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Cultura, memória e identidade: O documentário como “documento de memória”

Culture, memory and identity: The documentary as a “memory document”

Cultura, memoria e identidad: El documental como “documento de memoria”

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Resumo: O presente artigo expõe uma análise comparativa de dois documentários de curta-metragem que versam sobre uma manifestação cultural denominada “caretagem” pertencente ao distrito de Santo Antônio – BA. O trabalho investiga como os conceitos de memória e identidade podem ser observados nos filmes ao considerar o documentário como um “Documento de Memória” a partir do registro audiovisual dos sujeitos que compõem a manifestação. Por fim, observa-se a partir das análises que o documentário serve como instrumento capaz de acessar tempos narrativos distintos sobre determinado fenômeno, uma vez que abarca aquilo que é narrado pelos personagens, como também aquilo que é registrado pela câmera no momento da tomada. Para fundamentar a

discussão, buscou-se suporte em autores como Morettin (2003), Halbwachs (1990) e Pollak (1992).

Palavras-chave: Cultura. Documentário. Extensão. Identidade. Memória.

Abstract: This article exposes a comparative analysis of two short documentaries dealing with a cultural manifestation called "*carretagem*" belonging to the Santo Antônio -BA district. The paper investigates how the concepts of memory and identity can be observed in the films when considering the documentary as a "Document of memory" from the audiovisual record of the subjects that make up the demonstration. Finally, it is observed from the analyses that the documentary serves as an instrument capable of accessing different narrative times about a given phenomenon since it encompasses what is narrated by the characters and what is recorded by the camera at the time of the shot. To substantiate the discussion, we sought support from authors such as Morettin (2003), Halbwachs (1990), and Pollak (1992).

Keywords: Culture. Documentary. Extension. Identity. Memory.

Resumen: Este artículo expone un análisis comparativo de dos documentales cortos que tratan de una manifestación cultural denominada "*carretagem*" perteneciente al distrito de Santo Antônio - BA. El trabajo indaga cómo se pueden observar los conceptos de memoria e identidad en las películas al considerar el documental como un "Documento de la memoria" a partir del registro audiovisual de los sujetos que componen la manifestación. Finalmente, se observa a partir de los análisis que el documental sirve como un instrumento capaz de acceder a diferentes tiempos narrativos sobre un determinado fenómeno, ya que abarca lo narrado por los personajes, pero también lo registrado por la cámara en el momento de la toma. Para fundamentar

la discusión se buscó el apoyo de autores como Morettin (2003), Halbwachs (1990) y Pollak (1992).

Palabras clave: Cultura. Documental. Extensión. Identidad. Memoria.

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Introduction

For the last eighty years, the documentary genre has been a fundamental ally in “documenting” individual and collective memories of numerous people and social groups. Since Robert Flaherty and his controversial *Nanook the Eskimo*¹, the visual register of some cultures and individuals has been a significant instrument for research, especially in anthropological, ethnographic, and, more recently, the Humanities domain. Although the documentary record does not suffice the researcher's final work, it constitutes a document² through which they can make observations and reflections.

Besides research projects, multiple university extensionist actions utilize documentaries to register the extensionist practices. Additionally, they provide a possibility for the project's reassessment and promotion.

Back in 2004, within the proceedings of the 2nd Brazilian Congress of University Extension³ in Belo Horizonte, extension students from the Federal University of Paraíba highlighted, in the relationship of extension and documentary, the potential to display the university's social

¹ In cinematographic history, Robert Flaherty's film about the lives of the Inuit in Port Huron is renowned as a prototype of documentary filmmaking. It also stirs controversy due to the extent of the anthropologist's intervention in creating the film.

² Here, the term "document" refers to its technical form, as defined by CONARQ: "a document is any information recorded on a material medium that can be used for reference."

³ Anais do 2º Congresso Brasileiro de Extensão Universitária Belo Horizonte – 12 a 15 de setembro de 2004.

commitment and ensure greater visibility of the academic institution's social role.

