelhagens* are forced to explore alternative niches. They usually perform in smaller *bregões* farther away from downtown, places that sometimes present precarious conditions without any sanitation, safety structure or license to operate. Another alternative is to perform in the countryside where big *aparelhagens*, with their enormous mobile infrastructure, cannot reach. Despite the power held by big *aparelhagens*, the role played by smaller *aparelhagens* cannot be neglected. Very often they are the ones that take greater risks, playing unknown songs and attempting to set trends that are then incorporated by the big ones (Lemos and Castro, p.74-75). Vetron is a good example of how unstable the hierarchy among *aparelhagens* can be. It was founded by DJ Marcio in Benguí, one of the poorest and most violent districts on the outskirts of Belém, and began as a small *aparelhagem* mainly performing at neighborhood parties. DJ Marcio and his team developed a great ability to promote songs in the local pirate CD market and discover new talents and songs that eventually became *tecnobrega* hits. As a result, Vetron has become increasingly successful and influential in the circuit. It periodically releases a CD containing a collection of songs carefully selected by DJ Marcio and widely sold by street vendors all over the city. In 2010, Vetron was featured on the Brazilian MTV show *MTV na Pista* in which Gaby Amarantos, one of the most famous *tecnobrega* singers, declared that every artist in this industry dreams of having his/her song featured in one of Vetron’s CDs (Amarantos, 2010). As of 2011, Vetron was considered a rising *aparelhagem*, and

although its equipment structure was still not comparable to Tupinambá or Super Pop, its influence and prestige were.

The four big *aparelhagens* are in a constant struggle to stay on top of the market. This demands substantial investment in equipment and innovation usually beyond their financial possibilities. As a result, the major *aparelhagens* are not necessarily the most lucrative ones. With the exception of Super Pop, all other major *aparelhagens*, as well as medium ones attempting to grow, are often in debt with big investors, the so-called “festeiros” (Lemos and Castro, 2008, p.108-109).

The festeiros: *Festeiros* are party promoters responsible for organizing *aparelhagem* parties, especially the big ones. They hire the *aparelhagens*, pay their fees, book the night clubs or the open spaces where the parties take place, organize the sale of alcoholic drinks and control the box office. Since this is an informal circuit, investments usually do not come from banks, but rather from these *festeiros* who lend large sums of money to big *aparelhagens* so that they can periodically renew their equipment and sustain their technological innovation. *Festeiros* usually receive their money through “dates”; that is, *aparelhagem* owners agree to pay off their debts by performing on specific dates in places determined by *festeiros*. The profits of the party go to the *festeiro* and the *aparelhagens* deduct their presentation fees from the total amount they owe. If, for example, an *aparelhagem* borrows R\$100,000.00 (one hundred thousand reais) from a *festeiro* and their fee is R\$5,000.00 (five thousand reais) per presentation, they will have paid off their debt after 20 presentations.

In a fierce market in which audiences always expect to be mesmerized by state-of-the-art entertainment spectacle technologies, *aparelhagens* can only stay on top of the

market if they constantly keep on reinventing themselves. At least once a year they renew their equipment and promote huge parties in which the *aparelhagens* are released as the “New Tupinambá” or the “New Super Pop”. With new equipment, new technological tricks and state-of-the-art entertainment visual effects, they can continue to attract large audiences and new fans. Since *aparelhagens* need considerable amounts of money to keep up in the technological race, and banks are not an option for obtaining loans, they often borrow from *festeiros*. When the *aparelhagens* finally pay off their debts, it is time to renew their infra-structure, and so they borrow money once more thus perpetuating their financial dependence on *festeiros* (Lemos and Castro, p. 108-109).

Due to the substantial investments required by big *aparelhagens*, this segment of the market is a concentrated and difficult to enter. Unlike DJs or even *aparelhagem* owners, *festeiros* are “invisible” to the public. They never appear in the documentaries or newspaper articles about *aparelhagens*, and even in Lemos and Castro’s *Tecnobrega: o Pará reinventando o negócio da música* (2008), the most thorough account of the *tecnobrega* industry to date, their role in the circuit is described but their names are never cited. Lemos and Castro, however, identified in 2006 about ten groups of *festeiros*, each of which had about ten partners. Out of these, four were considered “the strongest groups”, that is, groups that had more influence in the circuit and possessed larger capital for investments in *aparelhagens* and their parties. In order to minimize the significant risks of their own investments, *festeiros* agree on strategies to prevent financial loss. For example, they promote parties in specific places and on specific dates to avoid direct competition. Without any kind of official regulation or state control, new groups of *festeiros* often accuse the older and more powerful groups of forming cartels or practicing

dumping. A new *festeiro* explains their strategies: “The new *festeiro* saves money, saves ten thousand to promote a party, and he goes ahead with his plans. What happens then? The old *festeiro* puts a bigger *aparelhagem* close to him on the same date, sells cheaper beer, and does everything to empty out his party. The new *festeiro* loses his R\$10,000.00. He has no more money to invest and has to leave the business” (Lemos and Castro, p.107)<sup>69</sup>.

The musicians: In the *tecnobrega* circuit, the musicians are the bands, singers and composers who produce the local songs played at *aparelhagem* parties. Because there are no copyrights in this industry, musicians – especially composers – are the individuals who face the most financial instability in the circuit. In the 1970s and early 1980s, when the circulation of *brega* songs was possible only through the release of LP albums and the rhythm was still highly stigmatized, musicians had very few opportunities to have their songs recorded because local labels were almost inexistent. The few recording studios that tried to release *brega* songs had a very short lifespan, as they were unable to enter a market dominated by large multinational companies like Sony Music – then CBS Records –, EMI-Odeon, Polygram – then a subsidiary of Philips Corporation – and Som Livre – the label belonging to the powerful Globo TV. A notable exception among these multinationals was Gravasom, a small local recording label founded in Belém in the 1970s by the legendary businessman, singer, composer and politician Carlos Santos. Originally from a very poor family, Carlos Santos was a self-made man who became a successful entrepreneur, building an impressive portfolio of investments that included department stores and local radio and TV stations. One of his companies was Gravasom,

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<sup>69</sup> It is important to mention, however, that the controversial figure of the *festeiro* is normally part of the big *aparelhagens* circuit – or medium ones trying to attain such a status. Small *aparelhagens* usually negotiate their fees directly with club owners, without any intermediation of *festeiros*.

created to record not only his own *brega* songs, but also other regional rhythms like carimbó and lundu. Gravasom was the local alternative for recording rhythms that were completely out of reach for *paraense* artists. Throughout the 1980s, the company produced some local hits and consolidated the career of Carlos Santos himself as well as of artists such as Alipio Martins and Pinduca. In 1982, Carlos Santos released his fourth album, which included the hit *Quero Você (I want you)*, a bestseller that sold more than one million two hundred thousand copies<sup>70</sup> – an impressive number, especially considering that its success was still confined to the poorest populations of the Northern and Northeastern regions of Brazil. *Carlos Santos Volume 4* was important to the history of the then incipient *brega* industry because, for the first time, an album and a hit *brega* song went beyond the limits of the State of Pará. In spite of his success as an entrepreneur and singer, Carlos Santos was always associated with the lowest classes who idolized him. His music was considered low culture by the elites, and his romantic songs were especially popular among housemaids, who sometimes had to hide their Carlos Santos albums from bosses who harshly criticized their bad taste.

Finding a way into local showbiz through a traditional recording studio such as Gravasom was a privilege enjoyed by very few artists. Most musicians kept on trying to promote their songs through the informal street vendor market or through the “radio-postes” (radio-lampposts), also known as “publicidades”. These are informal radio stations located in the poor local markets that announce the special offers found in the nearby stores. They are called *radio-poste* because one can only hear them through speakers that are often illegally placed on top of street lampposts. In addition to store ads,

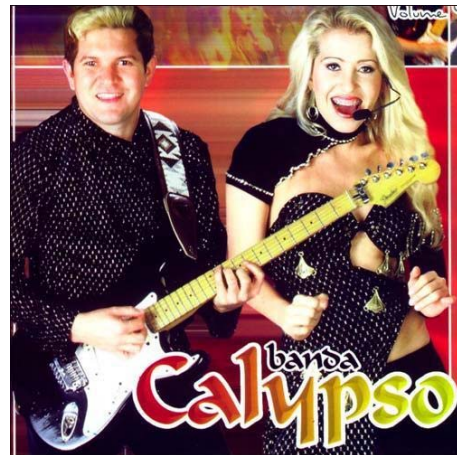
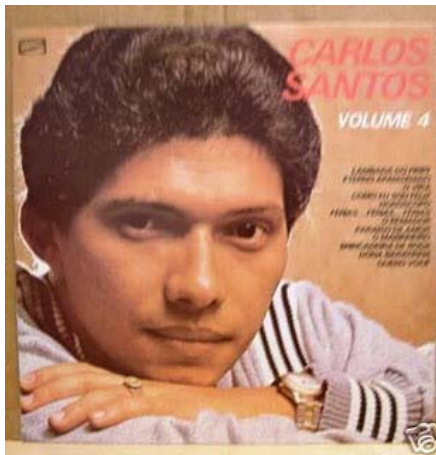
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<sup>70</sup> Source: [http://www.programacarlossantos.com.br/ver\\_pagina.asp?id=biografia](http://www.programacarlossantos.com.br/ver_pagina.asp?id=biografia), accessed on 12 April 2011.

*radio-postes* play the rhythms that are popular among the poorest classes. These poor audiences listen to the music while shopping, and musicians hope their songs will become hits through this informal media outlet. Especially up until the early 1990s, this was one of the only ways to promote *brega* music, as very few official radio stations dared to include this stigmatized rhythm in their programming. In the late 1990s, with the growth of the informal market of “pirate” CDs and the rise of *aparelhagens* as powerful trendsetters, the *radio-postes* lost importance, but they remain one of the primary vehicles of promotion for new artists.

It was mainly through the promotion of *radio-postes* that the *brega* industry witnessed the birth of a band that made history in the local and national musical scene, the *Banda Calypso*. More than twenty years after Carlos Santos, Joelma and Chimbinha, the leaders of Banda Calypso, achieved success not only in the State of Pará, but also throughout the rest of the country. Still, fans of Banda Calypso were concentrated among the poorest layers of the population all over Brazil – housemaids, construction workers, janitors, etc. With a combination of tacky and lively choreographies, gaudy costumes and ultra-romantic songs, Banda Calypso took the Brazil music scene by storm and became a national phenomenon. In the early 2000s, the band was featured several times on the national TV show *Sabadaço*, a variety show watched by the poorest classes across Brazil in *Bandeirantes* TV Network; but in 2005 they were invited by Globo TV to perform on *Domingão do Faustão*, a Sunday show whose audience encompasses all social classes in the country. In 2007, Datafolha, one of the most respected Brazilian survey companies, announced that Banda Calypso was the most popular music group in the nation. When asked to name their favorite band or singer, 14% of a representative sample of the

Brazilian population in different parts of the country responded with “Banda Calypso” (Calypso e Zezé Di Camargo são os mais ouvidos no Brasil, 2007). However, the success of Banda Calypso was not an indication that the *brega* rhythm had conquered recognition. On the contrary, the band’s success sparked great controversy on the regional and national level. In spite of the band’s pride in their Amazonian origins, during their rise to national stardom they tried to avoid association with the word *brega* due to the derogatory meaning connected with the term. When asked what kind of music they played, they promptly answered that it was “calypso”, not “brega”, claiming a distant genealogy with that traditional Afro-Caribbean music style<sup>71</sup>. Despite the band’s attempt to distance itself from the term “brega”, they were immediately associated with popular bad musical taste, confronting on a national level the same scrutiny and criticism they had undergone in Belém.



Covers of the albums *Carlos Santos – volume 4*, Gravasom, 1982 and *Banda Calypso – volume 4*, Independent Label, 2004. Photos retrieved April 12, 2011, from [musicadasantigas.com.br](http://musicadasantigas.com.br), <http://musicadasantigas.blogspot.com/2007/09/carlos-santos-volume-4.html>, and [letras.com, http://www.letas.com/b/banda\\_calypso/banda\\_calypso\\_vol\\_4/](http://www.letas.com/b/banda_calypso/banda_calypso_vol_4/).

<sup>71</sup> Although Banda Calypso was born in the *brega* music scene, it does not play *tecnobrega*. Among the many *brega* variations played in Belém, the band played “*brega calypso*”, which is much slower and without all the techno influence found in the *tecnobrega* variant.

Banda Calypso's success had little real impact on the local music industry in Belém, except as an inspiration for young artists who witnessed a local band achieve an inconceivable degree of success. In practical terms, the harsh reality of artists in the *tecnobrega* industry remained unchanged. Being part of an industry that lacks any mechanism of legal protection or copyright has a double effect on starting musicians. On the one hand, it provides marginalized artists with a parallel industry in which their songs can be produced and listened to by the masses. On the other hand, musicians are the agents of the circuit who face the greatest difficulty in generating income in this industry. When one of their songs becomes a hit, their only source of income is the concerts they can produce. However, the space of live spectacles in Belém is dominated by *aparelhagens*, which, of course, do not pay any kind of royalty to musicians when playing their successful songs. *Brega* bands and singers are thus forced to go to smaller cities in the countryside, hoping to attract audiences that have not yet been conquered by the technological power play of big *aparelhagens*. Due to this instability, most musicians hold other jobs in addition to their artistic activities. They are public employees, dance instructors, delivery boys, dancers, street vendors, etc. (Lemos and Castro, 2008, p.94-95). Working different jobs and facing instability and high risks are common to any artistic career, but in the *tecnobrega* industry, even when a song becomes a hit, the absence of any kind of royalty or copyright and the competition from big *aparelhagens* dramatically restrict potential earnings. In spite of all the difficulties, aspiring musicians and bands desperately fight for a chance to have their songs played by *radio-postes* and big *aparelhagens* – or influential ones like Vetron. Young artists from poor backgrounds

migrate from the countryside and even from other states with dreams of “making it” in the *tecnobrega* industry in Belém.

Street Vendors and Reproducers: In a circuit lacking official mechanisms of distribution, the street vendors of Belém – the so-called *camelôs* – are the ones who provide *brega* fans with pirated CDs and DVDs. Street vendors are everywhere, either in fixed tents in commercial areas or walking around in the city carrying their pirated products in small carts or bags. Artists and bands record the songs in improvised home studios spread across the city and manufacture a small number of “original” CDs. They then take these CDs to street vendors hoping that, along with other forms of promotion, their songs will become hits. If the song becomes a hit, the complex network of street vendors handles its distribution not only in Belém, but throughout the Northern Region. They commercialize the famous *coletâneas* – CDs that bring together the best and most successful songs of the moment. When there is demand for a certain CD that needs to be massively reproduced, another agent, the “reproducer”, provides the technical means to do so. The non-authorized reproducer has illegal “factories” hidden in the city, where CDs and DVDs are reproduced on a massive scale to meet the demands of the market (Lemos and Castro, 2008, p. 137-140). The street vendors and reproducers are a fundamental piece of the *tecnobrega* industry, because without them there would be no distribution of the CDs and DVDs that promote the songs, the bands and the *aparelhagens*. However, street vendors and reproducers do not duplicate only *brega* songs and concerts of local *aparelhagens* and bands. They pirate movies, albums and all kinds of CDs and DVDs, causing massive losses to mainstream culture industries. Due to the illegal nature of their activity, but also to their importance for the local *tecnobrega*

industry, street vendors, reproducers and their pirate market in Belém constitute a highly complex case of a business model that raises legal, ethical and social issues. Street vendors and reproducers are in a grey area in which they play a truly important role as agents of the *tecnobrega* circuit, but also branch out their piracy to other products. In 2009, the Federal Police coordinated the large-scale *Operação Torre*, an operation in which a great number of pirated products were seized. In the heart of Belém, in a tall commercial building known as *Edifício Nazaré*, the police found dozens of pieces of equipment for media mass reproduction and thousands of pirated CDs and DVDs not only from the *brega* industry, but also from all sorts of other sources – Hollywood blockbusters, Brazilian movies, national and international albums, etc. Along with these pirated CDs and DVDs, the police also found smuggled goods including tennis shoes, watches and other kinds of contraband (Polícia Federal combate pirataria e contrabando no comércio de Belém, 2009).

*Equipes and Fan Clubs*: These are the most recent agents in the *tecnobrega* circuit. An “*equipe*” – *team* in Portuguese – is an association of friends who usually go to *aparelhagem* parties every weekend. These associations are informal groups that can vary in size and fame. Some are small with only a few members. Others are large and gather hundreds of people. *Equipes* and fan clubs have become increasingly influential in the circuit due to their power to mobilize up to hundreds of fans who decide what party to attend, what new artist to promote or what DJ deserves the most recognition. Some of these associations are highly organized and have their own symbols, logos, “beer buckets”, traditions and even their own songs. These elements reinforce their bonding and help to create “urban tribes” that share similar tastes, worldviews and interests

(Maffesoli, 1996). *Equipes* now are more than mere *fan clubs* or associations for friends to enjoy *aparelhagem* parties together. *Equipes* also serve to give visibility to their members and increase their importance in the *aparelhagem* business. During the parties, the DJs publicly thank the *equipes* – also known as *galeras* – for their presence, often naming some of their most prominent members. A DJ from a major *aparelhagem* is considered a superstar in Belém do Pará – at least among *tecnobrega* fans – but in return he must be charismatic and acknowledge his fans, especially through his friendly relationship with *equipes* and *galeras*. Through this close relationship between DJs and *equipe* members, the latter gain prestige and visibility in the circuit, empowering them as active agents of the spectacle. Ana Krauskopf accurately describes the phenomenon as “exchange of loyalties”

Throughout the show, DJs will mention individual fans by name, occasionally displaying their names on the enormous LED screens that are part of their *aparelhagens*. The DJs’ power does not only reside in the spectacle they create, but also in their ability to call out to the fans from that higher plane. The most popular DJs are those who are kind to their fans, the ones that call out their names more often to the audience. It is those ‘loyal’ DJs that deserve their fans’ attention. (Krauskopf, 2010, p.46)

To *equipe* superfans, this exchange of loyalties is central for their participation in and preference for a specific *aparelhagem* over the others. From an economic point of view, they have become important agents because they usually “order” tailor-made songs from musicians. A popular kind of *brega* – in addition to the ultarromantic songs - is the one that celebrates agents of the circuit, especially *aparelhagens* and DJs. In recent years, *equipes* and fan clubs have begun to hire local artists to produce songs that promote and celebrate their associations, their symbols and their members. In a circuit in which musicians have very scarce chances of making profits, this has become a significant source of income for them.

This brief presentation of the history of the *brega* rhythm and the key agents that play a role in its industry today shows how multifaceted the phenomenon is. It has been developed in the region for decades and has grown into a highly complex industry characterized by an informal business model that has flourished despite its cultural stigmatization. Furthermore, its polemical and complex circuit of production and reception opens up innumerable possibilities of analysis and lines of investigation. From the description above, it is clear that a deep discussion of this industry encompasses legal issues that go beyond this thesis. My objective has been to contextualize the phenomenon and provide readers with an overview of the industry, its main agents and its functioning. My analysis, however, will concentrate on the *aparelhagem* parties. I will frame this analysis within the notion of aesthetic mobility as developed in the previous chapter. To do so, it is first necessary to thoroughly describe the experience of attending an *aparelhagem* party.

### 5.3 *Aparelhagem* parties: a kinesthetic experience.



Aerial view from *Tupinambá – o Treme Terra*, called so because it literally makes the ground tremble. Photo property of literal.com.br, retrieved December 22, 2010, from <http://www.literal.com.br/artigos/ritmo-louco-negocio-serio>, all rights reserved.

Here I am in front of African Bar on a hot sticky summer night in Belém do Pará. As one approaches the venue where the event is taking place, it is possible to see and feel the magnitude of a major *aparelhagem* party. The sound can be heard from far away, crowds arrive from everywhere, cars and buses stop by, and the streets are filled with all kinds of vendors. They sell CDs, food and drinks – mainly beer and soda. As I am waiting in line to buy my ticket, I hear people screaming and see security guards escorting a person inside the club. It is DJ Dinho, the owner and main DJ for Tupinambá, one of the biggest *aparelhagens* in Belém as mentioned above. DJ Dinho, like some of his colleagues in other major *aparelhagens*, has achieved super popstar status among *tecnobrega* enthusiasts. Tonight, Tupinambá will feature several DJs, but the highlight of the evening will be reserved for the main DJ, Dinho, when the full potential of sound and visual spectacle is presented to the fans.

Once inside, one can immediately notice the enormous quantity of equipment that is part of the travelling paraphernalia of a big *aparelhagem*. There are medium-sized, large and giant TV screens everywhere. There is also cutting-edge disco decoration such as laser beams, fog machines, disco balls, led lights, laser vortex, etc. The visual stimulation is accompanied by the deafening fast-paced cyber-*tecnobrega* sounds coming from giant and highly potent speakers strategically placed around the club. This super accelerated version of a disco or a rave party presents some of the sensorial effects discussed earlier in global entertainment products.

While in audio-visual products like CGI blockbuster movies the kinesthetic effect is obtained through *montage* techniques, frantic camera movements, and visual and sound special effects, in *aparelhagem* parties this effect is achieved through the use of almost hallucinatory lighting, loud and accelerated music and electronic displays producing non-stop visual movements. This particular way of engaging the senses becomes more intense as one gets closer to the DJ's "control room". In most traditional disco clubs, the DJs remain in a control room where the audiences can discreetly see them controlling the sound equipment. In an *aparelhagem* party, the DJ's control room is the focal point of the party, as if it were a large concert stage. The control room resembles a futuristic station from which the DJs control not only the music but also some of the pyrotechnic effects of the spectacle. The biggest screens and the most sophisticated lighting and visual effects are concentrated near these control stations.

Like world-class theme park attractions *aparelhagens* also encapsulate the senses and plunge audiences into particular universes by using state-of-the-art technology. The major *aparelhagens* also develop narratives full of symbols that facilitate the audience's

identification with each “brand name”. For example, Tupinambá’s DJ Dinho is nicknamed the “Tupinambá Warrior” and wears an Indian headdress in his presentations. The Tupinambás were one of the largest tribes encountered by the Portuguese when they began to colonize Brazil in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. DJ Dinho impersonates a Tupinambá Chief, a warrior who commands the “tribe”, that is, the fans of his *aparelhagem*. One of the hits played in the Tupinambá parties is the song *Faz o T*, composed by the popular band Tecnoshow. The lyrics present the Indian narrative created for this particular

*aparelhagem*:

**Faz O T**  
**Banda Tecno Show**

Alô tribo!  
Faz o T, faz o T, faz o T,  
Faz o T que eu quero ver (BIS).

Eu já tô sentindo, tá chegando a hora,  
Um novo combate tá pra começar  
Um índio pequeno prepara sua flecha  
Num grande guerreiro vai se transformar.

A tribo em festa invade a floresta  
De cara pintada, com flecha e cocar  
Todos a postos aguardam seu líder,  
Do altar sonoro vai nos comandar  
Cacique dá grito de guerra a ecoar.

Alô tribo!!!!!!

Refrão:  
Faz o T, faz o T, T  
Esse cacique é fantástico, a galera consagrou.  
Faz o T, faz o T, T  
Essa tribo tá chegando, do Pará, Tupinambá  
(Tecno Show)  
Faz o T, faz o T, T  
Esse cacique é fantástico a galera consagrou  
Faz o T, faz o T, T  
Vem lá do Pará, Tupinambá, Tecno Show.  
Show, show, show, faz o T, T, T...

Agora o guerreiro já está no comando,  
Ele é imponente com o seu cocar.  
Sua força é tão grande que até a terra treme,  
Não tem quem enfrente o Tupinambá.

**Make a “T” (my translation)**  
**Tecno Show Band**

Hello tribe!  
Make a T, make a T, make a T,  
Make a T, I wanna see (2 x).

I can feel it already, the time is coming,  
A new battle is about to begin  
A little Indian prepares his arrows  
He will turn into a great warrior.

The celebrating tribe takes over the forest  
Painted faces, arrows and headdresses  
All on guard wait for their leader,  
From the sound altar he will command us  
The Chief’s war cry echoes.

Hello tribe!!!!!!

Chorus:  
Make a T, make a T, T  
This Chief is fantastic, the tribe consecrated him.  
Make a T, make a T, T  
This tribe is coming, from Pará, Tupinambá  
(Tecno Show)  
Make a T, make a T, T  
This Chief is fantastic, the tribe consecrated him.  
Make a T, make a T, T  
It comes from Pará, Tupinambá, TecnoShow.  
Show, show, show, make a T, T, T...

Now, the warrior is in the command  
He is a powerful figure with his headdress.  
His strength is so great that even the earth trembles,  
Nobody is a match for Tupinambá.

This particular song is representative of a type of composition that creates narratives to describe worlds to which each *aparelhagem* is related. In the specific case of Tupinambá, this world evokes the Amerindian figure that is part of the identity construction of the Amazon Region. This appropriation of the Amerindian figure has the primary commercial purpose of providing this *aparelhagem* with a “character”, that is, a set of stories, body movements and other elements that fans can easily identify with and relate to. Other *aparelhagens* also have symbols and characters that help to “sell” their products – as we will see, Super Pop’s narratives revolve around an Eagle of Fire, for example.

The Amerindian evoked by the Tupinambá song is a strong leader, capable of guiding its tribe to victory in battle. The figure of the strong and brave Amerindian, which has been part of the Brazilian collective imagination for centuries, is transferred to DJ Dinho. The DJ is catapulted to the status of a super Amerindian, as if he had emerged from a poem or novel written by Gonçalves Dias or José de Alencar – two of the most famous Romantic Brazilian writers who immortalized the figure of the heroic, courageous and powerful savage. In this analogy, Tupinambá’s fans are part of the tribe led by its leader; a tribe possessing its own rituals and war cries. Part of these rituals are the bodily movements that are translated on the dance floor by thousands of people singing the chorus of the song with their arms in the air showing the letter “T” – one of the most famous trademarks of this particular *aparelhagem*.

The fact that these narratives are full of images of power, war and battles, and that the bodily movements are performed by poor crowds, points to the construction of discourses that are not restricted to commercial aspects. These other aspects will be

explored later in this chapter. In this section, I want to concentrate the analysis on the commercial function of these narratives and the parallels with other entertainment practices. Theme park attractions and video games, for example, use technology, story-telling and movement (locomotion and mediamotion) to immerse audiences in imaginary worlds. Technology, story-telling and movement are also used to produce entertainment pleasures, to “sell a product” to the masses in *aparelhagem* parties. A person enjoying a ride-the-movie theme park attraction, playing Wii or dancing in an *aparelhagem* party is putting similar kinesthetic principles into action. Their senses are engaged by state-of-the-art technologies, they are transported to imaginary worlds through fictional narratives, and different kinds of bodily and media movements are used to increase the sensation of being in these parallel worlds<sup>72</sup>.

In both *Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey* and the Tupinambá party, audiences are engulfed in a technological apparatus whose objective is to put fans inside these imaginary worlds. The characters and narratives of these worlds are previously constructed and learned through books and movies in the case of Harry Potter, or through songs and a variety of references in the case of Tupinambá. These narratives are then experienced *live* by fans during the actual ride/spectacle. In *The Forbidden Journey*, it is the pod-like capsule that moves through robotic arms whose movements are perfectly synchronized with the virtual movements seen on the screens. In the case of the Wii and Tupinambá, it is the body that must move so that audiences have the sensation of being inside specific imaginary worlds. In all cases, locomotion and mediamotion are combined

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<sup>72</sup> In spite of their similarities, there are, of course, striking specificities that cannot be overlooked and some of the particular traits of the *aparelhagem* party that are not found in other industries will be discussed later in this chapter.

with the craft of storytelling to provide audiences with the perfect entertainment experience.



DJ Dinho, the “Tupinambá Warrior” in his Matrix-like control station; photo retrieved December 23, 2010, from <http://aparelhagemsonora.blogspot.com/>, all rights reserved.

It is important to stress the *way* one enters the cyber-Amazonian world created to characterize Tupinambá. The words used by Angela Ndalianis to describe her feelings upon first viewing *The Matrix* could also be applied to describe my own sensation during my first *aparelhagem* experience. My senses were “bombarded by imagery, movements and sounds that plunged me into a state of disorientation and overstimulation; there was motion, and there was lots of it! Bodies, cameras, sound, and visual effects – everything moved and moved fast.” (Ndalianis, 2004, p.155). Ndalianis also stated how the speed of the images and the accompanying sounds that animated these images invited her “eyes to scan the screen restlessly in its entirety, speedily searching for significant details that might appear and vanish before the eyes had captured them” (Ndalianis, p.155). In

analogous fashion, during the climactic moments of the *aparelhagem* party – when the main DJ began and finished his presentation – I also frantically looked at the dozens of screens displayed and the giant main screen in front of me, trying to identify the pop culture allusions, the cyber-techno references or some of the participants that appeared and disappeared on the screens in the blink of an eye. All of this happened while my sight, smell, hearing and touch were bombarded by bits and pieces of the “Indian warrior narrative”, laser vortexes, lighting and pyrotechnical effects.

In this regard, the *aparelhagem* party goes beyond the ordinary disco sensorial experience, trying to achieve a certain level of the “assault of the sensorial apparatus” that usually belongs to the realm of the theme park attraction. In contemporary theme park attractions, audiences come into contact with heat, water and blows of air while their seats move according to the images and situations depicted on the screens. In the case of *aparelhagens*, the control station is the place where some analogous effects occur. The control station is fundamental not only because this is where the DJ interacts with the audience, but also because it provides some of the “theme-park-attraction-like” entertainment during the spectacle. When DJ Dinho is introduced, the station rises from the stage – a hydraulic lift effect – and the control station turns into an Indian log house. However, in this over-the-top futuristic version of an Indian house, the logs are made of phosphorescent lights that emit laser vortexes and set off fireworks.

In another major *aparelhagem*, Super Pop, the control station is in the shape of an eagle. In this *aparelhagem*, the mythical narrative involves the fictional Eagle of Fire. This immensely powerful creature is the symbol of the *aparelhagem* and the main inspiration for its spectacle and songs. For my second visit to an *aparelhagem* event, I

decided to attend a Super Pop party. Although I was still impressed by the “assault of the senses” and the almost hallucinatory sensorial immersion from the Tupinambá experience, Super Pop proved to be even more overwhelming than its predecessor. Super Pop presented the same technological paraphernalia to bombard one’s senses as Tupinambá, but at an even more intense level. At Super Pop, the control station is in the shape of a cybernetic metallic eagle. While Tupinamba’s control station was lifted off the ground, Super Pop’s Eagle of Fire not only rose from the stage but also projected itself towards the crowd as if it were preparing to take off. In this narrative, the mythical eagle turned into a war machine,<sup>73</sup> and in the climax of the party its wings became canons that shot potent blasts of air with shredded paper and fire towards the audience. Meanwhile the two main DJs – brothers who also own the aparelhagem – stepped up onto the eagle’s head and incited the crowds to dance, sing and respond to the technological spectacle. One of the DJs then began to play a musical keyboard, which suddenly transformed into a shotgun that launched fire towards the overwhelmingly excited crowd. The other DJ opened his arms which turned into fiery wings as if he had the same powers as the Eagle of Fire. All the while, fans sang songs at the top of their lungs that loosely told stories about the powerful Eagle of Fire and the two brothers that could hypnotize the masses in the Amazon Region.

As for bodily movement, there are basically two types of motion that are part of the event. The first is the most evident. People who are closer to the stage listen to the DJ and perform movements related to the song which seek to amplify the crowds’ state of

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<sup>73</sup> The war machine is a reference to the popular TV series *Airwolf* that was broadcasted in Brazil in the late 1980s. The series was about an incredibly powerful helicopter that in Portuguese was called *Águia de Fogo*.

delirium and collective ecstasy<sup>74</sup>. Most importantly, part of the collective movement involves having the masses indicate the *aparelhagem*'s symbols with their own bodies. As stated before, for Tupinambá, the crowds raise their arms and make the letter "T" in the air as if it were an Indian war cry. For Super Pop, the hands imitate the shape of a gun and the two thumbs are put together to form the letter "S". The second type of body motion in *aparelhagem* parties is found farther away from the stage. Usually, couples who dance the *tecnobrega* choose areas far away from the stage, as these are less crowded spaces where they can spin around and show off their sophisticated dance moves. The dance is very different from the way *brega* was danced in the late 1970s, but dancing couples today represent the last reminiscences of what was once an *aparelhagem* party in Belém. In the past, the parties centered on dancing and drinking; the *aparelhagem* was there only to provide good music for the couples to dance. The parties were ballroom dance events with an Amazonian flavor that played naïve romantic songs. Today, *aparelhagem* parties have become a mediamotion spectacle where dancing is only one element of a bigger kinesthetic system in which the body and the senses are fully immersed.

It is important to emphasize once again that this transformation was carried out closely in tune with the kinesthetic trends found in other entertainment products and

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<sup>74</sup> Although the kinesthetic experience of *aparelhagens* does work through an over-stimulation of the senses that causes a collective ecstasy, it is not exactly a case of collective trance as seen in some Afro-Brazilian rituals, for example. In his pioneering book *O Mundo Funk Carioca*, Hermano Vianna (1988) compares the Baile Funk Carioca with religious trance rituals and establishes differences that are also valid for *aparelhagem* parties. According to Vianna, one "cannot say that the dancers experience a state of trance. There are moments when everybody seems to be 'out of this world', but there is neither pre-trance crisis nor post-trance amnesia", two basic stages of classic trance experiences (Vianna, 1988, p.30, my translation). According to Gilbert Rouget (1980) in his *La Musique et la Transe*, music is usually associated with other complex social and psychological mechanisms in very particular ways to trigger the state of trance. In spite of the striking similarities between Afro-Brazilian Candomblé, for example, and *aparelhagem* parties, the latter do not present all the conditions for entering a state of trance in the rigorous sense of the term.

practices from the global entertainment industry. While the production and reception of some of the global entertainment products analyzed before are characterized by sensorial acceleration, fragmentary use of instant images and sounds, sensorial immersion and body motions, *aparelhagem* parties have appropriated and enhanced these kinesthetic features, putting them at the core of their aesthetic experience. Apparently, poor audiences in the Amazon Region seek a kinesthetic experience analogous to the one that middle class people have when they go to see *The Matrix* in a multiplex. The lower class individuals who attend an *aparelhagem* party seek a sensorial experience similar to the one found in *Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey* in Universal Studios. It is clear that kinesthetics is not restricted to products from the powerful global entertainment industry. On the contrary, as the *aparelhagem* phenomenon clearly shows, these are traits capable of “traveling” to poorer contexts and of adapting themselves to very specific local cultural realities.

#### **5.4 Kinesthetics, technology and the economic dimension of the *aparelhagem* business.**

Entertainment products with strong kinesthetic characteristics are generally considered to attract larger audiences, thus increasing their profitability. In the highly competitive *aparelhagem* business, these correlations seem to be even more explicit than in the global entertainment products analyzed beforehand. In order to verify the accuracy of this assumption, three pieces of evidence will be analyzed: extracts from the TV show *Central da Periferia* (Casé, 2006)<sup>75</sup>, data extracted from the book *Tecnobrega – o Pará*

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<sup>75</sup> Available on youtube.com: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cC-Yqwh-tY&feature=related>, accessed on 1 January 2011.

*reinventando o negócio da música* (Lemos and Castro, 2008) and interviews I have conducted with *aparelhagem* fans in June 2009.

The program *Central da Periferia*, a weekly one-hour TV series produced by Globo TV in 2006, explored the peripheral cultural production – especially music – of big cities throughout Brazil. The main argument of the series is that there has been a growing music market movement in different parts of the country which does not depend on the established mainstream musical circuit. Not only in Belém, but also in other Brazilian cities, the circulation and consumption of these songs and rhythms do not follow the rules of distribution and the multimillion-dollar promotion campaigns of the traditional music market. New open business models have been created in which the traditional mechanisms of production, manufacture, distribution, promotion, and enforcement of copyright protection are completely subverted. These peripheral music industries are created by and for the peripheries without any kind of formal regulation and without any mediation of the former “centers” of national cultural production.

In 2006, when *Central da Periferia* was broadcasted, the most famous kind of mass peripheral cultural production in Brazil was the music industry associated with the “baile funk carioca”<sup>76</sup>, the famous funk parties in Rio. The fact that these “funk parties” took place in Rio, where Globo’s headquarters is located, gave them great visibility across the country. On the other hand, the *brega* industry, which had dominated local musical production in Belém for decades, was virtually unknown to the rest of Brazil.

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<sup>76</sup> The “baile funk” in Rio was one of the first “subaltern music industries” to gain national attention in Brazil during the 1980s. Created by the young poor population of the “favelas” of Rio, the baile funk has many common features with the “*aparelhagem* party” in Belém: both were born under the stigma of social segregation, were consumed and produced by the lowest social classes, and flourished in spite of heavy criticism from dominant social groups. For a detailed analysis of the “baile funk carioca” see *O Mundo Funk Carioca* (Vianna, 1988).

The magnitude, effervescence and dynamism of this Amazonian industry, already multi-millionaire and well established in the mid 2000s but unheard of in São Paulo and Rio, offered a perfect “case” for the TV show *Central da Periferia*. The program was highly anticipated in Belém; after all, a one-hour TV show on the mighty Globo network, aired on prime time and completely dedicated to the city, was a rare event. It was *tecnobrega*’s “big break”, the very first time it would be shown to the whole country on the most powerful national TV network. *Tecnobrega*’s enthusiasts welcomed the news with pride and euphoria, while local detractors expressed shame and embarrassment to see their city nationally associated with what they considered such a lowbrow form of cultural production.

On 3 June 2006 the program was finally broadcasted, and Belém residents eagerly turned on their TV sets that Saturday afternoon to see how their city would be portrayed on the show. In a celebratory fashion, Regina Casé, the famous Brazilian actress who produced and presented the program, associated the *tecnobrega* industry with innovation and success, more specifically with *technological innovation* and *commercial success*. In order to analyze the TV show – and the correlations between kinesthesics, technology and commercial success –, I will concentrate on both its visual and textual contents. Both aspects will be examined: *what* is said (the interviews with the DJs, their presentation of *aparelhagens*, the program’s verbal content) and *how* it is said (the visual presentation, the editing of the program and the images chosen for display).

As for the visual presentation, the opening scene shows Regina Casé wearing an overly glittered dress, appearing on a big stage in front of thousands of *tecnobrega* fans who crowded Belém’s main tourist attraction, the Ver-o-Peso Market, to participate in the

filming of the program. After greeting the audience, the actress turns to the camera and explains that in Belém do Pará, parties in suburban poor areas are synonymous with *aparelhagem* parties. To explain what *aparelhagens* are, the program shows images of the party as the presenter's voice-over gives viewers further information about the phenomenon. The selected images present a spectacle of flashing lights, fog, small and giant screens everywhere, innumerable potent *moving heads*<sup>77</sup>, special kinds of shredded paper that fall from the ceiling and people frantically dancing, singing and drinking on the dance floor. As the presenter verbally describes the *aparelhagem* parties, the TV program itself *visually* tries to reproduce the vertiginous sensation of attending one of these parties by showing the images at a very fast-paced rhythm. The scenes are quickly cut and the images hastily alternate examples of lighting effects, frantic dancing and people working on the *aparelhagens* – both those who participate in the arduous task of assembling the technological paraphernalia and the DJs responsible for the the musical *repertoire* and technical quality of the sound. To maximize the whirling effect, the TV program also uses zooms – both in and out – to show scenes from *aparelhagem* parties. On both levels – the *aparelhagem* parties shown on the program and the program itself –, we have a typical example of the visual acceleration that characterizes kinesthetics in contemporary entertainment industry artifacts. The sensorial bombardment of imagery, movements, lights and sounds is explored in depth by the TV program in its presentation

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<sup>77</sup> *Moving heads* are luminaries traditionally used by DJs to provide lighting effects in discos. See image below.



of the *aparelhagem* parties, a clear indication of how fundamental kinesthetic effects are to their characterization. As the kinesthetic aspects of the party are visually established, the narration presents the other striking dimension of the event: its fascination with new forms of technology.

Once Regina Casé has explained the general nature of the phenomenon, it is time for the DJs to speak for themselves and present their own *aparelhagens*. It is worth transcribing and analyzing each one of these parts separately to obtain a better understanding of the intricacies correlating *kinesthetics*, technology and commercial success in the *aparelhagem* industry.

In the show's first scene, when the presenter enters the stage, she greets the crowds by saying: "Good evening Belém; good evening Pará, good evening Amazon, good evening Brazil". The population enthusiastically responds to each greeting. The presenter then cries "Hurray for the laser; hurray for the laptop; hurray for the mp3". After each cry, the crowds respond with a "hurray!", and when the presenter shouts "hurray for the technological periphery; hurray for the slums of Belém do Pará", the population reacts with an explosion of claps and screams. By greeting the crowds with these words, the presenter skillfully exploits two characteristics of the poor urban communities in Belém do Pará. Firstly, she touches upon the resentment of exclusion felt by these populations: exclusion for being poor and for living in a peripheral city. It was their moment to say "hello" to the entire country, to cease to be invisible, to be for the first time the main actor on the TV screen. Secondly, the presenter exploits the strong "techno-attraction" these masses feel for new technologies. The exaltation of the laser, the laptop and the mp3 and the response of the crowds indicate how these excluded

populations are fascinated by certain forms of technology. This fascination is acknowledged when the presenter states that in Belém, “the masses, besides being Catholic, *Umbandistas* [Afro-Brazilian religion], Buddhist, Protestant or Jew, have another religion. Their religion is technology, state-of-the-art technology” (Casé, 2005).

It is important to emphasize that these new technologies are used primarily for the achievement of kinesthetic effects during the *aparelhagem* party. As described before, all the technological paraphernalia is used to surround the participants and overwhelm the senses in a sensorial frenzy. The program shows images that not only attempt to reproduce the kinesthetic immersion of the *aparelhagem* experience but that also insist on the technological apparatus necessary to produce these effects: ultra-modern sound equipment, heavy and expensive machinery and sophisticated special effect devices.

After greeting the audience, Regina Casé explains:

Here, party in the slums equals “*aparelhagem* party”. *Aparelhagem* is the name in Pará for the sound equipment and its team. These parties take place in the poorest neighborhoods in the city and have the sound provided by a technological altar. They have been a mass phenomenon produced by the periphery and for the periphery for over fifty years. In Belém there are about three hundred *aparelhagens* that play mainly *brega*, *tecnobrega* and *cyber-tecnobrega* [...]. Although they originated in the slums of the city, they invest nearly one million reais (Brazilian currency) to purchase the most potent and modern sound, lighting and image equipment [...] (*Central da Periferia*, my translation<sup>78</sup>).

The technological fascination is clear in Casé’s words: the *aparelhagem* is considered a “technological altar”. The technological facet emerges again when the presenter mentions the types of songs that the *aparelhagens* specialize in: *brega*,

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<sup>78</sup> Original text: “Aqui, festa na periferia é sinônimo de festa de aparelhagem. Aparelhagem é o nome paraense para a equipe de som. Essas festas, realizadas nos bairros mais pobres da cidade e sonorizadas por um altar tecnológico, são, há mais de cinquenta anos, um fenômeno de massa, produzido pela periferia e para a periferia. Em Belém existem aproximadamente trezentas aparelhagens que tocam principalmente brega, techno-brega e cyber-techno-brega [...]. Apesar de terem surgido nos bairros de periferia, elas chegam a investir quase um milhão de reais para comprar o que tem de mais potente e mais moderno em termos de equipamento de som, luz e imagem [...]” (*Central da Periferia*, my translation.)

*tecnobrega* and *cyber-tecnobrega*. Along with the techno-fascination, the industry's power is emphasized by the impressive numbers associated with the industry: there are about three hundred *aparelhagens* in Belém, and although they come from poor areas, their investment in technology can reach the impressive figure of “one million reais”. Therefore, in Regina Case's presentation, there is a clear connection between technology, kinesthetics and industrial competition.

A close analysis of what comes next confirms these interconnections. The DJs' presentations of their respective *aparelhagens* also bring up these three elements:

The *aparelhagem* technology starts with the songs. All songs are stored in the MP3 format, we play with two notebooks. We don't even use the CD anymore, the DJ stand is digital, *Tupinambá* is 100% digital; today I will inaugurate my Indian Chief headdress that will activate lights. Undoubtedly, it is the biggest *aparelhagem* structure in the north of the country. [...] (DJ Dinho from *Tupinambá – Treme Terra*).

*Ciclone* has one of the most advanced *aparelhagem* technologies in Belém do Pará. We work with laptops, lighting equipment with moving heads, five laser beams, giant screen systems on both sides of the party; besides these giant indoor screens, we have two more of them that are located outside, we have state-of-the-art peripherals. The whole structure is worth R\$600.000,00 [...] (DJ Edilson from *Ciclone*)

Most people who like it come from lower classes, it is the periphery that likes the *aparelhagem*, the periphery supported the *aparelhagem* and showed the middle and upper classes what the *aparelhagens* are. People from here have the pleasure of seeing laser beams, lights and harmless indoor fireworks in an *aparelhagem* party. It is a first-class show. HURRAY FOR THE TECHNOLOGICAL

PERIPHERY! (DJ Juninho from *Pop Som*) (*Central da Periferia*, my translation<sup>79</sup>)

In the DJs' presentations, the technological fascination is even more flagrant. Almost all their descriptions revolve around their high-tech lighting, sound and image equipment. The first speaker, DJ Dinho, emphasizes the new technology used for storing the songs. CDs are outdated technology, no longer used by his *aparelhagem*. The other cultural elements he cites, such as the Indian Chief Headdress, boils down to a techno-fascination: the headdress is also digital and it will activate lights. The second speaker, DJ Edilson, also describes his *aparelhagem* almost exclusively in terms of its technological power. His statements sound like an advertisement to brag about his highly advanced equipment. Laptops, moving heads, laser beams and giant screens are part of the spectacular apparatus mentioned by the DJ. The last speaker, DJ Juninho, also emphasizes the technologies used to achieve the *kinesthetics* experience provided by *aparelhagens*, giving it a strong social component.

Their insistent bragging about their technological potency can be explained to a great extent by the strong competition among *aparelhagens* in Belém do Pará. In the battle for the public preference, major *aparelhagens* are in a constant technological race to provide their audiences with the “ultimate kinesthetic experience”. Their economic success is partly related to their ability to immerse their audiences in a frenetic setting of

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<sup>79</sup> Original text: “A tecnologia das aparelhagens começa pelas músicas. Todas são compactadas em MP3, a gente toca com dois *notebooks*. Já nem se usa mais o CD, a mesa é digital, o *Tupinambá* é 100% digital, inclusive hoje estou inaugurando meu cocar que vai acender luzes e tudo mais. Sem dúvida nenhuma, é a maior estrutura de aparelhagem do norte do país. [...] // *O Ciclone* tem uma das maiores tecnologias das aparelhagens hoje em Belém do Pará, trabalhamos com laptops, equipamentos de iluminação com *moving heads*, cinco lasers, sistema de telão de um lado e de outro, fora esses telões que temos mais dois que ficam na parte externa, periféricos de última geração, toda a estrutura chega a estar avaliada em torno de R\$600.000,00 [...]. // A maioria do público que gosta é da classe C, é a periferia que gosta da aparelhagem, a periferia que levantou a aparelhagem e que mostrou para a classe média e para a classe alta o que são as aparelhagens. O público paraense tem esse prazer de ver nas aparelhagens laser, luz, fogos *indoor*, fogos que não queimam a galera com alta segurança. É um show altamente de primeira classe. VIVA A PERIFERIA TECNÓLOGICA”

lights, images and sounds. The more new technologies they use to mesmerize audiences in their spectacle, the more successful and profitable they become.

According to Lemos and Castro (2008), there are four main aspects that define the *tecnobrega* commercial circuit: innovation as a core value, “cult of technology”, advertisement systems based on informal agents, and the absence of copyright royalties (Lemos and Castro, p.54). As for the “cult of technology” in *aparelhagem* parties, the authors explain:

The “cult of technology” is the most evident and concrete aspect of innovation. The sacralization of *aparelhagens* and their DJs is reinforced by themselves in their presentations and in the rituals prepared for the great technological spectacle that takes place in the parties. Technology is a key element in the competition among *aparelhagens* and clearly propels the *tecnobrega* market. (Lemos and Castro, 2008, p.54, my translation<sup>80</sup>)

The techno-fascination mentioned by Lemos and Castro can be observed in the narratives created by each *aparelhagem*. In addition to the high-tech version of an Indian chief from Tupinambá and the techno-mythical Eagle of Fire from Super Pop mentioned above, the other two major *aparelhagens* also insist on technological meta-references. Rubi’s control station is self-entitled “The Sound Spaceship”, and Ciclone’s is called “Double Cyber Command”. In one of the Super Pop parties I attended, a deep voice introduced the main DJs, announcing the beginning of the most expected part of the spectacle. As in most big concerts, this part of the show was meant to electrify the crowds, offering fans a triumphant entrance of the main artists. In this particular example, the deep voice bragged about Super Pop, showing flashes of some of the technological

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<sup>80</sup> Original text: “O culto à tecnologia é a forma mais evidente e material de inovação. A sacralização da imagem das aparelhagens e dos DJs é reforçada por eles mesmos, nas apresentações e nos rituais preparados para o grande show tecnológico que acontece nas festas. A tecnologia é chave na competitividade entre aparelhagens e, nitidamente, impulsiona o mercado do tecnobrega.” (Lemos and Castro, 2008, p.54)

tricks that were about to be performed and warning the audience that the world of *aparelhagens* would never be the same because a new age was about to begin, the digital age – at this moment the word *digital* appeared on the giant screens and disappeared in the blink of an eye.