Extension activities became part of the curriculum with the Resolution nº 7 MEC/CNE/CES on December 18, 2018.⁴ Since then, the document prompted higher education institutions to incorporate extension activities in their curricula, enabling students to gain practical experience with classroom-acquired knowledge. Thus, documentaries can serve as a powerful pedagogical tool because they allow the register of extensionist activities. In addition, they offer access to the collective and individual memories of communities represented within them.

However, it is essential to clarify the approach to the concept of “document”, whether in academic research or university extension. In this study, we approach the concept broadly, aligned with the school's perspective, proceedings that embrace beyond written registers but any past trace that serves as a testimony, such as iconographic or cinematographic documents (Cellard, 2008). Therefore, the analysis of documentary films can happen through an artistic expression, solely as an aesthetic appreciation, but also as a document of factual reality that allows us to access a distant historical/cultural period.

In this perspective, we delineate some observations about the term “documentary” and contextualize

⁴ Resoluções CNE/CES 2018. Available in: <http://portal.mec.gov.br/publicacoes-para-professores/30000-uncategorised/62611-resolucoes-cne-ces-2018>

considering its semantic use. Moreover, we discuss the concepts of memory and identity through the theoretical framework used to present both terms throughout this chapter. Finally, we analyze two short documentaries from western Bahia: "*Seu Limiro: Quando a Caretagem Chegar*" and "*Seu Limiro das Caretas*" by Justino Cosme. The analysis underlines how questions of memory and identity are present in these pieces while considering them as a "memory document".

The term document

When writing a text that shares the premise of the cinematographic documentary, it is essential to underscore certain aspects to elucidate the outlook of this film genre. The word "documentary", from the perspective of cinematography, "began to establish itself in the late 1920s and early 1930s, especially with the English documentary school - although it had appeared here and there in a few texts before" (Teixeira, 2006, p. 23, our translation).

This term carries within its genealogy a strict relation to the historical concept of a document. It represents a testament to what "in fact" happened in a certain period and location. While this perspective has been suffering changes throughout history, what persists is a vision of the documentary as a kind of document intimately linked to "truth". The perspective is primarily due to two significant factors: first, the authentic relationship with the represented

reality, embedded in the realism of mechanically recording photographic images; secondly, the discursive style in early expositional documentaries, majorly linked to knowledge transmission and the aspiration of irrefutability and persuasion (Paiva, 2019). This visual/discursive construction gives collective imagination the idea that the documentary is the “truth”⁵ about a subject or individual.

When approaching cinematography as a historical source, Morettin (2003) states that every film, whether documentary or fiction, must be analyzed as an object capable of providing accurate information about its own time. However, the author also mentions that we should view the documentary as a type of document, much like a monument (Le Goff, 1984), in other words, as the outcome of historical societies' effort to project a specific image of themselves onto the future. Moreover, he emphasizes how analyzing the document's testimony and lesson should demystify its apparent meaning (Morettin, 2005). This process involves observing the piece through an analysis that considers what it displays as a theme or subject represented but also the conscious or unconscious marks it carries from the production process.

In this perspective, advancing the understanding of the term “documentary” demands resorting to John Grierson's definition (1932-1934). He states that it is a creative

⁵ In this article, the term "truth" is being used to denote an irrefutable factual reality, a form of representation devoid of the intentions and discursive choices that the director inevitably makes when representing reality.

treatment of reality to assert the stance to which this work is connected. However, we highlight that this is not a defense of an omnipotent and omniscient voice of classic documentary but rather an update of Grierson's statement (1932-1934) that allows us to stress that no documentary comes without ideological, aesthetic, or poetic intervention. What we grasp from the filmed phenomenon is a portion of the reality. Therefore, it must remain connected to its historical and cultural contexts to avoid anachronisms.

When examining documentaries from the first half of the 20th century in Brazil, Morettin (2005) highlights that the silent era of Brazilian cinema saw minimal recognition of authorship and the limited role of directors and production companies. Nonetheless, when analyzing documentaries as a document, it is crucial to comprehend that the filmmaker makes deliberate choices, for example, framing, file selection, editing, and sound editing, processing this reality. Thus, the filmmaking process is intentional even when reproducing a factual reality.