The world of *aparelhagens* will never be the same after today. A new age is about to begin: THE DIGITAL AGE. And the *Eagle of Fire, Super Pop*, is the frontrunner again. This is the most perfect union between the human being and applied technology. The world will know now the power of the new Eagle of Fire. In order to command the new sound of the Eagle of Fire, here they come, the brothers, Elison and Juninho, NOW!<sup>81</sup> (Introduction to the “New Super Pop 2009”, my translation, available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4z0w1BqqM>, accessed on 6 April 2011).

The technological and futuristic fascination is combined with the idea of power. The more technological and futuristic, the more powerful an *aparelhagem* is. Each *aparelhagem* claims to be the best because it possesses the most advanced technology, hoping then to attract the biggest crowds.

For the specific study of the engagement of the senses in an *aparelhagem* party, it is clear from the extracts above that this “cult of technology” is almost synonymous with a kinesthetic experience that is both desired and expected by *tecnobrega* audiences. Technological innovation is implemented so that audiences can be immersed in a fast-paced, frenzied bombardment of the senses, because this is the characteristic that attracts audiences. In their analysis of the technological aspects of an *aparelhagem* party, Lemos and Castro indirectly – but clearly – address the correlations among technology, kinesthetics and commercial success. According to the authors, in the *tecnobrega*

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<sup>81</sup> Original text: “O mundo das aparelhagens sonoras não será mais o mesmo a partir de hoje. Uma nova era está começando: A ERA DIGITAL. E o novo Águia de Fogo, Super Pop sai na frente mais uma vez. Essa é a mais perfeita união entre o homem e a tecnologia aplicada à máquina. O mundo conhece agora o poder do novo Águia de Fogo. E pra comandar o novo som do Águia de Fogo, eles, os irmãos Elison e Juninho, AAAGORA!” (available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4z0w1BqqM>, accessed on 6 April 2011).

industry in 2006, the four major *aparelhagens* possessed the best and most modern electronic equipment for the production of a party. They had a sophisticated control table, video cameras for recording the party and playing the images on big LCD TV sets, notebooks, and above all, the most advanced visual effects. The authors state that one of the main factors in defining a major *aparelhagem* is its investment in technological resources (Lemos and Castro, p.64). Although other elements contribute to the success of an *aparelhagem*, its capacity to use technology to mesmerize audiences is considered a decisive factor.

[...] the most important thing to guarantee success in this market is still the investment in new technologies. Giant screens, plasma TVs, cameras that shoot and broadcast the party in real time, sky roses<sup>82</sup> and notebooks are some of the technological resources purchased and extensively shown off to the audience, aiming at increasing the *aparelhagem*'s popularity (Lemos and Castro, 2008, p.68, my translation<sup>83</sup>)

The technological apparatus was also identified as a key element for the popularity of *aparelhagens* by the *tecnobrega* fans I interviewed in Belém. Over the summer of 2009, I conducted interviews with fourteen *equipe* members who gave me an inside perspective of how *aparelhagens* work. They belonged to two different *equipes*. The first one was *Equipe Xarope*, a small association of friends, mostly men, who

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<sup>82</sup> Sky roses are the potent outdoor skylights that project light beams that can be seen from great distances – also called *searchlights*, but locally known as “skywalkers”. Lemos and Castro jokingly state that if one does not know where an *aparelhagem* party is taking place in Belém, he only needs to look at the skies and look for skylights. The authors remark that because these lights can be seen from distant points in the city one of their local informants compared Belém to Gotham City, and the *aparelhagem*'s sky roses to the “batsign”. As one comes closer to the “*aparelhagem* batsign”, it is enough to trust his ears and follow the loud music to find the right street (Lemos and Castro, 2008, p.60). In spite of the humorous tone – nobody in Belém really follows the skylights and noise to find an *aparelhagem* party –, it is interesting to notice in the anecdote the presence of the elements I am analyzing. The high-tech sky roses and the loud noise are the symbols that announce a particular sensorial experience that, like a magnet, attracts thousands of young people from different parts of the city.

<sup>83</sup> Original text: “[...] o mais importante para garantir o sucesso neste mercado ainda é o investimento em novas tecnologias. Telões, televisores de plasma, câmeras que filmam e transmitem a festa instantaneamente, *skywalkers*, notebooks, são alguns dos recursos tecnológicos adquiridos e exaustivamente exibidos ao público, visando o aumento da popularidade.” (Lemos and Castro, 2008, p.68)

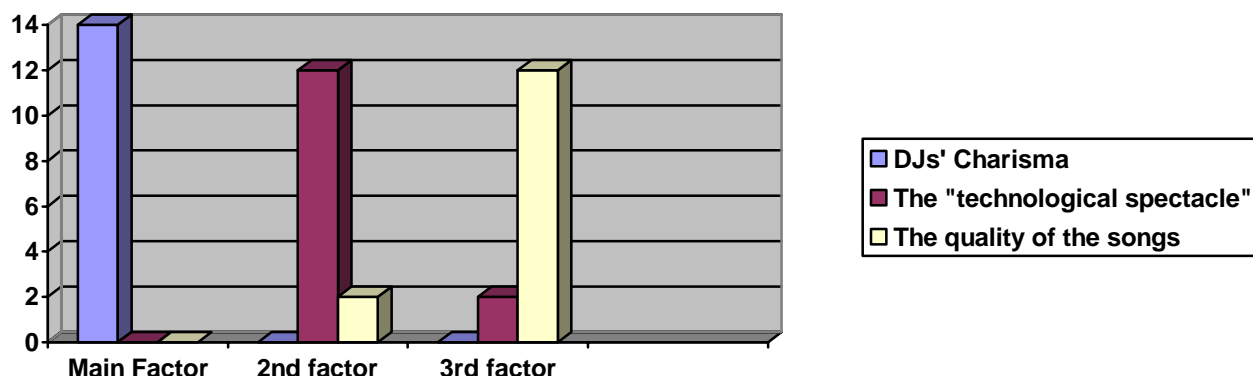
received me at their homes on the poor outskirts of Belém, where most of them lived. At the time of the interview, they had about a dozen members, six of whom spoke with me about *aparelhagens*, *equipes* and socio-cultural segregation. They showed me the T-shirts specially made to identify them at the parties, the custom-made *tecnobrega* song about their *equipe*, their customized beer bucket and the banners with their logo – used for self-identification at the parties. The second *equipe* – or fan club as they preferred to be called – was “Meninas do Príncipe”, a well known group of girls who follow Príncipe Negro, one of the most famous *aparelhagens* in Belém. Upon their president’s request, eight “Meninas do Príncipe” showed up for the interviews, which took place in a more convenient venue downtown.

Equipe members and DJs usually develop close relationships, so it is not surprising that they *all* pointed out the DJs’ charisma as the number one factor in the success of an *aparelhagem*. When asked “what else contributes to the success of an *aparelhagem*?”, twelve out of fourteen mentioned the “technological spectacle”<sup>84</sup>.

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<sup>84</sup> See the complete transcripts of the most significant interviews in appendix 1.

**What is the key element in the commercial success of an *aparelhagem*?  
(according to *equipe* fans)**



Due to the special relationship that DJs and *equipe* members usually establish, the technological spectacle – and the kinesthetic experience it implies – appears as the second most important factor for the commercial success of *aparelhagens* according to the interviewees. Had the participants been from the general audience, the results might have been different. However, in almost all interviews the “technological spectacle” was cited as a fundamental characteristic in pleasing the *aparelhagem* audiences. João<sup>85</sup>, 25, college student, mentioned that the technological spectacle – giant screens, potent speakers, lighting, fireworks, etc. – has a bigger impact when used in a surprising way that has “never been seen before”.

Paulo, 27, self-employed, confirms that the technological apparatus has to be used in innovative and surprising ways. He mentioned two technological innovations that, according to some of his sources, would be surprisingly implemented by Super Pop in 2010. The first is a moving camera built inside an eagle that would travel in the air attached to special hardware structures, a technology similar to the one used by Rede Globo in its aerial coverage of Carnival in Rio de Janeiro. In the frantic bombardment of

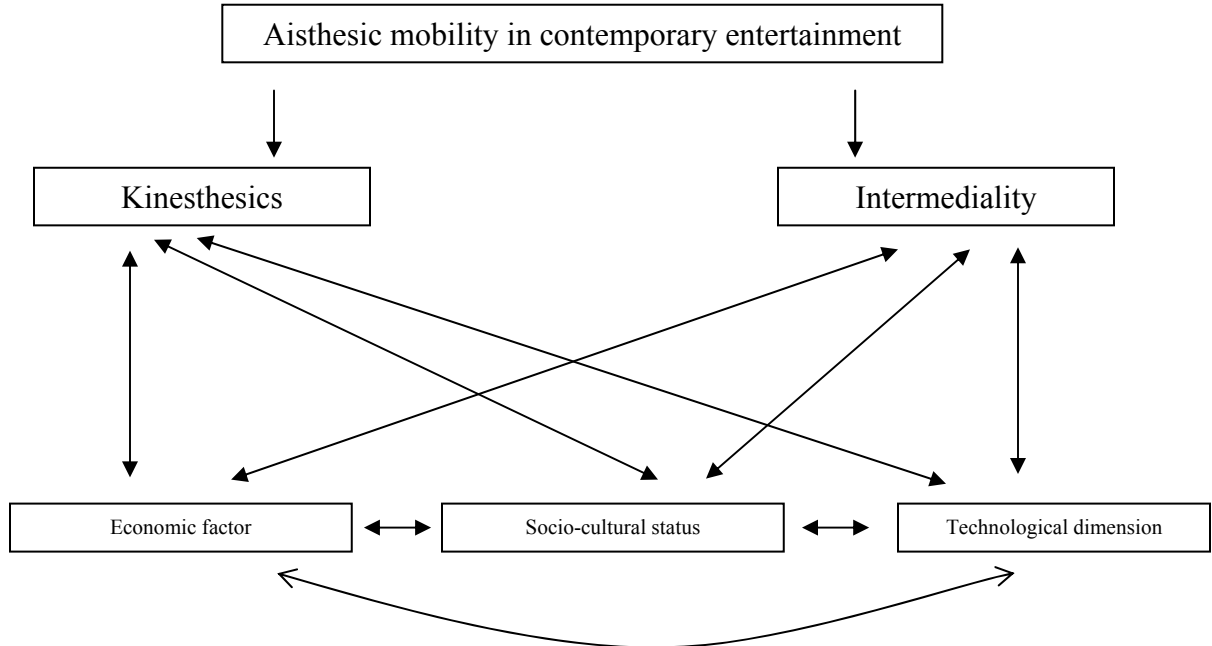
<sup>85</sup> For privacy reasons, all names have been altered.

images during the party, this technology would give audiences a “never before seen” moving aerial view. The second innovation would be the use of new technologies for the display of written messages on the giant LED screens. At the time of the interview, Paulo stated that these messages were sent to the DJs in an old-fashioned way. They were either written on small pieces of paper that were handed to the DJs or transmitted through cell phone text messages. Super Pop was allegedly trying to establish a partnership with a telephone company for the creation of a new technology in which messages sent to a special number would be automatically displayed on the giant screens without the DJs’ intermediation. This means that audiences would be able to send to the big screens not only the traditional thank-you or love notes but also photos and moving images – everything, of course, occurring at the super accelerated speed that characterizes *aparelhagem* parties. Paulo stated that this kind of innovation was exactly “what crowds loved” and that there usually was usually a correlation between the implementation of these technological novelties and the *aparelhagem*’s popularity. According to him, if at a certain party there were “only” one thousand people and at another there were five thousand people, fans would go to the larger party because the greater attendance probably meant it had the best DJ and the most surprising and enticing technological and visual spectacle.

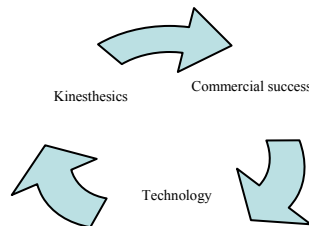
The texts analyzed above undoubtedly confirm that the interconnections among kinesthetics, technology and commercial success found in global entertainment products also play a pivotal role in *aparelhagem* parties. They all engage the senses in their storytelling through a bombardment of sensorial stimulus characterized by the use of new technologies in innovative ways. Accelerated body and/or media movements are pursued

so as to attract the largest possible audiences in a feedback loop dynamics of reinforcement.

Therefore, from the general systemic model as proposed earlier,



we can isolate a subsystem in which three elements present close correlations:



It is also interesting to notice that the similarities between *aparelhagem* parties – a local Amazonian urban cultural phenomenon – and global entertainment products is not restricted to the use of new technologies for the achievement of kinesthetic effects. There is also an aesthetic and commercial logic that permeates all these industries. While video game companies develop innovative mobile ways of immersing the player’s body in the game universe, *aparelhagem* fans also enter imagined Amazonian “techno-worlds” through symbolic body movements. While the movie industry and world-class theme

park attractions develop new technologies to fully encapsulate the spectator's senses in fast-paced sensorial experiences, *aparelhagem* parties do the same in overwhelming proportions. The same competition found in global entertainment products – Wii vs. Kinect vs. Move, for example – or the ever-growing search for the ultimate kinesthetic experience in theme park attractions – from *Star Tours* (1987) to *Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey* (2010), for instance – can also be found in the fierce commercial battle among *aparelhagens* in Belém do Pará. In many regards, then, it can be said that a local, stigmatized and marginalized cultural phenomenon such as the *aparelhagem* party in the Amazon Region works in the same way as other sectors of the powerful global entertainment industry. This conclusion brings up another dimension in the investigation of *aparelhagem* parties that is both inevitable and imperative for understanding the phenomenon; its socio-cultural status.

### **5.5 Kinesthetics, technology and the socio-cultural status of the *tecnobrega* industry.**

In order to investigate the socio-cultural status of *aparelhagem* parties, I will examine again the above-mentioned TV program *Central da Periferia* (Casé, 2006). As discussed above, *brega* music was born and baptized in the context of stigmatized communities that were at the very margins of the Brazilian socio-economic spectrum. Even after having flourished and dominated the cultural scene in Belém from an economic point of view, the industry still had to combat strong local stigmatization and national invisibility. The time had finally come to reverse that situation and *Central da Periferia* represented a turning point in this long process of cultural affirmation. For the poorer communities of Belém and their *tecnobrega* industry, it was the chance to receive

validation and legitimacy from the most powerful Brazilian TV network. The dress with the Paraense flag worn by the presenter, her greeting in the first scene that carefully embraced Belém as part of a bigger Brazil and the enthusiastic response of the crowds were the visible signs of a long local desire for cultural inclusion and recognition.

It is interesting to analyze the *strategies* used to achieve such recognition. After presenting the *aparelhagem* parties, Regina Casé shouts sentences like “Hurray for the laser; hurray for the laptop; hurray for the mp3, hurray for the technological periphery; hurray for the slums of Belém do Pará!”. By doing so, the program proudly associates peripheries with technology by praising and celebrating what Regina Casé calls “technological periphery”. Flaunting the use of advanced technology was intended to confer a certain respectability to the *tecnobrega* industry and to the peripheries that produce it. Regina Casé remarks: “Belém might be the Brazilian city where there are the most *favelados*<sup>86</sup>, but I can also say that Belém is the city that has the most laser gadgets in the whole world” (Casé, 2006). This statement suggests that Belém might have the most slums, but that their population cannot be underestimated because they are in tune with state-of-the-art technology.

In a context of extreme socio-cultural exclusion, the pride of the kinesthetic spectacle and its technologies takes on the surprising role of giving legitimacy to the *tecnobrega* industry. In a 2007 interview to *O Liberal*, the most important newspaper in Belém, DJ Dinho invited his fans to a special event in which Tupinambá would present the most modern and updated equipment available: “We are going to use the same giant screen that Ivete Sangalo’s production put up in Maracanã; it is the same one that U2

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<sup>86</sup> People who live in the *favelas* – the slums that are usually located on the outskirts of the city.

used too<sup>87</sup>”. The pride manifested in such comparisons, insistently presented by the DJ, goes beyond commercial advertisement. When DJ Dinho compares Tupinambá’s spectacle to those put on by Ivete Sangalo and U2, he also seeks to obtain some of the prestige attributed to those artists. This legitimizing strategy shows how the application of new technologies to “subaltern” entertainment practices can assume a socio-cultural dimension not found in the global entertainment products analyzed before. When blockbusters, video games or advanced theme park attractions mesmerize their audiences with kinesthetic experiences, their objectives are mainly commercial. In the case of *aparelhagens*, the use of state-of-the-art technologies to achieve kinesthetic effects goes beyond its commercial purposes. It is also used to create a discourse of cultural legitimization.

The interviews I carried out with the above-mentioned *equipes* also revealed the correlations between kinesthetics and cultural pride. João, one of the most articulate interviewees, drew sharp comparisons between *aparelhagem* parties and “bourgeois” parties – to use his own words. He complained eloquently about the misconceptions the “bourgeois” had about *aparelhagem* people. According to him

They [the bourgeois] can pay for something expensive, for a classy club, they can go and drink their whisky. We, the ones who attend *aparelhagem* parties, do not have all this money. [...] we work, we study, and we know how hard *aparelhagem* people work, so we do go to the parties, because this is *ours*, so we *have to defend it*. [...] those classy clubs are for people who enjoy their electronic music, songs from the past, this kind of stuff. There is nothing there, there is *nothing to see*. It is the high bourgeoisie meeting to talk about their weekend, businessmen talking about their business. I think this is not entertainment. We are different. We, *aparelhagem* people, go to the party to really have fun, to have some distraction. [...] We can go to Super Pop, Príncipe Negro, Rubi, whatever. If

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<sup>87</sup> Ivete Sangalo is one of the most commercially successful singers in Brazil, who had just gathered thousands of fans in Rio de Janeiro for a much publicized and critically acclaimed concert in the famous Maracanã Stadium. DJ Dinho’s interview available at [http://www.orm.com.br/plantao/noticia/default.asp?id\\_noticia=262777](http://www.orm.com.br/plantao/noticia/default.asp?id_noticia=262777), accessed on 08 January 2011.

it plays *brega*, which is *our* music, if it plays *our* music for *us*, everything is perfect. (João, personal interview, see full interview in appendix 1)

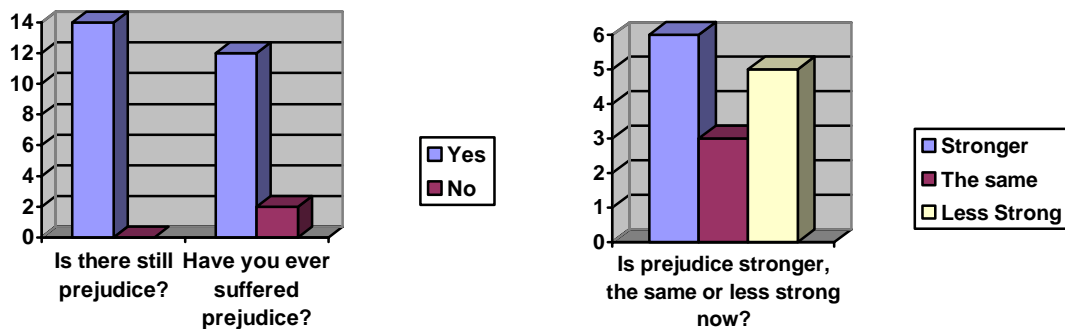
João's long interview revealed on one hand the resentment against "the bourgeoisie", their prejudice, and their ignorance of what *aparelhagens* really are. On the other hand, his remarks convey pride in the spectacle of fireworks, lighting, surprising special effects, etc. At the same time, João defied the hierarchy established between "bourgeois" parties and *aparelhagem* parties: the former is boring, has *nothing to see*, while the latter contains the truly fun spectacle. According to him, the *aparelhagens'* technology is very important because it allows them to see, in his own words, admirable things. During the interview he showed great pride in the *aparelhagem* technological spectacle, the "giant LED screens, hi def screens, the sound quality, the physical structure of the *aparelhagem*" and their "power to make the crowds participate, to show something new, something never seen before anywhere else". João's remarks show a combination of two elements that were recurrent in almost all the interviews: resentment against cultural prejudice, and pride in the technological spectacle.

As for cultural prejudice, many of them narrated cases of discrimination. João, who is poor but has made his way up to the university, explained how some of his classmates are surprised when he tells them he goes to *aparelhagem* parties, promptly distancing themselves by stating a preference for elegant clubs. Another interviewee, Paulo, told stories about "well-off" friends who go to *aparelhagem* parties but who keep a "double life". They do not mix their friends from two different social circles.

Guilherme, 33, a salesman, stated that the City was making it increasingly difficult for the smaller *aparelhagens* to obtain a license for their parties. Most of the interviewees strongly resented how "the bourgeoisie" and the "high society" portrayed *aparelhagem*

fans: they were seen as criminals, drugs addicts, illiterate, vagabonds and violent people. Renata, 20, a student, reported that a “middle-class” friend of hers was born and raised in Belém but had never been to an *aparelhagem* party because she was afraid of all “those dangerous people”. When she finally attended an *aparelhagem* party with Renata, she was surprised at how different the audience was from what she had expected and at the quality of the show. “They do not know us; they do not know how incredible the party is” were the two main ideas when the topic was prejudice against *aparelhagens*.

When asked “Do you think there is still prejudice against *aparelhagens*?”, all interviewees answered *yes*. When asked “Have you ever suffered any kind of prejudice?”, two people answered *no* and twelve *yes*. Finally, in response to the question “Do you think prejudice today is stronger, the same or less strong than before?” six people answered stronger, three interviewees answered that it was the same and five answered that it was less strong.



The interviews revealed that the enormous social gap in Brazil can produce preconceived ideas about social classes sharing the same geographical space, but which are unknown to each other. Brazil’s social inequalities generate great differences in what is consumed and enjoyed by different social classes, where to go and what to do with

one's leisure time. Just as there are shopping malls for the rich and for the poor, clubs for the rich and for the poor that do not mix, there are also class specific forms of music and dance. Social differences and the relations of power that they entail generate sharp physical and cultural delimitations that produce conflict or the potential for conflict on a daily basis. When it comes to musical taste, this socio-cultural differentiation can explain to a great extent the shame of the housemaids in the 1980s who had to hide their Carlos Santos albums from their bosses, or Paulo's wealthy friends in the 2000s who prefer to lead a "secret life" and not reveal that they are *aparelhagem* fans.

Of course, this phenomenon is not restricted to poor countries. In the classic *La Distinction – Critique Sociale du Jugement*, Bourdieu (1979) showed through extensive empirical and quantitative research carried out in France in the 1960s that social class – more specifically social origin – is the most influential factor in determining the individual's likes and interests. Although this seems to be a universal characteristic of modern Western societies, the social and cultural conditions of the *tecnobrega* phenomenon provide an extreme case to which Bourdieu's theses can be applied. According to Bourdieu, the idea of "good taste" is usually determined by those in power and is internalized from a very early age. People learn in everyday life to distance themselves from cultural practices associated with the lower classes, and to assert tastes that will set them apart.

Thus, nothing more rigorously distinguishes the different classes than the disposition objectively demanded by the legitimate consumption of legitimate works, the aptitude for taking a specifically aesthetic point of view on objects already constituted aesthetically – and therefore put forward for the admiration of those who have learned to recognize the signs of the admirable. (Bourdieu, 1984 [1979], p.40)

Bourdieu's authoritative work establishes beyond dispute that the criteria in determining cultural hierarchical positions come from dominant groups who learn to recognize the "signs of the admirable" and disapprove of the objects that do not bear them. The derogatory term "brega" used to name the *paraense* rhythm determined, from the very beginning, what kind of taste it represented and what position it should occupy in the hierarchy of musical production. What is "beautiful", "good quality" music is based on criteria that definitely were not established by the groups who produce *brega* music. However, aesthetic relativism, that is, the recognition that aesthetic criteria are constructed by specific social groups, is not enough to settle cultural conflicts: "It must never be forgotten that the working class 'aesthetic' is a dominated 'aesthetic' which is constantly obliged to define itself in terms of the dominant 'aesthetics'" (Bourdieu, 1984 [1979], p.40).