Through this stance, even while comprehending the film as a historical source, it serves as a document that presents experience reality, carrying marks of “monument-making” in its constitution - we cannot attribute it the capability of capturing the truth about the filmed subject.

Another noteworthy observation is the demystification of the superficial view of documentary as a traditional area with rules to follow (Ramos, 2017). This perspective of the

genre is cloudy because documentary cinema reinvents itself continuously and fragments into a “multiplicity of conceptions and renamings that have turned the field into one of the most Babel-like in cinema” (Teixeira, 2006, our translation). The documentary has been constituting itself as a highly creative and experimental genre. Thus, it is fundamental to observe it considering the mentioned characteristics in the analysis.

Having exposed the type of association that the term “documentary” aligns with, it's essential to address one final aspect of documentary praxis (Comolli, 2008). While portraying factual reality, the documentary establishes a double articulation in the production process: one aesthetic and the other sociological. On the former, creative freedom can cross the imaginary border between fiction and documentary and establish new ways of recording, narrating, and problematizing the produced images. However, in the latter, ethical considerations take center stage in the documentary production when filming real subjects, and the compromise to representing memories and individual and collective identities becomes a steering component in the documentary production. Accordingly, we will analyze these considerations focused on the filmed experience.

Brief context on memory and identity

In a documentary, memory and identity do not materialize solely by narrative construction mechanisms but through the cinematographic approach employed by each filmmaker to portray them. However, we highlight that "memory" and "identity" bear a multifaceted meaning, acquired throughout time in different contexts. Thus, a brief explanation is essential to outline a more objective selection in the subsequent analysis.

When talking about memory, it is worth mentioning associations with Halbwachs' (1990) propositions in his text *Collective Memory*. Pollak (1992) later expanded the author's discussion through historical studies. In that sense, we understand memory as a "collective and social phenomenon, collectively built and subject to constant oscillations, transformations, and changes" (Pollak, 1992, p. 2, our translation).

Considering this, individual and collective memories are independent and can go through reconfigurations throughout time via what Pollak defines as memory "framing." Concerning the process of negotiating between individual and collective memories, Halbwachs states that

(...) for our memory to be aided by that of others, it is not enough for them to bring us their testimonies; it is also necessary that our memory has not ceased to agree with theirs and that there are enough points of contact between one memory and the others so that the recollection they remind us of can overgo reconstruction on a shared foundation. (Halbwachs, 1990, p. 34, our translation)

Here, memory does not constitute itself as something inflexible. It is an ongoing process happening through multiple points of contact between individual memories. However, we observe how they are not entirely closed, seeing as the individual, to "reach their own past, has the frequent need to appeal to the memories of others" (Halbwachs, 1990, p. 54, our translation). Thus, the individual memory intersects with an external one, which guides the subject in a time frame, often longer than the time actually lived. Halbwachs (1990) distinguishes them, defining the first as autobiographical memory and the second as historical memory.

In light of these considerations, we advance to the second concept through the idea of autobiographical memories: identity. We highlight that we view identity as "something personal, potentially original, and unprecedented and, consequently, invented and assumed to a certain extent" (Taylor, 1996, p. 12, our translation).⁶

Here, we approach identity as what individuals can narrate about themselves throughout their lives. It is a constant negotiation process between what the individual embraces and how they are recognized. In other words, "the identities are identifications at course" (Santos, 1994, p. 31, our translation).

⁶ Original citation in Spanish: "algo personal, potencialmente original e inédita y, por consiguiente, inventada o asumida en cierta medida".

While discussing identity in this article, we consider it a subjective, fleeting, and negotiated process. Consequently, from the same standpoint, collective and cultural identities are "transient and ephemeral outcomes of identification processes" (Santos, 1994, p. 31, our translation). Thus, we reinforce the idea that "memory and identity can be perfectly negotiated" and "are not phenomena to comprehend as the essence of a person or group" (Pollak, 1992, p. 5, our translation).

Upon the concepts above, we will analyze two short documentary films, highlighting how they can portray issues of memory and identity in the filmmaking process by viewing the documentary as a "memory document."