This "clash of aesthetics", which can be observed throughout the interviews transcribed in the appendix, has generated a growing conflict in which working classes in Belém have developed a twofold and somewhat contradictory position in relation to dominant groups. There is a strong resentment of that prejudiced "bourgeoisie", but at the same time, there is a strong desire for cultural legitimization, for recognition of their "subaltern" culture. In this ongoing process of legitimization, resentment and increasing conflict, the *tecnobrega* industry has found pride in *aparelhagem* parties, with their state-of-the-art technological spectacle and kinesthetic effects on par with other global entertainment products.

The use of technology to legitimize *aparelhagem* parties is also very evident in the interviews with the *aparelhagens'* DJs on the TV program *Central da Periferia*. The

connection between technologies, the kinesthetic spectacle and socio-cultural hierarchies is even more aggressive when DJ Juninho states that it was the outskirts, the slums that created the *aparelhagem* party; it was the slums that showed the middle and upper classes what a “first-class spectacle is”. DJ Juninho’s statements amount to a celebration not only of the kinesthetic spectacle of *aparelhagem* parties and the technology it entails, but also of the *population who created it*. The peripheries “showed upper and middle classes” what *aparelhagens* are; that is, poor communities became *agents, producers* and *patrons* of a “first-class” entertainment spectacle. DJ Juninho’s exaltation of the highly technological kinesthetic *aparelhagem* spectacle is a subversion of the passive role commonly attributed to underprivileged groups when it comes to the reception of mass entertainment products. In this case, Tricia Rose’s remarks on rap can be applied to *tecnobrega*, as both cultural phenomena constitute “a contemporary stage for the theater of the powerless”, where it is possible to “act out inversions of status hierarchies, [...] and draw portraits of contact with dominant groups in which the hidden transcript inverts/subverts the public, dominant transcript.” (Rose, 1994, p.100).

In the case of *aparelhagem* parties, the subversion is not achieved through songs and lyrics of social contestation, but through the pride of creating, in spite of its subaltern condition, a “first-class” (kinesthetic and technological) spectacle that is at the core of a booming entertainment industry. Regina Casé’s final words on *Central da Periferia* are representative of the legitimizing discourse that circulates today in the *tecnobrega* industry:

Today we told the story of a victory. The victory of the peripheral culture from Belém, Pará, that even before conquering the center of this city had already been spread to the peripheries all over Brazil. Today a band, to be successful in Pernambuco, pretends to be from Pará; today there are *tecnobrega* parties even at

Rocinha, the biggest *favela* in Rio. All of this happened without governmental support, without the big national media outlets, and above all it happened without the big recording labels. I want to congratulate you all who are now occupying the center of this city [...]. Congratulations, outskirts of Belém! [...] Thank you for the lesson in celebration, for the lesson in hard work, for the lesson in technology. Thank you, Belém! (Casé, 2006, my translation<sup>88</sup>)

As discussed in chapter 2, major 20<sup>th</sup> century participants in the cultural debate such as Adorno, Benjamin and Brecht differed in their treatment of the culture industry, mass entertainment, media, technology and art. However, they all attempted to understand the role of these elements in the Marxist macro-narrative of class conflict. Their objective was to understand how these elements impacted society and what kind of social transformation they could trigger or prevent from taking place. In my particular case study, the *tecnobrega* industry in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is still the issue of class struggle, there is still the notion that there are mechanisms of symbolic oppression of underprivileged socio-economic groups; but now, the focus of the struggle has significantly shifted. In the particular battleground of socio-cultural hierarchies in the *tecnobrega* industry, the objective is not to combat socio-economic macrostructures. It would be tempting to pursue an Adornian interpretation of the *tecnobrega* industry, and more specifically of the *aparelhagem* parties, in which the masses would be distracted by products that numb their capacity to fight against dominant groups. It would also be easy to criticize the *tecnobrega* industry for not even following a Brechtian strategy of providing the masses with entertainment that could lead them to a reflection on their

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<sup>88</sup> Original text: “A gente contou hoje aqui a história de uma vitória. A vitória da cultura da periferia de Belém do Pará, que antes mesmo de conquistar o centro dessa cidade onde a gente *tá* hoje, já tinha se espalhado pela periferia de todo o Brasil. Hoje em Pernambuco, uma banda *pra* fazer sucesso, finge que é do Pará, gente!. Vou dizer mais, hoje em dia já existe baile de tecnobrega na Rocinha, a maior favela do Rio de Janeiro. Isso tudo aconteceu sem ajuda oficial, aconteceu sem *tá* na mídia nacional e principalmente aconteceu sem ter gravadora. Eu quero agora dar parabéns a vocês todos que *tão* aqui no centro dessa cidade [...]. Parabéns, periferia de Belém! [...]. Obrigada pela lição de festa, de coragem pra trabalhar, lição de tecnologia. Obrigada Belém”. (Casé, 2006).

social condition. However, pursuing such analyses would mean “missing the point” by turning the culture debate back to the social and historical conditions of the last century. There is another social and technological reality that triggers a more palpable, urgent and contemporary discussion, namely, the appropriation of new technologies by the masses, a phenomenon that can generate culture industries in defiance of the socio-cultural *status quo*. The conflicts that originate from this new reality are now at the core of the *tecnobrega* debate.

In this war over symbolic socio-cultural values, Regina Casé declared the first victory, the victory of an industry that has flourished “without governmental support, without exposure on the big national media outlets and without the big recording labels”; the victory, as she puts it, of producing cultural goods and “exporting” them to other peripheral areas in Brazil even before earning local recognition as a legitimate cultural *paraense* product<sup>89</sup>. At the end of the show, Regina Casé thanks the *paraense* population for teaching the rest of the country how to celebrate their local culture, foster entrepreneurship and use new technologies. A prestigious actress from Globo TV coming to Belém and thanking its underprivileged population for the creation of a vigorous entertainment industry was a powerful symbolic moment. It was a moment when the relations of power between the Amazon Region and São Paulo/Rio were subverted and the position of *tecnobrega* at the bottom of local cultural hierarchies was assertively

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<sup>89</sup> The main argument here is as follows: “the simple existence of a culture industry created and developed by oppressed groups is already an act of rebellion against the groups that had had until now the power to decide what was to be consumed by the masses”. This intriguing idea had already been pursued by Hermano Vianna in *O Mundo Funk Carioca* (Vianna, 1988) in which the author affirms: “The existence of parties in Rio dedicated to hip hop is a sign of “disobedience”, even if irrelevant in macropolitical terms, to the music multinationals that dictate on a world level what is supposed to be heard” (Vianna, p.132, my translation). As for the relation between “baile funk” and the mainstream music industry, Vianna also writes: “As the *baile funk* shows, the culture industry does not have only a homogenizing effect. Several cultural groups use their messages in different ways. They can even develop channels of communication that do not depend on ‘official’ radio and TV stations” (Vianna, p.141, my translation)

challenged. Paradoxically, the cultural legitimation came from “outside”, from the mighty Globo TV representing the mainstream media outlet that had long overlooked the existence of the “subaltern” *tecnobrega* industry.

*Central da Periferia* triggered an interest in the *tecnobrega* industry that went beyond the national borders. On the international level, the *tecnobrega* industry became widely known upon being featured in the documentary *Good Copy, Bad Copy* (Johnsen, Andreas, Ralf Christensen, and Henrik Moltke, 2007). In this Danish documentary, filmmakers focus on the current state of copyright and cultural production in the context of the internet, file sharing and new technologies. The directors investigate the increasing tensions between the traditional notion of copyright and the new technological forms of creating, distributing and appropriating cultural goods. *Tecnobrega* is shown in the documentary as an innovative business model in which the absence of the traditional copyright mechanisms allows, in its full potential, the use of new technologies to create new culture industries. In the portion dedicated to *tecnobrega*, the documentary shows how local music producers in Belém appropriate songs from famous artists – Gnarlz Barkley, Guns N’ Roses, U2, Dire Straits – and turn them into *tecnobrega* songs. They do this in their own modest homes through the use of computers and remix software. The songs then are played in *aparelhagem* parties along with original songs produced by local bands. No one earns copyrights, as profits from “pirated” CD sales go exclusively to street vendors as discussed before, and local artists earn profits only from their concerts – which will attract larger audiences if their songs become hits in *aparelhagem* parties.

By featuring the *tecnobrega* industry and *Nollywood*, the movie industry in Nigeria, the documentary shows how this kind of business model in poor areas of the

world can flourish only in marginal contexts located outside the regulatory sphere of the mainstream culture industry. It is important to highlight the empowerment discourse that comes along with this rationale. In an interview featured in *Good Copy, Bad Copy*, Ronaldo Lemos argues that

The interesting thing about these emerging culture industries is the fact they are very innovative in terms of business models. The whole industry has a lot to learn, society as a whole has a lot to learn from these emerging cultural forms of production that are taking place in the poor areas of the world. (Lemos, 2007)

The documentary applies on an international level the subversion suggested by Regina Casé in *Central da Periferia*. The powerful global entertainment industry – referring especially to the US movie and record industries – has to learn from poor peripheral areas of the globe how to use new technologies to create new business models. While the traditional culture industry struggles to fight the reproduction and distribution possibilities offered by new technologies, poor regions of the world embrace such possibilities, and as a consequence parallel new forms of cultural production thrive in these areas. Regardless of the legal and ethical implications of such a thesis, it is important to notice how it defies the power relations between the poor and the rich. Innovation does not come from the traditional centers that export entertainment products, but rather from the poor areas that appropriate new technologies to local realities and can now “teach” the rest of the world innovative economic models. Furthermore, in this kind of discourse, technology assumes a different role than the one attributed to it by Adorno. While Adorno’s arguments converged to the idea that the development of new technologies served only to reinforce the power structures of the *status quo*, the theoretical reflections on entertainment phenomena like the *tecnobrega* industry point in the opposite direction. New technologies have enabled poor people to take control and

develop new forms of distribution and commercialization of cultural goods that do not depend on large corporations. The culture industry no longer belongs to a handful of multinational companies that control what and how entertainment products are to be consumed. Subaltern classes now assume the role of producers of their own mass entertainment products.

This optimistic discourse of appropriation is directly applied to the *tecnobrega* industry by Lemos and Castro (2008). The authors defend the thesis that

The appropriation of low-cost technologies of musical production, combined with flexible copyright structures, provides the necessary conditions for the creation of markets that are as or even more efficient and viable than the usual business models of cultural goods. This combination entails a truly inclusive and democratizing potential (Lemos and Castro, 2008, p. 174, my translation<sup>90</sup>).

Lemos and Castro recognize that the inexistence of the traditional rules of commercialization in the *tecnobrega* industry does not mean the absence of norms of production and circulation of its goods (Lemos and Castro, p.178). They also acknowledge the fact that the *tecnobrega* industry creates internal mechanisms of hierarchization in which some agents concentrate a great deal of power – the major *aparelhagens* occupying the top of this hierarchical chain (Lemos and Castro, p.181). However, these norms and internal power structures are considered more flexible and inclusive than those that regulate the traditional phonographic industry. (Lemos and Castro, p.183). This positive outlook is reinforced at the conclusion of the book when the authors criticize the criminalization of the phenomenon by local conservative groups in Belém, who insist on not recognizing the efficiency and dynamism of this “creative

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<sup>90</sup> Original text: “a apropriação de tecnologias de produção musical de baixo custo, associada a uma estrutura de direitos de propriedade flexíveis, possibilitaria a formação de mercados tão ou mais eficientes e viáveis do que os modelos usuais de negócios de bens culturais, além de embutir um potencial inclusivo e democratizante francamente positivo”. (Lemos and Castro, 2008, p.174).

industry that generates profits, work, local development, inclusion and leisure”. (Lemos and Castro, p. 205).

The positive position adopted by Regina Casé and Ronaldo Lemos has been prevalent in academic circles and traditional media outlets. Chris Anderson, editor-in-chief of the prestigious American magazine *Wired*<sup>91</sup>, dedicated a chapter of his latest book *Free: the future of a radical price* (Anderson, 2009) to the *tecnobrega* phenomenon. Anderson places Brazil at the “frontier of free”, and the chapter’s subtitle “What can we learn from them?” (Anderson, p.199-208) uses once more the inversion of positions in which the north looks down to the south in search of innovative and creative business models in the digital era.

In the thesis entitled “Fire, Lights, Everything: Exploring Symbolic Capital in the *Tecnobrega* Dance Scene”, Krauskopf (2010) finds in the *tecnobrega* industry a perfect case to illustrate her main argument that audiences are far from being passive consumers in contemporary entertainment industries. Krauskopf argues that audiences today tend to become active participants and producers of value in their entertainment practices: “The [...] energy that audiences invest in the circulation, distribution, and creative appropriation of content is in fact generating new forms of value for media industries” (Krauskopf, 2010, p. 7). The *aparelhagem* party is then considered a prototypical example, since the direct and active participation of the audience in the event is a fundamental part of the spectacle.

In 2009, the BBC website published a lengthy article on *tecnobrega*: “*Tecnobrega* beat rocks Brazil”. According to the article, the *tecnobrega* industry is fostering

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<sup>91</sup> *Wired* is an influential monthly American magazine that focuses precisely on new technologies and how they affect culture, politics and economy.

mechanisms of production and distribution that will drive the future of music. The article contrasts the commercial mechanisms used by *tecnobrega* industry with those of the mainstream music industry, suggesting the supremacy of the former over the latter: “The music industry may not approve of all its methods - but it seems that in Belem the will of the consumer is a more powerful voice and that in the end may prove decisive” (Duffy, 2009). Once again, the consumer masses are regarded as active and decisive players in the *tecnobrega* industry.

Nelson Motta, one of the most respected music producers and critics in Brazil, has dedicated a special report on *tecnobrega* in his weekly culture review on Globo TV. Motta praises *tecnobrega* for being a “thriving industry in the internet age” (Motta, 2009). Joining the chorus of specialists who compare the dying traditional music industry with the booming *tecnobrega* business, Nelson Motta stresses the informality of the production chain in Belém through which street vendors and *aparelhagem* parties generates millions in the local entertainment industry.

In a thought-provoking thesis, Santiago and Alves (2006) examined all major reports on *aparelhagens* in *O Liberal*, the most important and influential newspaper in Belém, from 2003 to 2006. According to their study, the articles in the newspaper reflected the conflicting attitude that society in Pará has towards *aparelhagem* parties. They are treated either as a “police case”, confined to the crime section of the newspaper, or as a legitimate *Paraense* cultural manifestation featured in its culture section. However, the authors identify an important trend. The unfavorable positions are concentrated in the earlier reports. The earlier the article, the more likely it is to contain a negative portrait of *aparelhagem* parties, including reports denouncing crimes during the

events, cases of theft, or complaints of the communities disturbed by the deafening sound systems. As time went by, there were more positive articles about the phenomenon. In the “positive” articles, there were several strategies of legitimization of the parties. Some emphasized the cultural importance of *aparelhagens* which were “objects of study in theses, dissertations and television reports on *Fantástico*<sup>92</sup> and *Altas Horas*<sup>93</sup> on Globo TV” (Tupinambá conquista tribos da classe média, 2006). In the same newspaper article, DJ Dinho emphasizes the novelty of his *aparelhagem* organizing events for specific middle and upper class audiences in the most exclusive clubs in Belém. The “positive” newspaper articles analyzed by Santiago and Alves offer many passages that praise the parties’ display of “technology and modernity” of the parties (DJs levam o “tecnobrega” para o corredor da folia, 2003), the use of never-seen technologies in the spectacles (Dinho volta ao Tupinambá hoje e lança ‘altar sonoro’, 2004), the considerable investments in the technological extravaganza (DJs de brega investem até R\$ 500 mil em equipamentos, 2004) and the heavy infrastructure necessary to assemble the tons of equipment in a major *aparelhagem* (Tecnobrega é fantástico, 2005). In an interview with Edson Coelho, editor of the *O Liberal* culture section, Santiago and Alves (2006) asked if there was still prejudice against *aparelhagens*. According to Coelho, *aparelhagem* parties were improving, and due to the use of more technology in original and innovative ways, the prejudice had decreased in the last couple of years (Coelho, 2006).

After *Good Copy, Bad Copy*, the Brazilian filmmakers Vladimir Cunha and Gustavo Godinho also produced a documentary on the *tecnobrega* industry, *Brega S/A*

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<sup>92</sup> *Fantástico* is the traditional Sunday night show broadcasted by Globo TV that gives viewers a summary of the main events of the week and presents special reports on culture, cuisine, arts, etc.

<sup>93</sup> *Altas Horas* is another TV show broadcasted by Globo TV targeted on the hipster Brazilian middle class youth that discusses politics, music, cinema, etc.

(Cunha and Godinho, 2009). Released in selected movie theaters, on national television by MTV Brazil and available for free over the internet<sup>94</sup>, the documentary gave the *tecnobrega* industry even more visibility among those interested in new musical and cultural tendencies in Brazil. The documentary generated debate because, for the first time, there was not only the celebration of the democratizing effects of the appropriation of new technologies by the masses. The documentary was much more nuanced and showed the contradictions and tensions within the *tecnobrega* industry. Cunha and Godinho, both born and raised in Pará, provided an in-depth inside view of the dynamism and effervescence of the phenomenon, but they also exposed the internal and external conflicts the *tecnobrega* industry faces.

In Cunha and Godinho's documentary, technology is shown as the element that produces incredible kinesthetic spectacles and that allows the masses to both produce and distribute their songs. However, this facility also creates a voracious industry whose agents face precarious, unstable and sometimes degrading working conditions, in which everything is "disposable", in which songs and bands, if ever successful, disappear overnight and in which low quality music is produced on an unprecedented massive scale. Through interviews with a few *equipe* members, the documentary fully acknowledges the importance of participatory audiences in *aparelhagem* parties. On the other hand, Cunha and Godinho also show darker aspects of this active participation. In a revealing sequence of interviews, DJs explain how some *equipes*, in their thirst for visibility, disturb the events and sometimes even engage in physical violence, reinforcing the prejudice that "there are only violent criminals in *aparelhagem* parties".

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<sup>94</sup> Available at <http://mtv.uol.com.br/bregasa/videos/veja-o-documentario-brega-sa-na-integra>, accessed on 16 January 2011.

Cunha and Godinho's documentary is an important reminder that the positive outlook on the *tecnobrega* industry cannot dispel the fact that internal conflicts, violence and illegality are also part of the phenomenon. A brief glance on the description of the *tecnobrega* agents above reveals some of these tensions. The *aparelhagem* business is increasingly concentrated among a handful of companies that dominate the market; *festeiros* constitute capitalist groups that are accused of acting like cartel lords; musicians have lost significant space in the circuit and are "forced" to look for audiences in the backlands of the state; and street vendors and reproducers are involved in smuggling and piracy of all kinds of products in addition to those from the *brega* industry. These are all serious socio-economic issues that tend to be hidden in exclusively celebratory portrayals of the *tecnobrega* industry.

Furthermore, in Cunha and Godinho's documentary, local intellectuals with a conservative position against the *tecnobrega* industry are heard for the first time. The journalist Lucio Flavio Pinto and the architect Paulo Cal offer polemic remarks including the idea that *tecnobrega* is "not music, it is not culture, it is just deafening noise", and that the role of street vendors in the circuit, praised by Regina Casé, Ronaldo Lemos, Nelson Motta and Chirs Anderson, is just a "barbarian darwinist" system of commercialization where only the "strongest survive" and which is plunging Belém into chaos and disorder. On the other hand, the documentary gives voice to Rubens Silva, the young president of the Association of Street Vendors of Belém. Articulate and quiet, he explains the importance of street vendors in the city's economy: without the street vendors, the music industry in Pará would simply be inexistent, and thousands of people would lose their jobs. Rubens Silva is also aware of the scope and power of the street

vendors as trendsetters in the industry. He compares their importance and strategic position to those of television. Just as television determines cultural tendencies, so too are street vendors and *aparelhagens* highly influential in deciding what is trendy in the paraense music scene. Another interviewee, DJ Maluquinho, goes even further on this topic and argues that in Pará, *Vetron*, the mid-sized *aparelhagem* that became famous for turning unknown songs into hits, is even more influential than the powerful Globo TV – another daring remark that rearranges the traditional power positions occupied by Brazilian cultural agents.

The documentary's final scene is emblematic of the ongoing local struggle between *tecnobrega* agents and the hegemonic power structures. Policemen arrive at the *comércio*, a large popular commercial area located near the famous Ver-o-Peso folk market in Belém, and immediately begin to destroy the illegal street vendor carts and confiscate their pirated CDs. In the chaotic and violent final scenes, the street vendors seem to demand in retaliation the closure of nearby shops. When some security guards attempt to protect the shops, the *comércio* becomes a war zone. In Belém, the battle over *tecnobrega*'s cultural, social and commercial legitimacy is fought on an ideological level, but it also takes place in the form of real, violent physical struggles in the streets of the city.

Despite their differences, all the works mentioned above have something in common. They all promote the notion of the “empowerment of the masses” in the *tecnobrega* industry. In these narratives, technology is always regarded as a key element in the viability of *tecnobrega*'s business model and also as a source of pride for its agents. *Aparelhagem* owners and fans are proud of the “first-class” kinesthetic spectacle

of their parties and DJs, while bands and street vendors are proud of their appropriation of new technologies for the establishment of an alternative commercial circuit. The more these national and international documentaries, books, academic works and articles spread and multiply these narratives, the more local *tecnobrega* agents assume them and assert their pride of the industry, a cultural phenomenon that they begin to perceive as nationally and internationally recognized. During an informal conversation with DJ Agatha, one of the few female DJs on the circuit, after introducing myself as a PhD candidate, I asked her if she would agree to an interview. She responded that it would be no problem, that she was used to such requests now that “everybody in São Paulo, Rio and even from abroad wants to know about *aparelhagens*”. In an interview with MTV, Gaby Amarantos, one of the most acclaimed singers in the *tecnobrega* industry, talks about the “buzz” it has generated in Brazil and Europe, with journalists coming from all over the world eager to “know more about this music scene” (Amarantos, 2010).

All of the documents analyzed in this section show that this “buzz” is, to a great extent, a result of the creation of a subaltern culture industry that uses advanced technology for cultural assertion, to produce a thriving new business model and world-class kinesthetic spectacles. In any case, the prevalent strategy in the *tecnobrega* industry links technology to cultural prestige and pride. That is, *in this particular context of strong socio-cultural clashes, it is clear that kinesthetics and technology assume a role that goes beyond the commercial purposes described beforehand. They assume the new and surprising role of legitimizing a stigmatized mass culture phenomenon.*

### **5.6 Intermediality in the *tecnobrega* industry.**

From a simple party where couples could dance to romantic *brega* songs in the past to the mega events they have become today, *aparelhagem* parties have incorporated features from different media and entertainment practices. The music became increasingly fast-paced, and from *brega* to *brega pop* to *tecnobrega* to *cyber-tecnobrega* the event now resembles a hyper-accelerated version of a rave party. High-tech visual effects were increasingly incorporated, and now the spectacle uses ultra-intensified versions of aesthetic elements, found elsewhere only in certain theme park attraction rides.

Other media elements not present in the first *aparelhagem* parties were also integrated in the spectacle. In the big *aparelhagens* today, the role of DJs exceeds the simple selection of music. They are now performers who theatrically interact with the audiences. They are simultaneously performers who play a specific role – DJ Dinho is the “Warrior Tupinambá”, for example – and performers who have to incite the audience’s participation, similar to rock stars in a large concert. The added visual elements include all sorts of lighting and special effects that once belonged to the disco universe. TV sets showing all kinds of images – cartoons, video games, psychedelic patterns, etc. – are spread all over the party, and there is usually a giant LED screen placed behind the DJ’s control station. As stated above, this enormous screen, along with the DJ’s control station, is the visual focal point of the party, and its disposition evokes the idea of a movie theater. The movie-theater sensation is reinforced when the main DJs are introduced by a male voice resembling the traditional voice-over heard in Brazilian movie previews – in the case of the *aparelhagem* parties, instead of scenes from an

upcoming movie, audiences see flashes of futuristic images or self-referential allusions. The introduction of the main DJs of Super Pop at the party I attended in 2009 illustrates the remediating experience I am describing. As the “preview voice-over” announces that the audience is about to have the experience of a lifetime, the screen shows images of falling green codes in a direct reference to *The Matrix* – one of the most common sources of inspiration for the *aparelhagem* spectacles. The deep voice continues to make references to the digital era and to the “perfect” technological experience they will soon have, as though audiences were watching a sci-fi movie preview. The “movie preview voice-over” is then replaced by another voice that encourages the fans to welcome the DJs in a final apotheosis when they at last appear on stage. The spectacle then sensorially moves from a futuristic Matrix-like preview to a rock concert or rave party in which the audiences participate in ecstasy<sup>95</sup>.