THE DOCUMENTARY AS A MEMORY DOCUMENT: AN ANALYSIS OF THE FILMS "SEU LIMIRO: QUANDO A CARETAGEM CHEGAR" AND "SEU LIMIRO DAS CARETAS"

At the *Santo Antônio* community, the municipal district of Canápolis, West of *Bahia*, a yearly procession of masks takes place during Good Friday. The procession travels the streets carried by the rhythm of a local "reizado" group and follows to the neighboring district in *Açudina* before returning to the starting point. There, the participants

reunite alongside a space called "sítio" and perform the *Malhação de Judas*.

This cultural manifestation is called "*Caretagem*" by the residents of *Santo Antônio*. When approaching the "*Caretagem*" as a cultural manifestation, "it is essential to understand that it was already existent in the daily lives of African enslaved people in the 16th century in the Recôncavo region of Bahia, in the cities of Cairu, Nilo Peçanha, Taperoá, and Valença" (Silva, 2005, p. 89). The "*Caretagem*" somehow establishes an intimate connection to the *Quilombola* remembrance in the inland territories of *Bahia*. However, each region where the event culturally manifests itself carries particular traces of its cultural identity. Aesthetically, we perceive the significant differences in the creation of the masks, whose production takes place in various locations of Bahia where the manifestation occurs (Figures 01, 02, and 03).

Figura 01. *Mestre Dodô Mask - Acupe*



Source: Flickr. André Mota Lima.⁷

Figure 02: *Zambiapunga Mask- Nilo Peçanha*



Source: Flickr. Alexandre Amaral.⁸

⁷ Disponível em: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/andremottadelima/42137755500> Acesso em: 19/05/2023.

⁸ Disponível em: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/asa100/8190355838/in/photostream/> Acesso em 19/05/2023.

Figure 03. *Seu Limiro's* masks – Santo Antônio



Source: Cícero Félix's personal collection.

At *Santo Antônio's Caretagem*, an outstanding personality emerges in this process, Almir Vieira Farias, who is self-designated and recognized as *Seu Limiro*. For over 60 years, *Seu Limiro* has been assembling the masks that compose the *Caretagem* and organizing the festival in multiple dimensions. Throughout the year, he creates all the masks and dolls that form the procession, produces the scenographic space for the *Malhação de Judas*, guarantees, with his associates, the serving of food to all the *Caretagem* participants, and welcomes everyone that, directly or indirectly, participate in this manifestation.

In 2019, Justino Cosme Pereira produced a short documentary film displaying this cultural manifestation, titled "*Seu Limiro das Caretas*," as a final project for the Postgraduate Specialization in Audiovisual Production from the Federal University of Western Bahia (Figure 04).

Figure 04. Image of *Seu Limiro's Caretagem*



Source: Frame of the documentary “*Seu Limiro das Caretas*” (2019)

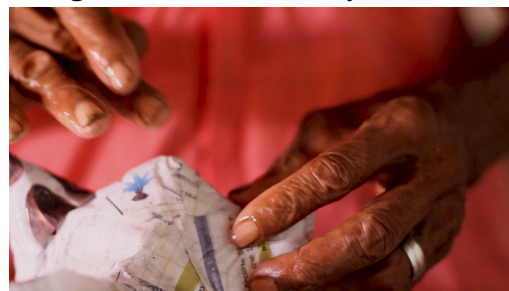
In the documentary "*Seu Limiro das Caretas*," Justino Cosme presents images of *Seu Limiro* crafting the clay molds and recycled paper masks used at the *Caretagem* (Figures 05 and 06). Through the audio, we listen to an interview where *Seu Limiro* uses individual memories to outline what resembles a genealogy of the *Caretagem*.

There is something noteworthy about the report of this historical personality. The narrative does not establish a reason or even indicate a starting point for the manifestation. Thus, *Seu Limiro* cannot define who were the first "challengers" of this *Caretagem*.

Figure 05. *Seu Limiro molds the clay*



Figure 06. *Seu Limiro crafts a mask*



Source: Frame of the documentary “*Seu Limiro das Caretas*” (2019).