In *aparelhagem* parties, it is clear that aisthetic elements from cartoons, video games, movies, theater, rock concerts, disco and rave parties are recombined and refashioned for the creation of a new spectacle with its own hybrid characteristics. However, concepts like *remediation* or *media convergence*, used to analyze global entertainment products in chapter 3, cannot be directly applied to the phenomenon I am describing here. It is important to keep in mind that those concepts describe processes that are established between different kinds of media. An *aparelhagem* party is not a “medium” *per se*, but rather an entertainment event that reuses and recycles many other elements that circulate in the sphere of mass entertainment. Sometimes these elements are related to a specific medium – TV cartoons or computer games, for example – or are

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<sup>95</sup> See the first two minutes of “DVD Super Pop Som (Tecnobrega) O som do Pará para o Brasil Parte 1” available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4z0w1BqqM>

characteristic of other entertainment practices – disco lighting and rock concert staging, for example. Therefore, we are dealing here with a more elemental process of cultural recycling that is not exclusively related to media transferences. The objective is to bring together several elements from different entertainment practices so that fans can recognize them outside their primary context and enjoy their refashioning in *aparelhagem* parties. From explicit pop culture references (allusion to specific Hollywood movies, versions of international hit songs, etc.) to more subtle instances of cultural appropriation (the “movie preview voice-over”, for instance), all kinds of cultural recycling are valid. In any case, the same aesthetic principles discussed in the intermedial phenomenon are at work here. The fans who enjoy *aparelhagens* still have to combine the sensorial perceptions experienced elsewhere and converge them in a new hybrid entertainment practice.

Another interesting comparison can be established between global entertainment products and *aparelhagem* parties. Although the term franchise media crossover was created to be used in a very precise context – the exploitation of the same character in different media –, the *tecnobrega* industry has developed interesting variations of the phenomenon. In the *tecnobrega* industry, the DJs themselves are the elements that circulate among different media. DJ Dinho from Tupinambá, for example, has a radio show and even a TV program on a local station. The radio show serves for the DJ to announce where his *aparelhagem* will be playing next, to publicize songs and to connect with his fan base. The TV programs are very amateurish productions that show images from the parties and allow DJ Dinho to advertise products as well as his own *aparelhagem* and personal image. Super Pop also has its own radio show and a very

popular website with an online radio, where DJs Juninho and Elison have total control over the programming and where fans can upload photos that can be watched while listening to the songs. The franchise media crossover in the *tecnobrega* business is not as developed and widespread as in its global counterparts. However, the basic principle of “squeezing from a product its fullest marketing potential” (Ndalianis, 2004, p.41) is also at work in the *tecnobrega* industry.

One of the most interesting cases of franchise media-crossover in this particular industry is the appearance of the “bailes da saudade”. *Saudade* is the Portuguese word for *nostalgia*, and the *aparelhagens da saudade* are sound systems that went “back in time” to reproduce the parties as they were enjoyed fifteen or twenty years ago. From the old *brega* of the 1980s to the *cyber-tecnobrega* of the 2000s, the rhythm became, for many people, too accelerated and the dance too frenetic. For some, the intense bombardment of the senses has exceeded the limits of an enjoyable entertainment experience. Also, since *aparelhagem* parties increasingly became more like rave parties or rock concerts, dancing couples are now confined to limited back spaces far from the DJ’s control station. Some entrepreneurs realized that there was a niche of nostalgic fans who enjoyed listening and dancing to the songs in couples on the dance floor as had been done for decades before the exponential technological and kinesthetic race among *aparelhagens*. These entrepreneurs decided to “freeze time” and remain outside of the techno-kinesthetic race of big *aparelhagens*. The most important *aparelhagem da saudade* in Belém is *Brasilândia, o calhambeque da saudade*. *Calhambeque* in Brazil is the generic term to designate car models produced during the initial stages of the automobile industry. In *bailes da saudade* – which can be loosely translated as “nostalgic parties” –, there are no

references to a futuristic Indian Chief, to spaceships or to science fiction narratives.

*Calhambeque* and *saudade* are words meticulously chosen to evoke the past.

Visiting these parties is also a sensorial trip back in time. Most of the songs are the so called *flashbregas*, that is, famous *brega* hits from the past. The *flashbregas*, the decoration and the simple lighting effects work like a journey to the past in which couples can dance and listen to songs as if they were attending an *aparelhagem* party in the 1980s or early 1990s. The rhythm is slower, and the engagement of the senses does not provoke the nearly hallucinatory effects of today's major *aparelhagens*. This kind of party draws much smaller audiences than big *aparelhagens*. However, it is a large enough niche that two of the major brands decided to create their own *bailes da saudade*. *Pop Saudade* and *Rubi Saudade* are the nostalgic versions of Super Pop and Rubi, respectively. This is an interesting variation of the traditional franchise media-crossover. In this case, there is not exactly media-crossover because in technical terms these are all *aparelhagens*. However, the franchise is expanded by moving back in time, that is, by reproducing elements of the same product as it was consumed and enjoyed in the past.

This unique case of franchise expansion was only possible because for some people the acceleration and intensification of the aesthetic experience in *aparelhagens* had reached over-the-top proportions. In recent years, the “mainstream” *tecnobrega* industry also slowed down the rhythm of the songs for similar reasons. According to Vladimir Cunha in a special article for *Rolling Stone* magazine:

As it changed and flirted with other genres, *tecnobrega* accelerated its beat and distanced itself from the traditional romantic music. In the most recent productions, the songs have a speed of up to 170 beats per minute and there is almost no melody, only samples and rhymes like the ones found in rap. *Tecnobrega* is now closer to electronic genres like jungle and grime. There is now

a slower version, the tecnomelody, a style that appeared when *tecnobrega* became too aggressive. (Cunha, 2008, my translation<sup>96</sup>)

Cunha's observation and the case of *bailes da saudade* are of particular interest to show that there are limitations on the acceleration and intensification of kinesthetic experiences in the production and reception of entertainment goods. This means that the correlations between aesthetic acceleration and commercial success as highlighted above have exhaustion points that are regulated by the *tecnobrega* industry itself. This also reveals how the industry can easily adapt to the market and how it can continuously change to please its fans.

In spite of all the controversy surrounding the *tecnobrega* industry, it is clear that it has developed and evolved over the years, mastering the craft of how to entertain the poor Amazonian masses in the age of digital technology. Designing *aparelhagem* parties according to the aesthetic principles that drive contemporary entertainment, together with the free circulation of music proved to be an unbeatable formula for commercial success. Whether *tecnobrega* will win the battle for socio-cultural recognition remains to be determined.

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<sup>96</sup> Original text: “À medida que foi se modificando e flertando com outros gêneros musicais, o tecnobrega acelerou a sua batida e se distanciou da música romântica tradicional. Nas produções mais recentes, as músicas chegam à velocidade de 170 batidas por minuto e quase não têm mais melodia, apenas samples e rimas no estilo dos vocalistas de rap, que o aproximam de gêneros eletrônicos como o jungle e o grime. Existe ainda uma versão mais lenta, o melody, estilo romântico surgido quando o tecnobrega tornou-se agressivo demais.”, available online at <http://www.rollingstone.com.br/edicoes/16/textos/1562/>, accessed on 17 January 2011.

## 6. Conclusion

From a scholarly interest in *mobility* as a framework to understand contemporary culture, to an empirical journey into the thriving *tecnobrega* industry of Belém do Pará, this thesis has revolved around a central idea: mobility is a fundamental constituent in the production and reception of products from the entertainment industry.

This basic argument demanded a careful consideration of the notion of *mobility* in the Western scholarly tradition. As argued before, human societies have never been static; it is part of human history to physically move for innumerable reasons. Wars, exoduses, commerce and, more recently, commuting and tourism are just a few examples of social phenomena that imply some kind of mobility. They all involve physical mobility, that is, displacement from a point A to a point B in space. This kind of elemental physical movement has long been explored by philosophers and researchers.

My investigation identified in Plato's *Dialogues*, for example, a clear concern about the cultural effects of traveling traders in ancient Greek cities. Plato offers a typology of traveling traders, describing them and giving local authorities very practical instructions on how they should deal with the menacing contact with foreigners (Plato, 1892 [348 BC] p.501). Plato recognized that the physical mobility of traveling traders had a direct impact on the commercial, social and cultural conditions of Greek cities. However, the philosopher also dealt with the notion of mobility in more metaphorical terms. In *Cratylus* (p.383-440), Hermogenes and Cratylus, a disciple of Heraclitus, discuss how words are chosen to designate names. Hermogenes defends the idea that words are established by convention, while Cratylus believes that names are not arbitrary, and that words are, in fact, encoded descriptions of the objects they designate. Socrates is

called to arbitrate the debate. He seems to favor Cratylus' point of view by analyzing the etymology of several Greek words and concluding that words do contain descriptions of the objects they name. Furthermore, Socrates concludes that words constitute doors to the ancients' insights on philosophical matters. In the process, however, he begins to notice that many of the Greek words he analyses associate positive values with flux and motion. *Phronesis* (wisdom), for example, meant *Phoras kai rhou noesis* (perception of motion and flux), or perhaps *Phoras onesis* (the blessing of motion). By recalling Heraclitus' belief that "all things move and nothing remains still" (p.437), Socrates comes to the following conclusion:

Socrates - By the dog of Egypt, I have not a bad notion which came into my head only this moment: I believe that the primeval givers of names were undoubtedly like too many of our modern philosophers, who, in their search after the nature of things, are always getting dizzy from constantly going round and round, and then they imagine that the world is going round and round and moving in all directions; and this appearance, which arises out of their own internal condition, they suppose to be a reality of nature; they think that there is nothing stable or permanent, but only flux and motion, and that the world is always full of every sort of motion and change. The consideration of the names which I mentioned has led me into making this reflection (Plato, p.438).

After having this epiphany, Socrates and Cratylus continue to discuss the origin of words, but in the final section they turn the debate to Heraclitus' belief that all things in nature are in a state of perpetual flux, i.e., that "everything flows" (*panta rhei*). Socrates questions Heraclitus' principle, but Cratylus remains a partisan of his master's thought.

Plato's example shows that the idea of mobility, whether literal – traders traveling across Greek cities – or metaphorical – Heraclitus' idea that everything in the world is in motion –, has long been part of western scholarly tradition. However, in Plato's thought, the notion of mobility is circumstantial; that is, it is not at the center of his reflections. In the first case, his main concern is the cultural impact foreign traders may have on local

societies, while in the second case, linguistic issues are the focus of the dialogue.

Although it can be argued that mobility has long been present in theoretical reflections in the western scholarly tradition, movement itself did not become a central object of study until many centuries later. Paul Soriau, with his *Aesthetics of Movement* published in 1887, and Frank Popper with his studies of Kinetic Art in the 1960s-1970s were some of the pioneers who placed movement at the center of their investigative projects. However, it was at the end of the 20th century, with the general interest in the phenomenon of globalization, that the interest in mobility studies grew exponentially. Studies on migration, diaspora, and the flux of people, objects, images and ideas have occupied a position of extreme relevance in the humanities roughly from the 1980s on. The mobility issues present in the debate on globalization gradually began to constitute, at the turn of the century, the backbone of a widespread interest in the study of physical and virtual movement in social enquiry. In 2007, Urry called this new interpretive framework the “mobility turn” (Urry, 2007, p.6-12).

The novelty of this mobility turn resided in a twofold shift. First, the adoption of mobility as a specific interpretive framework for social and cultural enquiry began to cross different areas of the humanities, from the social sciences to geography, to cultural analysis. A considerable body of interdisciplinary scholarship on the topic has been developed in the last decade. Second, the realization that global phenomena as well as personal aspects of contemporary life should be studied in terms of their mobile nature represented a major epistemological shift in these disciplines. In a world in constant motion, it was necessary to “mobilize” terms such as society, place and culture; that is, it became imperative to foster mobility-oriented perspectives in these disciplines. The

fluxes of people, objects and ideas worldwide, transportation and communication systems, the global mediascape, as well as walking, traveling, dancing or visiting an art gallery began to be analyzed through a basic common characteristic, that is, the different kinds of movement they entail.

This major epistemological shift comes with risks. The first challenge is the difficulty in analyzing pure movement. How can a researcher describe, seize and produce elemental knowledge of objects that are, by definition, ephemeral, in constant motion, continuously changing and moving? Plato himself addresses this challenge in his aforementioned *Cratylus*. At the end of the dialogue, the topic turns from the formation of words to the production of knowledge. Socrates criticizes Heraclitus' *panta rhei*, that is, the notion that everything is in motion, that nothing remains still.

Socrates – Nor yet can they [objects] be known by any one; for at the moment that the observer approaches, then they become other and of another nature, so that you cannot get any further in knowing their nature or state, for you cannot know that which has no state.

Cratylus – True.

Socrates – Nor can we reasonably say, Cratylus, that there is knowledge at all, if everything is in a state of transition and there is nothing abiding; for knowledge too cannot continue to be knowledge unless continuing always to abide and exist. But if the very nature of knowledge changes, at the time when the change occurs there will be no knowledge; and if the transition is always going on, there will always be no knowledge, and, according to this view, there will be no one to know and nothing to be known. (Plato, p.440)

According to Socrates, if everything flows, and nothing is stationary, any attempt to know a certain object is futile because, at the moment of the observation, the object changes into something else. As a consequence, knowledge about a moving object cannot be produced. This old epistemological problem is present in the mobility studies that aim at producing knowledge *about* and *through* movement. The mobility paradigm faces the

double challenge of producing knowledge about movement and applying it to the analysis of social and cultural phenomena.

The adoption of a mobility paradigm for social and cultural enquiry has to address another epistemological challenge. The idea of mobility – both in literal and in metaphorical terms – can be applied to many social and cultural phenomena. This extensive applicability allows for studying topics that are not normally investigated in the same analytical framework such as trains and mobile telephony (Urry 2007), bodily movements at the workplace and on the dance floor (Creswell, 2006), contemporary theatrical mobility and *translatio imperii* (Greenblatt, 2010) or traveling and watching a movie (Moser, 2004). However, in order to analyze these objects, it is necessary to identify what kind of mobility we are dealing with, at what level of mobility these objects can be analyzed and what the epistemological gains are of doing so. Otherwise, mobility may become an excessively general notion, thus losing its heuristic potential. There is a double dynamic at work when mobility is used as an interpretive framework to investigate contemporary social and cultural phenomena. It has an enormous potential applicability to a large spectrum of objects of study, but this very characteristic may turn the notion into an unmanageable analytical tool.

Due to this dynamic tension, the notion of mobility, its contemporary use by different researchers and its applicability to specific objects of study were discussed in chapter one. It was clear that in addition to largely explored themes related to globalization – the global flux of ideas, objects, images and people – the contemporary debate on mobility has also been interested in everyday aspects of life such as going to work or visiting friends (Urry, 2007, p.11). This broad applicability to a very heteroclitic

set of objects of study required a careful and systematic approach to the notion of mobility. It was necessary to adopt a theorization that would allow for the exploration of the phenomena in different spheres without “losing control” of the term.

Mobility applied to the fine arts, for example, was investigated under theoretical frameworks that systematized the types of movement found in works of art. From Naum Gabo in the 1920s to Frank Popper in the 1970s to Walter Moser in the 2000s, there has been a long tradition of studying the use of movement in the production and reception of artworks. Inspired by concepts such as *kinetic art* or *artmotion*, I have proposed to apply the mobility paradigm to the study of the entertainment industry. This strategy aimed at contributing to the debates on mobility and contemporary entertainment which surprisingly had not yet intersected. The contemporary debate on entertainment products has addressed their mobile nature without using the analytical tools developed by the so-called “mobility turn”. Likewise, the mobility debate has covered a vast area of contemporary culture and society, but has overlooked or explored only superficially the area of entertainment. The observation of different entertainment practices like watching a CGI blockbuster movie, playing motion video games, riding a theme park attraction or attending an *aparelhagem* party revealed that many kinds of movement are employed in their respective industries. These movements are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they are combined in sophisticated and intricate ways. As for the actual movement of the body, there are at least four kinds of combination:

- 1) The body remains still and the sensation of movement comes from the sensorial interaction with a screen. This kind of “pure” mediamotion is the one experienced in the traditional viewing of a movie.

- 2) The movement of the body is the *sine qua non* for the entertainment experience, and the human/machine interaction does not take place without it. Motion games (*Wii*, *Kinect* and *Move*), for example, use this kind of movement.
- 3) The body is displaced due to the movement of benches that carry participants while they also have some kind of mediamotion experience. This is the principle behind most contemporary “ride-the movie” theme park attractions (*Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey*, for example).
- 4) The body moves but its movement is not a *sine qua non* condition for the interaction of the human sensorium with the technological apparatus. Dancing in an *aparelhagem* party is an example of movement in this category.

These, of course, are not the only kinds of mobility found in entertainment practices. Roller coasters, for example, displace the body due to the movement of benches, but there is usually no interaction with any kind of media. It is a special kind of “pure” locomotion entertainment experience, in which pleasure comes from the falling and looping movements through the air at high speed. Ferris wheels are another example of an entertainment experience in which the body is displaced without interaction with technological apparatuses – pleasure comes from sightseeing at high altitudes. These purely locomotive kinds of movement have not been considered in my investigation. This is so because, as stated before, mobility is a widely encompassing notion that must be carefully dealt with in concrete analyses of cultural objects. Covering all levels and forms

of mobility in contemporary entertainment practices would be an impractical task. Therefore, in order to narrow down the scope of the investigation, special emphasis was placed on entertainment practices in which the interaction of the human sensorial apparatus with technological devices was particularly important.

This sensorial aspect, which is imbued in the concept of mediamotion, led me to another strategic theoretical maneuver to obtain a common underlying basis for the analysis of artworks and entertainment products: a return to the etymological origins of the word *aesthetics*. Aesthetics as a branch of philosophy is commonly understood as “philosophy of art”. In this restricted sense, its objective is to investigate such notions as the beautiful or the sublime for the critical judgment of works of art. The validity and meaning of these judgments and the principles underlying the making of artworks are common topics associated with aesthetics. The concerns and reflections of the discipline, associated exclusively with the fine arts, are usually applicable to the restricted universe of art galleries and museums, not encompassing the realm of mass entertainment. My initial hypothesis was that the engagement of the senses and the movements used in both artistic installations and some theme park attractions were strikingly similar. It would be difficult, however, to discuss the “aesthetic” mechanisms at work in mass entertainment products, since the term was semantically circumscribed to a very restricted cultural universe. Moving back to the etymological origins of the word was a theoretical maneuver that allowed me to overcome such an impasse.

Aesthetics comes from the Greek *aisthētikós*, which means “sensitive, perceptive”, and whose radical is *aisthēsis*, that is, “perception from the senses”. When Baumgarten appropriated the term in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the objective was to create a theory

of perception based on the ancient differentiation between *aistheta* and *noeta*. The first category, the “objects of sense”, would be the objects of study of the incipient science of perception that Baumgarten was proposing, whereas the second, the “objects of thought” would belong to the science of logic. In this new theory of perception, Baumgarten (1954 [1735]) attempted to apply rational principles to the critical judging of the beautiful – a strategy that was later criticized by Kant (1996 [1781], p.74). Although Baumgarten was specifically interested in the investigation of poetry, it was clear that his aesthetic project was not meant to be a branch of philosophy that would specialize in the fine arts. His careful choice of the word was anchored in the ancient empiricist philosophical tradition of *lower cognitive faculty*, which argued that cognition was the result of the sensorial interaction with the material world. A return to *aisthesis* and Baumgarten’s project of creating a general theory of perception, and not a philosophy of art, allowed me to establish comparisons between artworks and a wider array of cultural products.

Both the great applicability of the term mobility to different cultural phenomena and the return to aisthesis were the foundation that allowed me to circulate between these two cultural subsystems that are rarely put side by side in contemporary scholarly investigations. Based on this foundation, I proposed to discuss contemporary entertainment products under the syntagm *aisthesis mobility*. As the name suggests, the research focused on kinds of mobility in which the aisthesis, that is, the sensory perception, played a decisive role in the entertainment experience. For analytical purposes, two basic aspects of aisthesis mobility were isolated.

The first, *kinesthetics*, explores the taste for acceleration, aisthesis intensity and immersion that audiences look for in contemporary entertainment practices. The second,

*intermediality*, addresses the relations between distinct media systems and their impact on the reception of entertainment products.

With the term *kinesthetics*, a remarkable trend in the production and reception of contemporary entertainment products was identified. While the body remains still, moves or is carried around as described in the typology above, the human sensorial apparatus is normally stimulated in traditional mediamotion experiences. As the illustrations in chapter 3 have shown, this experience takes place at high speeds, and the images depicted on the screen or the actions taking place in front of the spectator are fast-paced, thus increasing the sensation of mobility. CGI blockbusters, children's cartoons, theme park attractions and even soap operas – among many other products – are characterized by visual acceleration. This effect can be achieved through several methods. It can take place at the level of the *montage* (the images change from one scene to another at a frantic velocity), in the way the camera moves (camera somersaults and zooms, for example) or through the speed of the movement shown (frenetic chases, for instance). Most often, all these techniques are employed at once.

In the article “Quand James dépasse Bond ou 40 ans d'accélération visuelle”, Philippe Viallon (2011) analyzes all of these types of movement in James Bond movies from 1962 to 2002. According to the author, the exacerbation of these kinds of movement is not exclusive to Bond movies: “Représentation du mouvement, mouvements de la caméra, mouvement créé par le montage : c'est la triple dimension du mouvement qui semble s'hypertrophier de nos jours dans l'image animée” (p.183). To prove his argument, Viallon undertakes a meticulous quantitative analysis of 20 James Bond films in which he compares the average duration of the shots, the duration of the action scenes,

the number of scenes shown at the same time and the speed of the scene shown on the screen in each movie. Through the use of tables, his findings statistically prove that there is a clear acceleration of the rhythm of the images. The first table illustrates this tendency:

### A. La durée moyenne des plans

Titre	Année	Durée officielle	Durée réelle	Nombre plans	Durée moy	RÉALISATEUR
<i>Dr. No</i>	1962	110 min	103'13"	920	6,7"	Young
<i>Bons baisers de Russie</i>	1963	118 min	106'05"	1124	5,6"	Young
<i>Goldfinger</i>	1964	108 min	101'15"	1545	5,4"	Hamilton
...						
<i>Demain ne meurt jamais</i>	1997	119 min	110'30"	2795	2,3"	Spottiswoode
<i>Le monde ne suffit pas</i>	1999	128 min	116'05"	2380	2,9"	Apted
<i>Meurs un autre jour</i>	2002	134 min	124'24"	2965	2,5"	Tamahori

Source: Viallon, 2011, p.183.

In three movies from the 1960s, the average duration of each shot was 5.9". In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the average duration dropped to 2.6", that is, less than half the duration in the 1960s. As a consequence, the number of shots has also dramatically increased in the latest movies. The average number of shots per minute in *Dr. No* is 8.9 (920 divided by 103), whereas in *Die Another Day* the average is 23.9 (2965 divided by 124). This means that, in 40 years, James Bond accelerated more than 2.5 times in terms of the duration of shots. The analyses of the other tables come to similar conclusions: there is an increase of the action scenes and a decrease of the dialogue scenes.

Furthermore, even dialogue scenes in the latest movies tend to be more fast-paced due to the camera movements or the speed of the talk. In light of his findings, Viallon concludes:

En résumé, on peut dire que les films ont peu à peu abandonné l’alternance habituelle de temps faibles et de temps forts pour arriver à une alternance entre temps forts et temps encore plus forts. Les résultats des quatre catégories analysés sont convergents : tous indiquent une accélération du rythme des images, accélération confirmée par l’étude de la bande son, avec notamment le rythme des musiques. (p.186)

This last remark is particularly interesting for my analysis because the kinesthetic phenomenon is not restricted to visual acceleration. Two other elements are almost invariably added to the mobile entertainment experience: aesthetic intensity and immersion. It is not enough to watch a visually accelerated James Bond movie. It has to be accompanied by equally accelerated rock and roll music, loud explosions, mesmerizing sound and visual effects in a multiplex theater whose architecture and technology (the speakers, the position of the seats, the size of the screen, the quality of the image, etc.) are conceived to assault the senses and provide as immersive an experience as possible.

A comparison between the opening scenes of *Prospero’s Books* (Greenaway, 1991), considered an “art movie”, and *Die Another Day* (Tamahori, 2002), a franchise blockbuster, can illustrate the kinesthetic tendencies of entertainment products. Both are motion pictures, and therefore, when it comes to physical mobility, they follow the same principle: the body remains still and the perception of movement comes from the images on the screen. Both are very mobile in the sense that the images are shown in a very dynamic montage; that is, many shots are shown in short periods of time. Each shot also features a considerable amount of motion: bodies moving, extras dancing, flowing water

alternating with images of flames, close-ups of drops of water, etc. Another technique employed by both movies is the showing of more than one scene in a single shot. Peter Greenaway, for example, repeatedly overlaps different scenes in the same shot in multilayered screens.



Greenaway's multilayered images technique in *Prospero's Books*. Image property of Cine Electra Ltd., extracted from youtube.com, retrieved June 4, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pdoUjdaIVM>, all rights reserved.

In this shot, it is possible to identify three different layers of images. The furthest to the back shows raindrops apparently falling on one of Prospero's books, the Book of Water, which can be seen in the frontmost frame in the center. The two frames are connected, but their placement on the screen provokes a sense of discontinuity in the spectator. Between these two frames, there is a middle layer in which Prospero is seen bathing and talking to Ariel, who is urinating into the water behind the book in the central frame. Ariel can only be seen because the front frame with the Book of Water flashes,

appearing and disappearing on the screen in the blink of an eye. All these discontinuities cause a certain disorientation in the spectator, who must move his or her eyes from scene to scene trying to make sense of the images.

*Die Another Day* (Tamahori, 2002) also places different scenes in the same shot. In the opening scene, the protagonist, James Bond, is being tortured by drowning by a couple of villains. The spectator sees the character's face from inside the tank used for the torture.



*Die Another Day* (Tamahori, 2002), opening scene. Image property of Eon Productions, extracted from youtube.com, retrieved June 4, 2011, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JBzxKLS-dY>, all rights reserved.

In the center of the screen, the spectator sees the protagonist desperately moving his head in an attempt to break free. On each side, it is possible to see women swimming and moving their bodies as if they were diving into the water. This example does not feature the radical overlapping of frames seen in *Prospero's Books*, but it is possible to see two different scenes put together in the same shot. In both movies, these techniques, allied with a visual extravaganza of vivid colors and surprising images, increase the sensation of movement and aesthetic activation. However, there is one considerable

difference between them. The sound effects in *Prospero's Books* are minimalist. All the spectator hears in the first minutes is the repeated sound of water slowly dripping and John Gielgud's (the British actor playing Prospero) deep voice reading the Book of Water. In the second part of the scene, the spectator hears the music composed by Michael Nyman, the famous English musician known for his minimalist film scores. Steady pulse, repetition and very slow musical changes are the characteristics of the sound score in the opening credits. *Die Another Day*, on the other hand, opens with a fast paced pop song written and performed by Madonna. Composed specially for *Die Another Day*, the homonymous song features a strong electronic beat. The explosion of sounds is synchronized with close-up images of moving scorpions, dancing girls of fire and electric shocks. Although the visual movement is very strong in both movies, the aesthetic intensity added by the fast paced soundtrack and sound effects of *Die Another Day* gives the spectator an increased sensation of mobility. Aesthetic intensity does not automatically mean more mobility, but it can be – and indeed is – used by the entertainment industry to increase the sensation of accelerated rhythm, as can be clearly observed in *Die Another Day*.

The sensation of mobility and aesthetic intensity can also be heightened if the entertainment experience takes place in an immersive environment. The resurgence of 3D in movie theaters, the new 3D TV sets on the market, IMAX and motion games are just some of the new technologies currently being developed so that audiences can have an even more intense mobile and aesthetic experience. When James Bond, Harry Potter and Spiderman fans go to the movies, or play a video game, they want to feel as if they were *inside* their heroes' accelerated and intense adventures as discussed in chapter 3.

The second aspect of aesthetic mobility investigated was *intermediality*. Created as an analogous concept to intertextuality, intermediality refers to the mutual influences and relations that can be observed between different media in a given mediascape. Intermediality was used as an “umbrella notion” to encompass other concepts that describe similar intermedial phenomena: transmedia, media convergence, media crossover, remediation, etc. The proliferation of such concepts in different spheres – academia, the entertainment industry and communication systems engineering, for example – reveals the interest in understanding the scope and complexity of the phenomenon in the contemporary mediascape. Intermediality is widespread in many different forms in entertainment products. One such form is franchise media crossover, that is, the transposition of the same character or storyline to several different media. Although the phenomenon is not new, it has reached new levels of commercial exploitation in the last decades. A relatively recent new term has been widely used to refer to this kind of transposition: transmedia storytelling. The idea of transmedia storytelling, that is, “the construction and enhancement of entertainment franchises” (Jenkins, 2003), is studied not only in academic circles but also by entertainment companies. In the entertainment business, there is a growing tendency to create project teams and/or hire specialists to develop transmedia product lines. Transmedia has attained a degree of sophistication that goes beyond the simple repetition of a successful storyline in different media. Jeff Gomez, one of the most respected specialists in the business, affirms that

In today's interconnected world, young adults, teens and even kids have become so comfortable with media technology that they flow from one platform to the next. The problem is that their content is not flowing with them. As a discipline, transmedia provides us with a foundation for the development, production and

rollout of entertainment properties or consumer brands across multiple media platforms. Transmedia creates the flow. Instead of repeating the plots over and over again for each medium, creators can continue and expand their storylines, generating dazzling mythologies and complex narratives. (Gomez, 2009)

My interest in including this kind of intermedial phenomenon in the mobility debate lies in the fact that there are at least two kinds of movement at play here. The first one is the most obvious. The intense flow from one media platform to another puts young audiences today in a constant state of “in transit”. However, as my thesis claims, this state of movement is not restricted to storytelling. The intermedial phenomenon entails the manipulation and transference of sets of sensorial elements characteristic of a specific media platform to another media. When fans play *Batman Lego*, for example, they are not only reshaping and reconfiguring the Batman story as observed by transmedia specialists. They are also rearranging and refashioning previous sensorial experiences and applying them to different media. The specific relations between storytelling and aesthetic mobility in transmedia practices, and their impact on the reception of such products, is yet to be investigated by academia and the entertainment business.

In my thesis, however, other equally important correlations were examined. Through several illustrations, I have shown that aesthetic mobility and the economic and technological rationale that moves the entertainment industry have to be understood as parts of a bigger system of production and reception. The way the senses are engaged, the technologies developed to produce entertainment experiences and the pursuit of economic success interact in an intricate system of mutual influences, as graphically represented in the systemic model that guided my investigation.

The applicability of such a model was tested with the analysis of the Brazilian *tecnobrega*, which was chosen as the main case to be studied in my investigation. Before

the introduction of *aparelhagens*, most examples discussed came from the global – especially American – entertainment industry. The analysis of objects like *tecnobrega* enriches the mobility debate because in addition to the aesthetic, technological and economic dimension, it brings up socio-cultural aspects that are paramount in regions with great inequalities such as Latin America. There are socio-cultural aspects in the production and reception of global entertainment products that could be linked to the general debate on mobility. However, the *tecnobrega* industry is an extreme and unique case which blends social conflict, cultural stigmatization, mobility and commercial success. On the one hand, *tecnobrega* faces strong oppression and prejudice; on the other, it has reached the status of a thriving industry that has grown exponentially in the last twenty years. How could my analysis be applied to such a specific Latin American context? What differences and similarities would be found in relation to global entertainment products? The application of my analytical framework to such a context of extreme socio-cultural tensions as the one found in the *tecnobrega* industry yielded unexpected results.

It was clear that the *tecnobrega* industry follows – and even exacerbates – the aesthetic, technological and economic mechanisms at work in the global entertainment industry. In both areas, technological innovations are developed to achieve immersion and aesthetic intensity which are combined with intricate kinds of mobility – locomotion and mediamotion. In all cases, immersion and aesthetic intensity proved to have an impact in increasing the sensation of mobility experienced by audiences. In turn, different kinds of movement put these audiences in a state of disorientation and overstimulation that increases the sensation of immersion and aesthetic intensity. This complex

mechanism of feedback loops has become paradigmatic in contemporary entertainment, and when products operating these principles become commercially successful, the paradigm is reinforced. New technologies to achieve immersion, aesthetic intensity and mobility are sold to audiences who expect experiences in which these elements are creatively and intensively used. The phenomenon was found to different degrees in several entertainment products, but theme park attractions and *aparelhagem* parties were certainly the examples in which the phenomenon was most clearly visible. The unexpected and surprising discovery in *aparelhagem* parties is that this system of feedback loops is not only used to achieve commercial success, but also plays a role in cultural legitimization. The technological show, the aesthetic extravaganza and the movements that accompany them are certainly used to sell a product to *Paraense* audiences, but their function is not exclusively commercial. DJs and fans insistently and proudly brag about the “first class” spectacle they produce. In their struggle to reverse *tecnobrega*’s cultural stigmatization, this has been one of their most recurrent weapons. Therefore, the complex system described by my thesis assumed a new function in the intense war of symbolic values involving the *tecnobrega* industry.

Amidst this war, the *tecnobrega* industry has been “discovered” as a new way of producing mass entertainment by puzzled copyright and mass culture specialists worldwide. As it usually occurs in any polarized debate, these specialists – scholars, filmmakers, magazine editors, even TV celebrities – have “taken sides”. As jokingly suggested by the title of the documentary *Good Copy, Bad Copy* (Johnsen, Andreas, Ralf Christensen, and Henrik Moltke, 2007) there is a polarization between “good guys” and “bad guys” when sensitive issues like copyright enforcement are at stake. In this Danish

documentary, the position adopted by the filmmakers is subtle but very clear. The documentary uses different strategies to advance its line of reasoning.

Many intriguing characters and stories, mostly related to the music industry, are featured in the documentary. The first story is about an independent Pittsburgh artist called Girl Talk. Famous in alternative electronic music worldwide, Girl Talk specialized in mixing and remixing songs from artists of all musical tendencies, creating new original songs. His technique consists in extracting samples from the catalogue of mainstream artists, and in digitally manipulating, remixing and selling them on his website at very affordable prices. Girl Talk's ingenious sampling techniques gave him prestige and fame among electronic music fans all over the world. Portrayed in a very sympathetic way, Girl Talk declares that the current copyright laws of the American phonographic industry are inhibiting the flow of culture and music. In an interesting scene, viewers can see Girl Talk "in action". In a few minutes, using an ordinary laptop at home, he takes a song, extracts a sample, alters it digitally, mixes it to another song and posts it on the internet. The whole process takes a couple of minutes in front of the camera and after presenting the result, Girl Talk puts forward a compelling argument. He says that he would be happy to pay royalties if he could afford it. But even in a hypothetical scenario in which he would have unlimited funds, millions or billions of dollars to pay copyright, it would take him 50 years to go through all the legal hassles to obtain licenses for all the songs he had already sampled. The documentary ingeniously places this declaration after the scene in which he had just used technology to produce and distribute a song in a couple of minutes. Editing and the power of the images are used to convince viewers of the great

gap between the paradigms of creation, production and distribution the phonographic industry insists on adopting and the possibilities offered by new technologies.

The documentary then turns to another story, the lawsuit that was a landmark for the traditional phonographic industry in the United States, Bridgeport Music vs. Dimension Films. Bridgeport was the owner of the copyrights of a famous funk song titled *Get off your Ass and Jam* by George Clinton and Funkadelic (1975). In 1990, the hip hop group N.W.A. sampled two seconds of the song, digitally manipulated it and used it in another song titled *100 Miles and Running*. Bridgeport decided then to file a lawsuit against the group, accusing it of intellectual piracy. The documentary supposedly gives the chance to listen to the arguments on both sides in a rather impartial way. Dimension Film's representative insists that sampling is illegal and that it does not promote artistic creativity. Other specialists – both in favor of and against piracy – present their views on the subject. Some of them show that the two-second extract – three musical notes – were deeply manipulated to the point of being hardly recognizable in the remixed hip hop song. When the documentary shows that Dimension Film won the lawsuit, audiences cannot help feeling that injustice had been served.

The documentary then cuts to another case narrated by Siva Vaidhyanathan, identified as an associate professor in the Department of Culture and Communication at New York University. With the authority of a scholarly specialist on the topic, he starts his interview by stating that copyright law undermines everyone's interests in the phonographic industry. He cites a famous remix artist, Danger Mouse, as an example. In 2004, Danger Mouse released an album titled *The Grey Album*, which mixed the vocals of *The Black Album* by the rapper Jay Z (2003) and the musical track of *The White Album*

by The Beatles (1968). Danger Mouse had produced a small number of CDs and distributed them mainly among friends, who posted the songs on the internet. According to Professor Vaidhyanathan, the work was considered brilliant and became an instant classic. Danger Mouse himself is interviewed and explains how the project began as a personal challenge at home and how it eventually “got crazy and out of hand” (Danger Mouse, 2007). When *The Beatles*’ publishing company tried to stop the circulation of the CD it was far too late. Danger Mouse legally accepted not to distribute it anymore, but the songs were already part of the public domain on the net. Professor Vaidhyanathan explains that the album was probably the biggest hit of 2005, but that neither Danger Mouse, nor The Beatles’ publishing company, nor Jay Z nor the people who voluntarily distributed it on the net earned any profits from the album. The interviewee sarcastically concludes that “Beatles lawyers must have made some money, but nobody else did” (Vaidhyanathan, 2007).

In opposition to Girl Talk and Professor Vaidhyanathan, the Chairman and CEO of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), Dan Glickman, is also interviewed. He represents six of the largest motion picture companies in the country and speaks about the difficulty of fighting piracy with the advent of the internet. According to Mr. Glickman, the street variety of piracy was easier to fight because there were actual agents that could be arrested on the street. Internet piracy, on the other hand, is much more difficult to attack because it is a global phenomenon whose functioning is “fluid” and whose agents are harder to identify and stop. The CEO recognizes that new technologies make it impossible to stop piracy, but his mission is to “try to make it as difficult and tedious as possible and show that there are consequences if one is caught”

(Glickman, 2007). Immediately this declaration, surveillance camera images are shown and a sinister tune is played. These images are real footage of the 2006 raid against the Swedish internet server The Pirate Bay. In that year the MPAA filed an international suit requesting the shutting down of The Pirate Bay, one of the main websites in the world for *torrent* filesharing. The Swedish justice system accepted the American request, but the episode sparked a national uproar. The Swedish justice system was accused by the national media outlets of giving in to the pressures of the powerful American entertainment industry. The young Pirate Bay owners mobilized Swedish youth in a national campaign for file sharing rights. The mobilization eventually became international and turned into a civil rights movement in which the young users of the website began to engage in civil disobedience through protests and public manifestations to support piracy all over Europe. After three days, The Pirate Bay was available again because servers from all over the world had offered to host the website. The MPAA realized that it was impossible to shut down the website since its physical server could easily migrate to another country. Furthermore, the server migration did not affect the flux of torrent file sharing because of the way this file sharing system works. In the so-called BitTorrent protocol, the file to be shared is divided into segments, and each participating computer in the world holds a piece of the document. When someone is downloading a file, the pieces can come from any user in the world. Therefore, each user of the system works as a fragmented “donor”, making it impossible to stop peers around the world from sharing files in this computational floodlike system. The documentary showed the whole controversy, and the two sides were portrayed in a very particular way. The Pirate Bay owners were young, rebels, dynamic, creative anarchists who believed in

free circulation of cultural goods. The MPAA representative was an old lawyer-like figure who wore an elegant suit and tie and who advocated the idea that piracy destroys creativity and hinders the economical viability of culture industries. This is when the documentary switches to other places in the world to portray successful stories of local entertainment industries that bourgeoned out without copyright enforcement mechanisms. The two cases presented by the documentary are the *Nollywood* film industry in Nigeria and the *tecnobrega* industry in Belém do Pará.

The filmmakers insist on images that show how both *Nollywood* and the *tecnobrega* industries are driven by a poor population that uses the technology they have access to in order to produce thriving culture industries, in which the concept of copyright is inexistent. An important argument in the documentary is that these are successful industries that have “a lot to teach” to the rich countries of the world. In Belém do Pará, one character is particularly interesting. Beto Metralha is a music producer who has specialized in and gained fame from remixing and reinventing musical hits. The documentary shows the very poor house he lives in with his wife, mother and father. Then, Beto Metralha is shown “in action”, remixing the song *Crazy* by Danger Mouse and Cee Lo who formed at that time the American black hip hop duo Gnarls Barkley (2006). In a few minutes Beto Metralha replaces the song’s bass, adds some techno beats and *Crazy* becomes a *tecnobrega* song. The last scene is representative of the documentary’s main argument. The filmmakers take the *tecnobrega* remix of *Crazy* to Girl Talk, who listens carefully and immediately starts remixing the remix again. Girl Talk then speaks about the beauty of having a song created by an American hip hop duo that is reinterpreted by Brazilian folks and then sent back to the United States to a white

Pittsburgh guy, who once again reinvents the song. Girl Talk defends the use of new technologies to spread musical ideas that can cross race, geographical and socio-cultural boundaries. The new technological possibilities for recycling and circulating ideas are defended as a powerful way of promoting artistic creation.

The polarized narrative of *Good Copy, Bad Copy* could not be clearer. The editing, the careful choice of the images, the interviews with scholarly specialists, the music, the sarcasm, the characters portrayed, everything is carefully put together so that audiences pick the “right side”. The good guys are found in alternative entertainment industries that have embraced new technologies to democratize culture, empower the masses and give them access to the means of production of their own mass entertainment. The bad guys are the giant multinationals that use judicial mechanisms of oppression to stop the enormous possibilities of reproducibility and circulation of cultural goods made possible by new technologies.

The TV show *Central da Periferia* (Casé, 2005) also plays with this opposition, only slightly changing the focus of the conflict. In Globo’s TV show, the masses of Belém do Pará are portrayed as the “good guys” who refused to tolerate the cultural oppression they had suffered for so many decades. They are the victims and the heroes of the narrative. Many others follow this reassessment of the *tecnobrega* industry. From the comprehensive scholarly study by Lemos and Castro (2008) to the acclaim of Brazil’s most important music critic (Motta, 2009) to the praise of the editor-in-chief of the prestigious magazine *Wired* (Anderson, 2009), the *tecnobrega* industry is celebrated as a new frontier, a story of success by subaltern populations that could teach the old mainstream music industry how to do business in the digital age.

My analysis endorses this tendency, but with some reservations. My approach questions the judgment of tastes that is part of deep Brazilian and Latin American cultural roots. In the case of the *tecnobrega* music scene in Belém, the judgment and hierarchization of tastes have long produced much more than just social distinction. They have been a powerful instrument for the stigmatization of subaltern cultural products and the social classes that produce them. Mobility as an interpretive framework and the *aesthetic* approach are research strategies that allow for overcoming such stigmas, contributing to foster inquisitive and prejudice-free scholarly interests in diverse cultural objects. However, in polarized debates, there is always the risk of reducing the complexity of an object, of reinforcing the “good guy vs. bad guy” myths and, instead of eliminating old paradigms, creating new ones with new prejudices and misconceptions. The overwhelmingly positive reassessment of the *tecnobrega* business tends to ignore or minimize the internal conflicts and new relations of power created within this industry. After the initial moment of strong cultural exclusion and oppression, it is understandable that there is an antithetical second moment of total celebration. Yet, by simply inverting the positions of a dichotomy, the dichotomic structure is not overcome. This dissertation has aimed at elaborating a third position that would bring about a more careful and nuanced approach to the *tecnobrega* phenomenon. This position is in tune with Cunha and Godinho’s documentary *Brega S/A* that succeeded in portraying the *tecnobrega* industry in all its complexity and ambiguity. This documentary suggests that the same characteristics that enabled the flourishing of an impressive entertainment industry – including the embracement of new reproduction technologies and the non-enforcement of copyright laws – have created new legal and ethical dilemmas. Ignoring these dilemmas

is just one step away from patronizing the population that should be heard in the debate and reducing their voices to new stereotypes.

In the ongoing struggles and transformations of the *tecnobrega* industry, it is impossible to know the outcome of the battle. Will it eventually be absorbed by the mainstream Brazilian phonographic industry? Will it achieve the much desired cultural inclusion and recognition? Will it inspire the emergence of other subaltern entertainment industries in Brazil? Will *aparelhagens* continue to be the propelling force of the industry with their successful blending of mobility, aesthetic intensity and immersion? Will new agents emerge and change the rules of the game? These questions can only be answered by future developments of the investigated phenomenon, developments that might demand new investigations. After all, when it comes to the dynamic *tecnobrega* industry, Heraclitus' *panta rhei* is the only immutable rule: "everything moves, and nothing remains still".

## APPENDIX

### Interviews with *aparelhagem* fans

These were qualitative interviews that had a loosely controlled set of questions. This set of questions revolved around two aspects, namely, their perceptions on what made an *aparelhagem* commercially successful and on musical prejudice. The two *equipes* I interviewed first met me in groups, but the actual interviews were conducted individually. They did not listen to each other's interviews, but the answers to most questions were strikingly similar. These were the questions that loosely guided the conversation:

- 1) What is the secret of the (commercial) success of an *aparelhagem*? Technical quality of the sound? The image and light spectacle? The quality of the musical repertoire? The DJ? Others (support from important people, from the media, publicity, etc.)? If you had to rank them, what would be the top two factors and in what order?
- 2) Is there still prejudice against *aparelhagens* today? What kind of prejudice? Who has a prejudice against this industry? Can you provide some examples? If there is prejudice today, how does it compare to the prejudice in the past? Is it stronger now? Is it weaker now? Why is that? If there is prejudice today, do you think it can be reversed? How?

Of the fourteen interviews, here is a selection of the most insightful ones. The interviews were conducted in Portuguese, and the respective English translations follow immediately afterward (my translations). Following ethical guidelines, each interviewee

received a codename, the same that was used in chapter 4. The ages, professions and all other pieces of information correspond to the real data collected during the interviews.

João: João was my contact in *Equipe Xarope*. Related to my cousin's wife, João provided one of the most interesting interviews. Young, articulate and smart, this university student incarnates the conscious pursuit of cultural legitimization that characterizes the *brega* industry today. João circulates within the academic, more elitist cultural world of a university, but is also an active member of *Equipe Xarope*, most of whose associates are poor and uneducated. His interesting "mixed" position allowed him to have interesting insights on *aparelhagem* parties in Belém do Pará. He was also one of the proudest *brega* fans I interviewed.

Marcio – Muito obrigado pela entrevista, João. Eu tenho umas perguntinhas pra você. Na sua opinião, qual é o segredo do sucesso de uma aparelhagem? O que faz uma aparelhagem ser um sucesso?

João – Bom, primeiro, o que leva a gente a frequentar aparelhagem é o carisma dos DJs, o conhecimento que a gente tem através deles e o sucesso é inovação, é novas tecnologias, novos aparatos que chegam pra gente conhecer, por mais que a gente não conheça anteriormente.

M – Que tipo de aparato? Fala um pouquinho pra mim como funciona esse aparato.

J – O telão de LED, o telão de alta definição, a qualidade do som, a estrutura física da aparelhagem, ou seja, a tecnologia de poder levantar, de poder botar uma coisa nova, uma coisa nunca jamais vista em qualquer outro lugar.

M – Uma coisa que surpreende? Um espetáculo?

J – Uma coisa que surpreende, que pra nós é um espetáculo.

M – Fala um pouquinho qual é a marca dos espetáculos que você mais gosta, por exemplo, aparelhagem tal, eu acho incrível tal espetáculo, tal efeito que é marca daquela aparelhagem.

J – Pode falar nome?

M – Pode.

J – A do Super Pop que a gente teve a oportunidade de conhecer bem, um pouquinho mais tarde que a do Príncipe Negro. O que mais chama a nossa atenção é o tipo de música que eles jogam. A seleção das músicas. A seleção das músicas é super importante pro pessoal ficar ali todo tempo vibrando e é uma coisa que tu vais no Super Pop e todo mundo *tá* ali vibrando com as músicas que eles tocam. E geralmente quando, por exemplo, como é o Águia de Fogo, aquilo ali sobe fazendo o voo da Águia. Aquilo ali sobe e depois tem um espetáculo de iluminação, de fogos de artifício e outras coisas também que o Juninho vai e faz uma dança lá em cima e todo mundo gosta, todo mundo admira.

M – Que tipo de dança é essa?

J – Bom, é um tipo de dança, por exemplo, assim, ele *tá* comandando o Águia. Por exemplo, quando ele fala “para o lado direito” vira pro lado direito a Águia e a base. Ele fala pro lado esquerdo, ele vai pro lado esquerdo.

M – É uma coreografia...

J – Sim, é uma coreografia. Ele fala subiu, o Águia sobe cada vez mais. Ele fala descer, ele vai descendo.

M – E essa coreografia é pras pessoas que estão lá embaixo que dançam?

J – Não, na verdade é ele que dança no ritmo de uma música, o DJ, o próprio DJ que dança no ritmo de uma música. E solta fogos, solta as imagens das equipes no telão de alta definição.

M – Você acha que isso é a coisa que mais marca, é essa pirotecnia, esse jogo de iluminação, essa tecnologia?

J – Com certeza.

M – É o que a galera gosta?

J – É o que a galera gosta.

M – E se não tiver isso, a aparelhagem é considerada menos popular?