In addition, it is interesting that, although the documentary narrates a cultural manifestation of the *Santo Antônio* (BA) district, it immediately emphasizes the importance of the character *Seu Limiro* in its title. Therefore, his autobiographical memory somehow intersects with the cultural identities of the district's residents and also with *Açudina's* (Halbwachs, 1990). The film creates a discourse about the *Caretagem* from the perspective of popular traditions through the approach of documentary interviews, archive images, and the *in-loco* registration of the procession. In a general sense, the piece constructs itself through the individual and collective memories of *Santo Antônio* and *Açudina's* residents, attempting to establish, from the accounts, a sort of historical memory regarding this manifestation.

Pollak (1992) comments that memory constitutes itself through three criteria: the occurrences, the characters, and the places. In the documentary, the *Caretagem* is an event that permeates individual and collective memories of *Santo Antônio* and *Açudina's* residents, a contact point relatively invariable and immutable (Pollak, 1992). Subsequently, it becomes evident that the formation of this collective memory directly connects to the role that *Seu Limiro's* character holds in the collective memory of those individuals, whether as an artist/artisan, memory guardian, or a "living document" that materializes this tradition, yearly at the Good Friday.

Lastly, the place where the *Caretagem* occurs is significant in constructing such memory. Through the residents' accounts, we perceive a process of identification with each district - deeply ingrained in their discourses. Moreover, although the residents find various contact points in their accounts, what arises from these narratives are fundamental divergences that put these memories in conflict throughout the film (Pollak, 1992). Such divergences emerge precisely on the most sensitive point of a crucial aspect of identity, what Bauman (2005) stresses as the feeling of belonging.

When being interviewed, the residents of *Santo Antônio* stated that the *Caretagem* in this district has always been better than the one in *Açudina*. From another perspective, when giving their report, the residents of *Açudina* claimed that the *Caretagem* there has always been better than the one in *Santo Antônio* because it has always had more artistry (Figures 07 and 08).

Figure 07. Interview with Antônio Gaiteiro



Figura 08. Interview with José Moreira



Source: Frames of the documentary “Seu Limiro das Caretas” (2019)

It is worth mentioning that these characters lived in the same historical period. However, the identifications that each one establishes with their district influence the group identity (Taylor, 1996) or, as Bauman (2005) mentions, the relationship of belonging with the "community" guides the discourse in opposite directions when it comes to assigning a value judgment to the *Caretagem*. This process reinforces the idea that memory and identity can be negotiated and retained over time - that collective and individual memories are interdependent and not the essence of a person or group (Pollak, 1992).

Figure 09. *Caretagem in Santo Antônio*



Source: Frames of the documentary “Seu Limiro das Caretas” (2019)

Figura 10. *Caretagem in Açudina (São Pedro)*



Source: Frames of the documentary “Seu Limiro das Caretas” (2019)

Through the previous paragraphs, we can observe some inquiries concerning the memories that arise in the documentary. These memories emerge from the recollections of *Santo Antônio* and *Açudina*'s residents.

However, we confine our analysis to the narrative provided through oral storytelling, the narratives (Pollak, 1992). Nevertheless, when considering the documentary as a "memory document," it is essential to inquire about which memories are available through a documentary film.

Considering these questions, we highlight that Morettin (2005) discusses the state of memory acquired by the cinema as a mass communication medium, pointing out that in many socio-political contexts of the time, films can configure themselves as "authentic national monument pieces in every sense, surrounded by the exaltation of cinema's ability to absorb mythologies, enveloped by references to technical wonders and the entire array of inventions" (Morettin, 2005, p. 17, our translation). Accordingly, it exposes the author's concern in making a critical assessment of the documentary without falling into anachronisms, which could cloud the perspective on a particular subject.

It is crucial to perceive the singularities of a documentary film, in comparison with other documental sources, to conduct a fruitful analysis of this film genre. Before anything, in contrast with a written document, the cinematographic documentary can capture the instant of a lived experience. Although acting as a representation of that reality, the moving photographic image maintains an inherently reliable connection with the captured reality. The display of visual features occurs through a mechanical register of the image, and there is no human translation in

the descriptive sense of the process. Therefore, we conclude that the individual is happy or sad due to the possibility of seeing their facial expression through the camera in the representative act and not because someone registered their emotional state in a document.