J – Bom, sim é considerada menos popular, mas a equipe tendo reconhecimento, se o DJ lembrar que você está ali, se ele disser “A Equipe Xarope está aqui, a equipe tal e tal *tá* aqui”, isso já é gratificante pra gente, porque a gente vai estimular cada vez mais, “Poxa, ele deu moral pra gente. Ele reconheceu que a gente estava lá”...

M – Ele reconhece o grupo.

J – Reconhece o grupo. Então isso já é uma satisfação mais do que boa pra gente.

M – Então tu falaste três coisas: reconhecimento dos fãs-clubes, das equipes, das galeras, a música que você falou que é importante, a seleção das músicas e o espetáculo em si. Tem um que você acha que é mais importante que o outro?

J – Não, todos são importantes. O Super Pop é bom porque sempre ele surpreende a gente e vem com uma novidade, uma homenagem a uma equipe, vem com alguma coisa que eles fazem, um lançamento.

M – Mas se você tivesse que escolher um destes elementos, qual seria o mais importante?

J – A simplicidade dos DJs.

M – Quer dizer a relação com o grupo...

J – Sim, a relação com os grupos, com os fãs-clubes. É isso que marca o Super Pop.

M – Ok, e você acha que tem preconceito hoje contra as aparelhagens, contra quem frequenta as festas?

J – Bom, em relação a isso que foi dito na reunião que teve uma semana atrás, que era justamente isso, o preconceito perante a sociedade. Porque, assim, as pessoas de alta renda, de alto escalão veem a aparelhagem assim como um acúmulo de gente, de como posso dizer... de pivetes, de marginais. A aparelhagem hoje é conhecida perante essa sociedade, essa alta burguesia aí como uma marginalidade. Então pra eles que não conhecem, pra eles que não sabem o que a gente dá valor... porque já virou cultura do Pará, já virou uma referência no Estado do Pará o que é uma aparelhagem. São pessoas que não conhecem que tem essa ideia de marginalização de aparelhagem e totalmente não é isso. Não é isso. Claro que tem aquelas coisas que a gente vê em baile funk no Rio de Janeiro, tem aquelas coisas, rola uma briga aqui, rola uma briga ali, mas nada que venha a acarretar na imagem pra quem tá ali. Porque é um aglomerado de gente, as pessoas tão bebendo, tão se divertindo, aí tem uns que já não...

M – E você acha, João, que essa classe média tá começando a mudar de opinião ou não? Por exemplo, a classe média começa a ir à festa de aparelhagem?

J – Bom, alguns freqüentam. Alguns freqüentam sim.

M – Mas na sua percepção, você acha que não é a maioria.

J – Não é a maioria. Com certeza não é a maioria. Porque eles têm outros tipos de música. Eles podem pagar por uma coisa, por uma sede social, ir lá beber seu uisquezinho. A gente que frequenta aparelhagem, a gente não tem todo esse poder de renda. Claro se a gente não conhecesse aparelhagem, a gente jamais iria frequentar. Mas a gente que trabalha, a gente que estuda e sabe como é o trabalho deles, a gente frequenta sim porque isso é nosso, a gente tem que defender isso.

M – Mas é engraçado porque a festa de aparelhagem tem muito mais tecnologia, mostra mais o poder da tecnologia, das imagens, dos fogos de artifício, do que a festa da sede social, né?

J – É a sede social é mais assim pras pessoas curtirem, por exemplo, uma música eletrônica, um passado, essas coisas... Não tem nada, não tem o que ver. É ali a alta burguesia se encontrando pra bater papo de final de semana, resumir o que fez, os empresários se reunindo falando de empresas. E eu acho que isso não é uma diversão. A gente não. A gente que gosta de aparelhagem vai pra se divertir, pra tirar o peso do cansaço. A gente trabalha a semana inteira. Quando chega o final de semana, a gente quer se divertir. [...] Poxa, a gente vai no Super Pop, a gente vai no Príncipe Negro, a gente vai no Rubi, a gente vai no que for. Tocando brega, que é a nossa música hoje em dia, tocando brega pra gente, tudo é perfeito. [...]

M – E você *tava* me falando de preconceito. Você já sofreu algum preconceito, sofre algum preconceito quando fala pra um amigo “Eu curto aparelhagem”, tem gente que olha meio torto?

J – Tem. O próprio pessoal da minha faculdade, alguns que têm dinheiro, são bem de vida, eu às vezes digo “Ah, eu gosto de festas de aparelhagem”. “Ah, mas isso é pra pivete, pra gente marginal”. Aí eu falo “Ah amigo é porque você não conhece”. “Ah, o meu negócio é Assembléia Paraense, é a AABB”. Aí eu falo “Eu não vou porque não tenho dinheiro” O que eu ganho dá pra ir na aparelhagem, dá pra beber, me divertir. Lá não. Eu indo pra uma sede social dessas, eu não vou ter com quem conversar, não vou ter prazer, o prazer que eu tenho lá no Super Pop. Não é o mesmo.

M – São outros assuntos, é outro mundo?

J – Isso, são outros assuntos, é outro mundo.

M – Você acha que isso vai mudar, pode ser mudado, como isso pode ser mudado?

J – Bom, isso pode ser mudado sim. Tem uma coisa que eu *tô* aprendendo teórico na faculdade que é o marketing. O melhor marketing é aquele de boca em boca. A gente falando bem, mostrando que a gente é da paz, que a gente vai só pra curtir, só pra se divertir, falando bem das coisas que existem na aparelhagem, eu acho que isso muda, muda sim.

M – Aí nesse sentido as equipes podem ter um papel importante.

J – Sim, podem ter um papel muito importante. Eu até propus na última reunião que teve da gente fazer uma associação entre os fã-clubes, para fazer essa interação entre os fã-clubes. Tem fã-clubes que vão só no Príncipe Negro, tem fã-clube que vai só no Super Pop, eles acabam discutindo, então o projeto que eu propus na reunião foi que a nossa meta da nossa equipe, da Equipe Xarope, é fazer essa integração entre todos os fã-clubes. Apesar de ser Príncipe Negro, Super Pop, Rubi, Tupinambá, independente de qualquer aparelhagem, a nossa integração é o fator social pra se resolver toda essa questão de marginalização, de visão marginalizada, de visão de preconceito, pessoas que não conhecem mesmo. A nossa função é essa.

M – Muitíssimo obrigado, João, foi interessantíssima a nossa conversa.

J – De nada.

M – Eu esqueci de perguntar idade e profissão.

J – Bom, tenho 25 anos, faço administração, *tô* no segundo semestre, sou paraense e curto aparelhagem (risos).

M – Maravilhoso, obrigado.

J – De nada.

**English version:**

Marcio – Thanks a lot for the interview, João. I have some questions for you. In your opinion, what is the key element for an *aparelhagem* to be successful? What makes it successful?

João – Well, first, what makes us go to a certain *aparelhagem* is the DJ's charisma, the fact that we know them. And success comes from innovation, new

technologies, new technical apparatuses that come for us, stuff that we weren't familiar with before.

M – What kind of stuff? Tell me a little bit how this apparatus works.

J – Giant LED screens, hi def screens, the sound quality, the physical structure of the *aparelhagem*, that is, the power to make the crowds participate, to show something new, something never seen before anywhere else.

M – Something that surprises? A spectacle?

J – Yeah, something that surprises us. That, for us, is a spectacle.

M – Tell me what kind of spectacle you like the best. Can you give me specific examples from specific *aparelhagens*?

J – Can I mention names?

M – Yes, you can.

J – Super Pop's effects, I'm really familiar with that one, although I got to know it after Príncipe Negro. What is very important is the kind of music they play. The music selection is very important for everybody to enjoy it all the time. That happens at Super Pop, you go there and everybody is enjoying it all the time during the party. Besides, for example, because it's the Eagle of Fire, it goes up flying as if it were an Eagle. It goes up and then there's a lighting spectacle, fireworks and other things that Juninho does, he goes up there, dances and everybody loves it.

M – What kind of dance is this?

J – Well, it's a kind of dance that when he's up there he says "to the right" and the Eagle goes to the right. He says "to the left", then the Eagle and the whole station goes to the left.

M – It's a kind of choreography.

J – Yeah, it's a kind of choreography. He says "go up" and the Eagle goes up and up. He says "go down" and it comes down.

M – And this choreography is for the fans who are down there dancing?

J – No, in fact it's the DJ who dances according to the rhythm of a song. And there's fireworks and we see the images on the hi def screens.

M – Do you think this is one of the most remarkable traits, these pyrotechnics, this technology?

J – Yeah, for sure.

M – Is that what people like?

J – Yeah, that’s what people like.

M – If the *aparelhagem* doesn’t have this technology, is it less popular?

J – Yeah, it’s considered less popular, but if the DJ remembers you are there, if he says “*Equipe Xarope* is here, *Equipe X* is here” this is already rewarding for us, we have more motivation to go back, “Wow, he acknowledges our presence here”...

M – He acknowledges the presence of the group...

J – Yeah, when this happens it’s a big satisfaction for us.

M – So you mentioned three things, acknowledging the fan-clubs’ presence, the music and the spectacle. Is there something you think is the most important among these three?

J – No, all these elements are important. Well, Super Pop is good because they surprise us, they always bring novelties, a tribute to a fan club, something they do brand new.

M – But if you had to choose one of these elements as the most important, what would that be?

J – The DJs’ simplicity.

M – You mean, the good relationship with the fans.

J – Yes, the relationship with the *equipes*, fan-clubs. That’s what is most remarkable at Super Pop.

M – Ok, do you think there’s still prejudice today against *aparelhagens* and people who go to these parties?

J – Well, that’s exactly what we discussed in the last meeting last week, the prejudice of society. Because people with high income, the hotshots, see *aparelhagens* as an agglomerate of people... how can I put it... of crooks, of criminals. *Aparelhagem* today is considered by this high society, by this bourgeoisie as a thing of criminals. So for them who don’t know what we believe is good... because the *aparelhagens* have already become a trademark of the paraense culture. The people who have these ideas are the ones who don’t know the *aparelhagens*, that’s why they think there are only crooks in there and it’s absolutely not like that. It’s not like that. Of course, there are some

problems, like the ones we see in baile funk in Rio, there are those problems, for example, every now and then there's a fight, but nothing that jeopardizes the whole experience for *aparelhagem* fans. Because there are thousands of people, people are drinking, are having fun, then there are always some people who...

M – And do you think this middle class is beginning to change? For example, has the middle class started attending *aparelhagem* parties?

J – Well some of them have started attending. Some have.

M – But, in your perception, there are still few.

J – Yeah, for sure, there are few because they have other kinds of music. They can pay for something expensive, for a classy club, they can go and drink their whisky. We, the ones who attend *aparelhagem* parties, do not have all this money. Of course, if we didn't know *aparelhagem*, we would never go to a party. But we work, we study, and we know how hard *aparelhagem* people work, so we do go to the parties, because this is ours, so we have to defend it.

M – Funny thing is that *aparelhagem* parties have more technology, they show off more technology, they are more expensive, there are more special effects than a party in a classy club, right?

J – Yeah, those classy clubs are for people who enjoy their electronic music, songs from the past, this kind of stuff. There is nothing there, there is nothing to see. It is the high bourgeoisie meeting to talk about their weekend, businessmen talking about their business. I think this is not entertainment. We are different. We, *aparelhagem* people, go to the party to really have fun, to have some distraction. We work hard all week long, so on the weekend we want to have fun. [...] We can go to Super Pop, Príncipe Negro, Rubi, whatever. If it plays *brega*, which is *our* music, if it plays *our* music for *us*, everything is perfect. [...]

M – Speaking of prejudice, have you ever suffered any kind of prejudice? Is there any kind of prejudice against you when you say “I enjoy *aparelhagem*”?

J – Yes, there is. Even my classmates at the university, some of them are wealthy, sometimes I tell them “I like *aparelhagem* parties”. Then they answer “But this is for crooks, thugs”. Then I say “No, my friend, you think like this because you don't know anything about it”. Some insist and say “Well, I only go to Assembleia Paraense,

AABB”. Then I just say “I don’t go there because I don’t have money”. I can only afford to go to an *aparelhagem*. There I can drink and have fun. In a classy club I can’t. If I go to any of these clubs, I won’t have anybody to talk to, I won’t enjoy myself like I do in a Super Pop party. It wouldn’t be the same.

M – Do they have other interests, is it another world?

J – Exactly, they have other interests, it’s another world.

M – Do you think this will change, can be changed? How?

J – Well, this can be changed. I’m learning marketing theory at the university. The best marketing is word of mouth marketing. If we say good things about *aparelhagem*, if we show we are peaceful people, that we just wanna have fun, if we emphasize the good stuff going on in *aparelhagens*, I think this misperception can be changed. It can be changed.

M – So, *equipas* and fan clubs can play an important role in this process?

J – Yes, they can play a very important role. I even proposed in the last meeting we had to found an Association of Fan Clubs so that we can have interaction among them. Some fan clubs just go to Príncipe Negro, others only to Super Pop, so they end up having rivalries. So the project I proposed aims at integrating these groups. *Equipe Xarope* can do this, integrate all these groups. Regardless of their preference, Príncipe Negro, Super Pop, Rubi or Tupinambá, if we have integration we will have the power to solve the problem of marginalization, this idea that we are all criminals, this prejudice of people who don’t really know anything about it. This is our goal.

M – Thank you very much, João, our conversation was very interesting.

J – You’re welcome.

M – I forgot to ask your age and profession.

J – Well, I am 25, I study business administration, I am in my first year at the university, I am from Pará and I love *aparelhagens* (laughs).

M – Wonderful. Thank you.

J – You’re welcome.

Paulo: Paulo, 27, self-employed, seemed to be the one who knew the *aparelhagem* business the best. He told me about his personal interaction with the owners and DJs of big *aparelhagens*. Some of his interesting insights confirmed the assumptions I had about the industry and its functioning.

Marcio – Paulo, muito obrigado pelo seu tempo pra entrevista. Eu queria que você falasse sua idade e profissão.

Paulo – Tenho 27 anos, sou autônomo, casado e tenho uma filinha.

M – Minha primeira pergunta pra você, Paulo, na sua opinião qual é o segredo do sucesso de uma aparelhagem? O que faz uma aparelhagem ter sucesso? O que é que faz uma aparelhagem boa?

P – O que é que faz uma aparelhagem boa? Rapaz, pra mim, na minha opinião eu acho que é o DJ. O DJ tem que ser aquele DJ que sabe chegar e arreentar e não aquele DJ que fica calado, que toca uma música com uma batida forte, depois mistura com mais baixa. Aí sai misturando música, atropelando umas com as outras. Tudo isso pra mim é o que dá o destaque, a maravilha na festa.

M – A qualidade e o carisma do DJ também?

P – O carisma do DJ também, cara. A interação deles, como eles fazem, *tá* mandando abraço, vê a pessoa ali que *tá* acompanhando sempre “Abraço pro fulano, que *tá* sempre com a gente e abraço pro ciclano, assim, assim”.

M – O reconhecimento ao fã-clubê...

P – Isso. Isso aí com certeza conta muito.

M – O que mais? Além do DJ, o que mais é importante?

P – Olha, além do DJ, eu acho que é a estrutura também todinha da aparelhagem. Uma aparelhagem boa... claro se tiver uma aparelhagem, vai lançar uma aparelhagem tal aí a gente vai lá prestigiar a festa, uma festinha mixuruca, umas caixinhas pequenas, um DJ que não agita bacana... Tem que ter também numa aparelhagem pra dar o destaque tem que ter o DJ, tem que ter o pessoal que trabalha por perto, tem que ter a performance dele...

M – O que você inclui nessa estrutura que você diz que é importante?

P – Iluminação, aqueles fogos que ele acende, entendeu? Uma festa de fogos de artifício que eles fazem, vai uns fogos pra lá, volta outros pra cá e o DJ pula lá na mesa de som...

M – A galera gosta disso...

P – A galera gosta disso, com certeza, o espetáculo visual, entendeu? Isso aí com certeza conta muito.

M – E nessa estrutura você inclui também as televisões, os telões?

P – Sim, as televisões, os telões. Olha, o que o pessoal gosta muito também, eles gostam muito da mídia, entendeu? Geralmente eles gostam muito da mídia, o pessoal chegar ali e dizer “Abraço pro fulano, pra equipe tal que está sempre com a gente” Aí isso daí também vai contando muito, entendeste? Aí eles vão atraindo muita gente pro lado deles, como o Super Pop e o Príncipe Negro, são duas das aparelhagens que tão arrebatando, né?

M – Por que elas têm as duas coisas que você falou, a boa relação com a galera e a estrutura como você falou?

P – Isso. Os telões, os fogos de artifício e também a gente pode ir lá na frente e mandar um abraço pra alguém. A gente vai lá, eles passam pro telão, tudo isso daí conta com certeza.

M – E você, pessoalmente, se for uma aparelhagem que não tem muito essa parte tecnológica, tem menos interesse pra você ou é a mesma coisa?

P – Não, tem menos interesse, com certeza, porque eu acho que a pessoa vai na festa, no meu caso, eu vou numa festa onde a festa estiver boa, né? Claro que se *tiver* uma festa boa aqui e a outra do lado *tiver* ruim, né, pouca gente, pouca animação, a gente vai querer ir na festa onde *tá* bem animada, né? Se tiver pouca gente..., tem uma festa ali que tem umas cinco mil pessoas, ali tem mil pessoas só, então *umbora* pra ali, porque ali tem alguma coisa de bom, o pessoal tão indo tudo pr’aquele lado ali.

M – Então lá onde tem cinco mil pessoas vai ter fogos de artifício, telões, efeitos pirotécnicos, iluminação, imagem...?

P – Isso, fora outras coisas também que às vezes eles vêm com algumas surpresas assim que nem a gente *tá* esperando, entendeu?

M – Por exemplo, que tipo de surpresa?

P – Assim, às vezes vem um equipamento novo. No caso do Super Pop, né, eles usam a vinheta deles que é uma metralhadora. Tem a Águia também e inclusive agora há pouco tempo eu *tava* conversando com um amigo meu que ele trabalha lá e ele *tava* falando pra mim “Paulo, agora esse ano, esse mês de outubro vem muito equipamento novo, que eles vão pegar de surpresa. Ah, vai ter festa do Super Pop em tal lugar, uma festa animada com feriado e tal, eles vão lançar equipamentos novos”.

M – Esse equipamentos são de som ou são do espetáculo visual?

P – Dos dois, câmera também, filmagem, entendeu? Como ele me falou, eles *tão* querendo fazer agora, *tão* querendo colocar uma águia com uma mini-câmera, fazer tipo, montar uma ferragem, fazer tipo aquela volta, aquela volta filmando tudinho, como aquela câmera da Globo que tem na Marquês da Sapucaí, entendeu? Fazer aquilo ali e isso daí eles não avisam nada... não avisam nada. Fazem o convite na rádio pra festa e chega lá é que a gente vai ver.

M – Aí a galera fica surpresa...

P – Pô, a galera fica surpresa. Aí é que a gente gosta mesmo, né? (risos) Uma coisa que a gente só via na Sapucaí, de repente chegou aqui. Olha, agora eles falaram que não é preciso mais a gente ir lá e escrever a mensagem no celular ou então anotar no papel e entregar pro rapaz. Parece-me que agora eles vão fazer uma parceria com não sei qual operadora e tu envia a mensagem daí aqui mesmo direto cai no telão lá. Por exemplo, eu quero enviar uma mensagem, agradecer o Marcio porque veio aqui, não *tá* acostumado a vir em festa de aparelhagem e hoje veio prestigiar aqui o Super Pop, manda uma mensagem cai direto no telão sem ir lá na frente, sem sair do teu lugar...

M – É a tecnologia...

P – É a tecnologia, eles investem mesmo. Daí eles mostram pra gente na hora da festa [...]

M – E você acha que ainda tem hoje preconceito contra aparelhagem, contra quem frequenta aparelhagem?

P – Acho que tem. Tem na classe mais alta, né? Com certeza tem porque teve agora há pouco tempo, saiu no jornal que pra eles essas *equipes* que são formadas, para eles são, não disseram assim, tudo um bando de vagabundo que vão pra festa, que vai

procurar briga, que vai fazer assalto, então eles discriminam muito por essa parte e na verdade não é por aí, entendeu?

M – Tem estudante, tem pai de família...

P – E tem gente trabalhadora. Agora é que deu uma mudadazinha, que a gente já vê um médico, a gente já vê um advogado, a gente já vê um promotor, entendeu? Um político vai lá, delegado, prestigiar a festa que muitas vezes eles anunciam lá.

M – Então você acha que de pouquinho as classes mais altas vão conhecendo...

P – Isso, vão conhecendo e pra isso, para ter uma melhora, o que é que eles deveriam também fazer as aparelhagens? Os donos das aparelhagens deveriam tentar ajudar, fazendo contato com empresários maiores, ir pra rádio, falar mesmo, marcar reunião, *umbora* lá na Câmara, *umbora* botar alguém lá pra defender a classe daqui das aparelhagens porque às vezes a gente é muito discriminado mesmo, né? Pra eles, pra classe alta, quem frequenta aparelhagem é bandido, né?

M – E o pessoal que não frequenta e vai numa festa de aparelhagem deve ficar bem espantado com toda aquela tecnologia, né?

P – Isso com certeza, tem até alguns que são bem de vida que vão que gostam. Mas aí é tipo separado, as amizades deles são pra lá, é separado, tipo ele cresceu ali em um bairro nobre, foi criado ali e de repente se socou numa festa onde as amizades deles não vão, ele fica tipo excluído né? “Ah, o fulano gosta de se meter no baile funk, na aparelhagem, em vez de vir pra cá pro centro, curtir um barzinho”

M – Então a própria pessoa que frequenta de classe mais alta deixa a coisa separada?

P – Isso, com certeza. Mas isso devagarinho *tá* mudando. Falta uma pessoa que seja mais forte, mais influente, ir na rádio, na televisão, tanto que agora a gente vê direto na televisão as festas de aparelhagem, coisa que um tempo atrás não ia pra televisão de jeito nenhum. E *tá* indo. As aparelhagens *tão* tomando conta das rádio, tendo um horário, isso deveriam vir muitas vezes, entendeu? Não ficar, por exemplo, só um ano na rádio, acho que eles deveriam investir mais nisso aí, procurar meios pra divulgar e até pra acabar com esse preconceito, né? Que tem gente que pensa que é... Tem alguns amigos meus que não vão porque tem medo “Ah, tu vai te socar na aparelhagem!” “Não tem

problema, *umbora* lá, outros já foram, já fizeram o teste, foram prestigiar e viram que é totalmente diferente”.

M – Muito interessante! Muito obrigado pela entrevista. Foi ótimo! Muito obrigado.

**English version:**

Marcio – Paulo, thank you very much for your time for this interview. How old are you and what do you do?

Paulo – I am 27, self-employed, married and have a little daughter.

M – Paulo, in your opinion what is the secret for the commercial success of an *aparelhagem*? What makes it successful? What makes a good *aparelhagem*?

P – What makes a good *aparelhagem*? Dude, for me, in my opinion, I think it’s the DJ. The DJ has to know his business, he has to know how to rock. He can’t be that DJ that is quiet, that plays a “strong” song, then plays a “weak” song, mixes everything up. A good DJ and good music, for me, is what makes a party shine.

M – The DJ’s charisma too?

P – Yeah, the DJ’s charisma too, dude! His interaction with the crowds: “I send a hello to John who is always with us, another hello to Jim” and so on.

M – He has to acknowledge the fan club...

P – Exactly. This counts a lot for sure.

M – What else? Besides the DJ, what else is important?

P – Well, besides the DJ, I think the *aparelhagem*’s whole structure is important. A good *aparelhagem*... of course, if there is an *aparelhagem*, it is going to be its premiere party, then we go there and it’s a boring party, some little speakers, a DJ that doesn’t electrify everybody... An *aparelhagem* has to have a good DJ, the supporting people around him, he has to have a good performance.

M – What do you include in the structure you mentioned as important?

P – Lighting effects, fireworks, got it? The fireworks extravaganza they show, there is fireworks everywhere, the DJ jumps on the control station...

M – So the crowds like this...

P – Yeah, the crowds love this, that’s for sure. It’s the visual spectacle, got it? This counts a lot, for sure.

M – And would you include in this structure the giant screens, the TV sets?

P – Yes, the giant screens, the TV sets. Look, what everybody likes a lot too, they love media, got it? They like it a lot when the DJs say “A hello to John, to *Equipe X* who is always here with us”. Then this counts a lot, got it? Then they attract many new fans like Super Pop and Príncipe Negro. They are *aparelhagens* that are very strong now, right?

M – Because they have the two things you mentioned, the good relationship with fans and the technological structure?

P – Exactly. The giant screens, the fireworks and we can also go up front and ask them to display stuff on the giant screens. All of this matters, that’s for sure.

M – And for you personally, if it is an *aparelhagem* that does not have so much technology, is it less interesting for you or is it the same?

P – It’s not the same. It’s less interesting for sure. Because I think in my case, for example, I just go to a party if it’s a good one, right? Of course, if there’s a good party here and next door there is a bad one, with few people, little excitement, we’ll go to the good party, right? If there are few people... there is a party with about five thousand people and another one over there with only one thousand people, so let’s go to the first one, because there might be something good there, everybody is going there.

M – So where there are five thousand people, will there be fireworks, giant screens, pyrotechnics, lighting, visual effects, etc.?

P – Exactly, and also they sometimes bring some surprises for us that we don’t even expect, got it?

M – What kind of surprise?

P – Well, sometimes there is new equipment. In the case of Super Pop, they use one of their trademarks, the machine gun. There is also the Eagle. By the way, I was talking to a friend of mine who works there and he told me “Paulo, this year in October, there will be a lot of new equipment and they will surprise everybody. There will be a Super Pop party in such and such place and time, it will be exciting, the next day is a holiday, then they release the new equipment”.

M – Is this equipment for audio or visual effects?

P – Both, special cameras too. He told me that what they're trying to do now is to put an Eagle with a mini-camera inside, put up a special hardware that the Eagle will be attached to, moving, recording everything like that aerial view Globo shows in the Marques de Sapucaí in their coverage of the Carnival in Rio, got it? They're trying to do this but they don't let everybody know... they don't let everybody know, they invite everybody for the party and only during the event we'll see it.

M – So everybody will be surprised...

P – Yeah, the crowds are surprised. Then we like it even more, right? (laughs). Something that we only saw in Rio, all of a sudden is right here. Look, now they said it will no longer be necessary to send a text message through the cell phone or go up there in front to the control station and write a little message on paper and give it to the DJ's assistant. Now, it seems that they will establish a partnership with a telephone company so that you can send a message from your cell directly to the giant screen. For example, I wanna send a message to Marcio because he came here and he's not used to coming to *aparelhagem* parties and today he came here especially to see Super Pop. I send the message and it goes straight to the giant screen, no need to go there in person, no need to move from where you are...

M – It is technology...

P – Yes, it's technology and in this kind of stuff they invest a lot. Then they show us during the party [...]

M – Do you think there is prejudice today against *aparelhagem*, against people who go to these parties?

P – I think so. There is prejudice from the upper classes, right? There is for sure because very recently I saw in the newspaper that these fan clubs, for them, well they didn't use these exact words, are nothing but a bunch of vagabonds who go to the parties, who just go to fight, who go to rob people, so they discriminate a lot and in fact this isn't the way it is, got it?

M – There are students, family men...

P – And there are so many hard-working people. Now things have changed a little, now we sometimes see doctors, lawyers, sheriffs, got it? A politician sometimes

goes there, a DA, to enjoy the party... it's a big deal, they even announce it during the party.

M – So you think things are changing very slowly.

P – Exactly, they start getting to know it. So for things to get better what should *aparelhagens* do? *Aparelhagem* owners should try to help, having contacts with big businessmen, go to the radio, talk to people, have meetings, “Let’s go to the City Council, let’s elect somebody to defend us over there”. Yeah, because sometimes we’re very discriminated against, you know? For them, for the upper classes whoever goes to *aparelhagem* is a thug, you know?

M – But people who have never been to an *aparelhagem* when they get there, they are probably surprised to see so much technology, right?

P – That’s for sure. There are even some people who are well-off who go to *aparelhagem*, they like it. But in many cases they keep it separated. Their friendships outside *aparelhagens* are something separate. Like, they grew up in a rich neighborhood. He was raised there and then suddenly he goes to a party where his friends don’t go, so he can be excluded too, you know? “Ah, that guy likes to go to baile funk or *aparelhagem*, instead of coming here downtown to a middle-class bar”.

M – So the person who goes to *aparelhagens* and comes from the upper classes separates the two circles of friends?

P – That’s for sure. But I think this is changing little by little. We need someone who is stronger, more influential to go to the radios, to television. Only now we can see *aparelhagem* parties, something we couldn’t even think about a while ago. *Aparelhagens* now are on the radio, they have a radio program, this should happen all the time, understand? Sometimes they have radio programs for one year only and then they’re off. They should invest more in this, trying to find ways to promote the party to end this prejudice, you know? There are people who think these parties are... I have some friends who don’t go because they’re afraid. “Are you going to an *aparelhagem* party?!! “There’s no problem” I say. “Let’s go. Other friends of mine have been there, they went there to give it a shot and they saw it’s totally different from what they had imagined”.

M – Very interesting! Thanks a lot for the interview. It was great. Thank you.

Guilherme: Guilherme, 33, salesman, had interesting remarks about how the *aparelhagem* scene in Belém has changed in the last years and how small *aparelhagens* struggle to stay in the business.

Marcio – Muito obrigado pela entrevista, Guilherme. Você pode me dizer sua idade e profissão?

G – Sou comerciante e tenho 33 anos.

M – O pessoal da equipe, a maioria é dessa idade ou é mais jovem?

G – A maioria são dessa idade.

M – Mas também tem o pessoal mais jovem, né?

G – É tem o pessoal mais jovem aí, que tem 27, 28, 22, 23, de 22 pra cá, São tudo de maior.

M – Bom, a minha primeira pergunta, Guilherme, é qual é o segredo da aparelhagem? O que faz uma aparelhagem boa?

G – O que faz o sucesso de uma boa aparelhagem é primeiramente a música, um bom DJ, é a atenção também que eles têm com a gente. Geralmente eles dão uma boa atenção, mas também quando não dão a gente fica meio chateado, né, pra te dizer logo (risos).

M – Que tipo de atenção?

G – “Oh, maluco, pô moleque, aqui tá o Guilherme da Equipe Xarope, tá o Paulo” dizer mesmo, sabe como é? Tipo ir chegando e dando um alô que a gente chegou na festa, entendeu?

M – É o reconhecimento que dá prestígio...

G – É o reconhecimento que dá prestígio, é isso aí. Porque pô uma equipe que também dá prestígio, esse barril, né, uma grana, se eles não souberem dar valor, né? A gente tá direto ali na onda, todo tempo tá pagando entrada.

M – Então o carisma, o reconhecimento e o que mais? Que outras coisas além do DJ?

G – Além do DJ? Bom, uma boa música, tem que saber selecionar...

M – É, mas isso faz parte do DJ, né, porque é ele que seleciona as músicas.

G – É isso é do DJ. O que mais, bom *vamu* ver...

M – E a parte do espetáculo de imagens e luzes, também é importante?

G – Ah sim, isso não dá pra esquecer. Você já foi numa festa de aparelhagem?

M – Já fui uma vez no Tupinambá.

G – Pois é o cara vai lá, tem todo aquele show, né, que *tá* tendo aqui em Belém, *pô* é bacana, cara! Aquela geladinha, o cara curtindo o som com os amigos, com a namorada... Aí o cara vai embora. [...]

M – Na sua opinião, Guilherme, tem preconceito contra as aparelhagens?

G – Tem, tem muito preconceito. Só de não deixar tocar em tudo que é canto, como tinha antigamente em Belém, né, qualquer ruazinha. *Pô* ia todo fim de semana em uma ruazinha sempre tinha uma aparelhagem na rua de lazer...

M – Ah, agora não tem mais rua de lazer nos subúrbios? Tinha muito na minha infância.

G – Não, agora é proibido, não tem mais, não é qualquer lugar que vai ter uma festa entendeu? Tem que ser tudo reservado, marcado, aí se torna mais difícil por isso agora tem poucas aparelhagens.

M – E quem é que tem preconceito contra esse tipo de festa?

G – Acho que é mais esse pessoal burguês mesmo. Sempre tem uns que vão lá na onda, mas a maioria não gostam, entendeu? Querem acabar mesmo com a festa.

M – Nunca foram, mas também...

G – Nunca foram e o cara diz logo que só vai ladrão e malandro. Porra, se fosse só ladrão e malandro eu não ia. *Pô*, eu trabalho todo dia, vou só trabalhar...

M – Tem trabalhador, tem pai de família, tem estudante...

G – Isso. Isso aí. Aí já viu. O cara trabalha normalmente só que chega o fim de semana o cara gosta de tomar sua geladinha, *tá* com os amigos, no caso da Equipe Xarope, né, entendeu?

M – E você acha que agora o preconceito, ele *tá* a mesma coisa, ele *tá* mais fraco ou ele *tá* mais forte do que antes?

G – Não, *tá* mais forte. Pra *ti* ver, as aparelhagens que ficaram foram só as aparelhagens de nome. Não tem mais aquelas aparelhagens pequenas que tinha antigamente, as menores, entendeu, as que tem pouco recurso, não conseguem mais nem se segurar porque não tem o recurso.

M – E também a galera vai pras maiores e...

G – É vai pras maiores que cobram mais o ingresso, 15, 10 pau, uma pequena cobra 4, 5 reais. Na pequena vai pouquinho pessoa. Uma grande dessas arrasta o que? 4, 5 mil pessoas. Uma pequena tá arrastando o quê? Umas 700, 500, 600 pessoas. Isso quando não é 100 pessoas, 200 pessoas!

M – E como elas não têm os recursos tecnológicos das grandes, a galera acha menos interessante?

G – É, a galera acha menos interessante. Mas é menos interessante mesmo. Porque a grande vem com um show, né? Um show à parte, entendeu?

M – Entendi, entendi. Muito interessante, Guilherme, obrigado pela entrevista.

G – Obrigado a você.

**English version:**

Marcio – Thanks a lot for the interview, Guilherme. Can you tell me your age and profession?

Guilherme – I am a salesman and I am 33 years old.

M – People from the *Equipe*, most of them, are they at this age or younger?

G – Most of them are at this age.

M – But there are younger people too, right?

G – Right, there are younger people. 27, 28, 22, 23. From 22 on, they are all over 18.

M – Well, Guilherme, what do you think is the secret for an *aparelhagem* to be successful? What makes a good *aparelhagem*?

G – What makes an *aparelhagem* successful? Well, first the music and a good DJ. It's the attention they give us. They're usually attentive, when they're not we get mad, let me tell you! (laughs).

M – What kind of attention?

G – “Hey, Bro... yo dude, there is Guilherme from *Equipe Xarope*, there is Paulo too” You know, saying hello ‘cause we’ve arrived in the area, you know?

M – It is the recognition that gives the group prestige...

G – Yeah, it's the recognition that gives us prestige, that's it. ‘Cause, you know, an *equipe* also gives them prestige. This special bucket we ordered, this costs a lot of

money. If they don't acknowledge this... We're there all the time in the party with them, we're paying for tickets.

M – So the charisma, the DJs recognition and what else? What else is important besides the DJ?

G – Besides the DJ? Well, good music, he has to know how to select...

M – Ok, but this is part of the DJ's job, the musical selection right?

G – Yeah, this is the DJ's job. Well, let's see...

M – What about the spectacle, the images, the lights, is that important too?

G – Oh, yeah, that's right, you can't forget this. Have you ever been to a party?

M – Yes, I've been to Tupinambá once.

G – So you know, the person goes there and there's all that show that we have now here in Belém, yo, it's cool dude! We drink that cold beer, we enjoy the songs with our friends, with the girlfriend. Then we go on [...]

M – In your opinion, Guilherme, is there prejudice against *aparelhagem*?

G – Yeah, there is. There's a lot of prejudice. Now they don't even let the *aparelhagens* play everywhere like it used to be in Belém. In the past, on every little street every weekend there was a small *aparelhagem* playing in the street...

M – Ah, so today there are no more small *aparelhagens* playing on the street in the outskirts? It was common in my childhood!

G – No, now it's forbidden, there aren't any more. It's not everywhere they can have parties now, you know? They have to reserve, have a special permit, then things are more difficult today, that's why there are fewer *aparelhagens*.

M – And who has a prejudice against this kind of party?

G – I think it's more those people from the bourgeoisie. There's always a few who go there to the parties, but most don't like it, man, you know? They even want to shut down all *aparelhagens*.

M – They have never been to a party, but they have an opinion...

G – Yeah, they 've never been to a party and they say "There's only crooks and thugs in there". Fuck, if there were only crooks and thugs I wouldn't go there. Shit, I work all day long, all I do is work...

M – There are working people, family men, students...

G – Yeah, exactly. You know, we work all week long but on the weekend we wanna have some beer with our friends, like we do in *Equipe Xarope*, you know?

M – Do you think there is more or less prejudice now than before? Or is it the same?

G – No, now it's stronger. Now, the only *aparelhagens* that can survive are the big ones. We don't have those small *aparelhagens* anymore, understand? The ones that have little resources, they can't even survive because they have little resources.

M – So the crowds tend to go to the big ones...

G – That's right. They go to the big ones which charge more for the ticket, 15, 10 bucks. A small one charges 4,5 bucks. Few people go to to the small ones. A big *aparelhagem* can have an audience of what? 4, 5 thousand people. A small one can gather what? About 700, 500, 600 people, sometimes it's only 100 or 200 people!

M – Since the small ones don't have the technological resources, do they attract less people?

G – That's right, the crowds think it's less interesting. But it's less interesting for sure. Because the big one comes with a spectacle, you know? A big spectacle, got it?

M – I got it. Very interesting, Guilherme. Thank you very much for your interview.

G – Thank you.

Renata: Renata was my contact in the group *Meninas do Príncipe*. A young, dynamic girl, she was about to finish High School. Upbeat and positive, she was one of the very few interviewees who said she had never suffered any kind of prejudice for being an *aparelhagem* fan - although right after answering this question she did tell me a story of prejudice. Her interview shows the importance of the relationship between fans and DJs in the *tecnobrega* circuit. Thanks to her, I had the chance to go up to an *aparelhagem* control station and take a close look at the very impressive and complex technological apparatus controlled by the DJ. It was also astounding to see thousands of fans participating during an *aparelhagem* party from the DJ's point of view.

Marcio – Renata, muito obrigado por ter juntado o grupo pra vir. Foi muito simpático da sua parte, então eu te agradeço muito. Queria que você me dissesse sua profissão e idade.

Renata – No momento estou só estudando, estou no terceiro ano pelo fato de ter parado pra trabalhar. E tenho 20 anos.

M – Renata, a primeira pergunta é, na sua opinião, qual é o segredo do sucesso de uma aparelhagem?

R – Pra mim é a simplicidade dos DJs. Existe algum DJ estrela? Sim, é o Juninho (do Super Pop). É porque eles começaram de baixo, mas agora, ele não dá muita importância pras pessoas que *tão* ao redor dele, tipo assim, os fã-clubes que dão valor neles. Aí ele já mudou um pouquinho porque o sucesso sobe à cabeça.

M – Então o que faz um DJ bom? Quais características?

R – Ele é carismático, humilde principalmente. Tem que ser, porque, como aconteceu com o Tupinambá. Era a melhor aparelhagem do Pará. Hoje em dia você não ouve mais falar pelo fato do DJ ser muito tipo assim... como ele falava... nenhuma aparelhagem aqui no Pará ia subir mais do que ele. E hoje em dia você não vê mais Tupinambá. *Tá* tocando, mas não mais como era antes. Era considerada a primeira aparelhagem no Estado e até no exterior.

M – Porque? Ele ficou meio assim inacessível?

R – Sim, porque pra ele os outros não existem.

M – E isso influenciou a popularidade dele?

R – Com certeza. Porque ele falava “Nós somos os melhores. Não vai haver outra melhor” Mas não, tem espaço pra todo mundo.

M – Que outra coisa faz uma boa aparelhagem?

R – Olha, é em termos de tecnologia.

M – Então tecnologia é importante também.

R – É também. Você já foi *né* numa festa do Super Pop?

M – Sim já fui uma vez.

R – Viu que a tecnologia do Super Pop é bem avançada, *né*?

M – É, mas por favor explica que tipo de tecnologia eles usam nos espetáculos.

R – Eles têm fogos. O Super Pop quando eles descem, é uma Águia que vai *prum* lado e pro outro, ele balança. Quando ele pula em cima do bico da Águia sai fogo, sai uma chama de dentro da Águia. Aí tem guitarra que solta fogo. Tem telão de LED, são imensos os telões de LED. Tem três, um atrás e dois de lado. [...]. A minha aparelhagem, o Príncipe Negro, também *tá* subindo, eles tão investindo pesado em tecnologia. Esse já é o segundo Príncipe Negro. Aí agora vem o terceiro...

M – Isso significa o quê? Que o equipamento todo mudou? Foi tudo renovado?

R – É, o equipamento todo mudou.

M – Aí cada vez eles colocam mais tecnologia, mais fogos, mais show pirotécnico?

R – É. Mais tudo. Aí a coroa roda, sobe...

M – Então a galera gosta é disso. Se a aparelhagem não tiver isso, não é tão boa a festa?

R – Não porque, tipo assim, quando tem esses efeitos todo mundo grita, todo mundo gritando. Não pode subir na mesa, mas a galera agitando sobe nas mesas. Tudo isso faz uma aparelhagem. E também a importância que eles dão pro fã-clube, porque o Príncipe Negro talvez não tenha a maior estrutura, mas em termos de fã-clube, eles são os maiores.

M – Justamente porque eles são muito carismáticos, conversam com a galera?

R – É, são muito carismáticos.

M – Renata, e você acha que hoje ainda tem preconceito contra a aparelhagem?

R – Pior é que tem. Muito, bastante. Assim, já não tanto como era antes. Porque antes, eles viam as pessoas assim de baixa renda, de baixa sociedade, era defamado como uma pessoa que não presta, transviado, ladrão, tudo era assim, entendeu?

M – *Tá* mudando isso ou ainda continua muito forte essa ideia?

R – Continua sim, mas não muito porque hoje em dia você já vê... Olha no Príncipe você encontra sempre as mesmas pessoas conhecidas, mas você encontra assim já pessoas da alta sociedade frequentando.

M – Então começa a penetrar. Devagarinho a classe média começa a ir.

R – Isso, uma vez eu fui aqui no Palmeiraço<sup>97</sup> e fui com uma amiga bem de vida. Aí ela me falou “Puxa, adorei o Príncipe. Tantos anos morando aqui em Belém e nunca tinha ido”.

M – Por que ela era menina mais de classe média?

R – É, menina de classe média (risos). Aí eu falei, “Poxa, a primeira vez que você está vindo”. Aí ela disse “É, porque tipo assim as pessoas jogavam a imagem de aparelhagem lá em baixo”. Mas ela falou que ela adorou a festa.

M – E do que ela gostou? Ela falou do que ela gostou? Dos fogos, da música, das pessoas?

R – De tudo. E também ela foi lá na coroa. Ela gostou, adorou, porque eles trataram ela super bem. Tudo depende do DJ, pra atrair as pessoas pra aparelhagem.

M – E você, já sofreu algum preconceito por ser membro de uma equipe, por frequentar aparelhagem?

R – (pensando) Não, não, graças a Deus, não! (risos). [...]

M – Mas no geral, você acha que ainda existe, apesar de estar mudando?

R – Existe, existe. Como eu tenho amigas com quem eu estudo que me dizem: “Eras, mas tu não sai de aparelhagem”. “Ah, mas eu gosto”. Em casa é difícil eu ouvir um brega. Eu gosto mais de ouvir uma MPB<sup>98</sup>. Mas pra festa, eu adoro uma aparelhagem. Pra mim, é em primeiro lugar. (risos). Cada pessoa com sua opinião, né? (risos).

M – Com certeza. Muito obrigado pelas suas informações, foram interessantes e importantes pro meu trabalho. Obrigado.

R – Obrigada também.

**English version:**

Marcio – Renata, thanks a lot for having invited all your friends to come talk to me today. It was very nice of you, thank you so much. So, how old are you and what do you do?

Renata – At the moment I’m just a student, I’m a High School senior because I had to stop for a while to work. I’m 20 years old.

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<sup>97</sup> Palmeiraço é um clube popular, frequentado por pessoas das classes mais baixas em Belém.

<sup>98</sup> MPB, Música Popular Brasileira. Apesar do nome, MPB é hoje associada com bom gosto e ouvida pelas classes mais altas no Brasil.

M – Renata, in your opinion what’s the secret for an *aparelhagem* to be successful?

R – For me, it’s the DJs’ simplicity. Is there a DJ who thinks he’s a star? Yes, Juninho (from Super Pop). They all began at the bottom, but now he doesn’t care too much about people who are around him like the fan clubs that support him. He changed a little because success changes people.

M – So what makes a good DJ?

R – He has to be charismatic and especially humble. He has to be, because, like what happened to Tupinambá. It used to be the best *aparelhagem* in Pará. Today we don’t hear so much about it due to the fact that its DJ is too... how can I say? You know, he used to say that no other *aparelhagem* would go higher than him. And today we don’t see Tupinambá so much. Yeah, they play, but it’s not like it used to be. It was considered the best *aparelhagem* in Pará and even famous abroad.

M – Why is that? Because he was too inaccessible?

R – Yeah, because for him the other ones didn’t exist.

M – And you think this has influenced his popularity...

R – For sure. Because he used to say “We are the best. There will not be another one”. I don’t agree. There’s space for everybody.

M – What else is important in an *aparelhagem*?

R – Look, I guess it’s technology.

M – So technology is important too.

R – Yeah, it is. Have you been to a Super Pop party?

M – Yes, I’ve been once.

R – So you’ve seen how advanced Super Pop’s technology is, right?

M – Yes, but please explain what kind of technology they use in the spectacles.

R – They have fireworks. Super Pop, when they come down, there’s an Eagle that goes to one side and then the other side, it moves. When the DJ jumps on the Eagle’s beak, it shoots fire from inside the Eagle. Then there’s a guitar that shoots fire. There’s the giant LED screens. They’re enormous, the giant LED screens. There are three, one behind and two on the sides [...] My *aparelhagem* (the one I’m a fan of), Príncipe Negro,

is also on the rise, they're investing a lot in technology. This is the second Príncipe Negro. Now there'll be third one...

M – What does that mean? That the equipment was all renewed?

R – Yeah, the equipment was all renewed.

M – And every time it is renewed, do they have more technology, more fireworks, more pyrotechnical effects?

R – Yeah, more of everything. The Crown (Príncipe Negro's symbol) spins, goes up...

M – So, that's what the crowds like. If an *aparelhagem* does not have all of that, it is not that good?

R – No, because, you know, when there are these special effects everybody screams, everybody screams. We can't go up and dance on the table, but people do it. All of this makes a good *aparelhagem*. Also the importance they give to fan clubs. Maybe Príncipe Negro doesn't have the biggest structure, but in relation to fan clubs, they're the best.

M – Because they are very charismatic and talk to everybody?

R – Yeah, they're very charismatic.

M – Renata, do you think today there is still prejudice against *aparelhagem*?

R – It's too bad, but yeah, there is. A lot, by the way. Well, I think it's not as bad as before. Because before they saw people from the lower classes, from low society, they were labeled as good-for-nothing people, outlaws, robbers, everything was like this, you know?

M – So you think this is changing or is it still very strong?

R – Yeah, it is very strong, but not like before, because today you even see sometimes... Look, at Príncipe's party, you always see the same old people, but you can sometimes find people from high society going there.

M – So, it has begun to change slowly. The middle class is slowly going to the parties?

R – That’s right. For example, the other day I went to Palmeiraço<sup>99</sup> and I took a friend who’s well-off. Then she told me “Wow, I loved the party. So many years living in Belém and I had never been to an *aparelhagem* party before”.

M – Why? Because she was a middle-class girl?

R – Yeah, a middle-class girl (laughs). Then I told her. “Too bad it’s the first time you’re coming”. She answered “Yeah, because people painted a very bad picture of *aparelhagem*”. But she told me she loved it.

M – And what did she like? Did she say what she liked the best? The fireworks, the music, the people?

R – Everything. She also went up there in the Crown. She loved it so much because they treated her very well. Everything depends on the DJ.

M – And you? Have you ever suffered prejudice for going to *aparelhagem* parties?

R – (thinking) No, no, thank God, no! (laughs) [...]

M – But in general, you believe there is prejudice, although it’s changing, right?

R – Yes there is, there is. I have some friends at school who tell me: “But you’re always going to *aparelhagem* parties”. Then I say “But I like it!” At home, I hardly ever listen to *brega*. I prefer listening to MPB<sup>100</sup>. But when it comes to parties, I love *aparelhagens*. For me *aparelhagem* comes first (laughs). Every person has his own tastes, right? (laughs).

M – Absolutely. Thank you so much for all this information. It was interesting and useful for my research. Thanks.

R – Thank you.

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<sup>99</sup> Palmeiraço is a very popular club in Belém, attended by the poorest people in the city.

<sup>100</sup> MPB stands for Música Popular Brasileira. In spite of its name, MPB is usually associated with good taste and is listened by upper classes in Brazil.

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