Even with the knowledge that the film represents reality and is not reality itself, the "realism" that images offer constitutes a fragment of the phenomenon, resembling a frozen memory. Through the visual miniature, we can access data that are not contained in the characters' discourse but are present in the cinematic one, whether due to its iconic or indexical nature (Xavier, 2005).

In the documentary *"Seu Limiro das Caretas"* (2019), the viewer accesses the characters' individual and collective memories through their accounts and from the moment of capture. Thus, there are two distinct narrative periods, one narrated by the characters and another by the camera. What explains this characteristic is that, when choosing a documental approach that uses the interview, the author adds a dimension particular to oral storytelling to the documentary. Then, beyond registering the cultural manifestation, the author, through the accounts, reaches memories of a time not recorded but experienced by the characters. In that sense, the documentary as a "memory document" can harbor not only the accounts of such

non-recorded memories but also capture the dimension of the moment⁹.

For comparison with the film *"Seu Limiro das Caretas"* (2019), in 2022, the author Cícero Félix created a short documentary film about *Seu Limiro's Caretagem*, titled *"Seu Limiro: Quando a Caretagem Chegar"* (2022). The film registers the comeback of this cultural manifestation after a two-year pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic resulting from the coronavirus.

Figure 11. *Procession in Santo Antônio.*



Source: Frame of the documentary *"Seu Limiro: Quando a Caretagem Chegar"* (2022)

The chosen approach for *"Seu Limiro: Quando a Caretagem Chegar"* highly differs from Justino Cosme's documentary film. Here, the director creates the piece in a participative and engaging approach, presenting himself not only as a producer but as a movie character. Furthermore, Cícero Félix starts his film by contextualizing the viewer

⁹ "Moment" is used here in its temporal sense, representing a specific unit of time, an instant.

through intertitles¹⁰ concerning the moment of production. He does it by positioning the spectator through the COVID-19 pandemic (Figures 12 and 13).

Figure 12. Intertitle about COVID-19

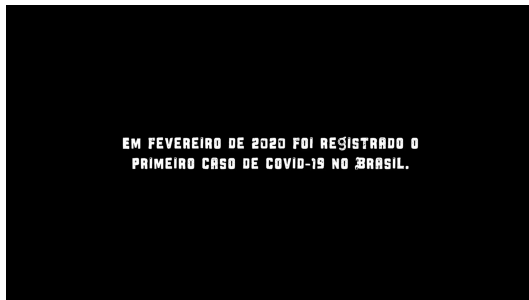
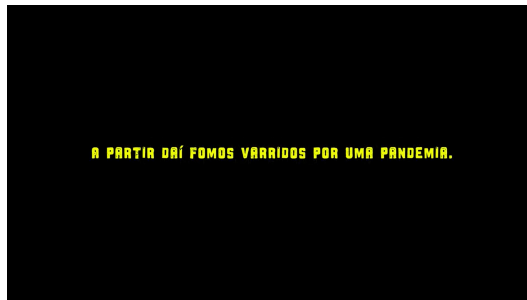


Figure 13. Intertitle about the pandemic



Source: Frames of the documentary “Seu Limiro: Quando a Caretagem chegar” (2022)

Regarding the relationship between time and memory, Halbwachs (1990) asserts that it is essential to have points of contact between the life and history of people for us to speak of a shared time. This idea is what Cícero Félix precisely embarks on with his documentary by introducing social time frames in the intertitles.

Rather than holding onto a specific date or mathematical time (Halbwachs, 1990), the director uses a reference point of an event that humanity experienced simultaneously, facilitating people to situate themselves historically and timely in the face of the images. From this perspective, the mentioned documentary builds a narrative that is much more interested in bringing the *Caretagem* into the present rather than in remembering it.

¹⁰ "Intertitles" are the textual inserts that the author adds to films and that are part of the narrative. In the past, especially in silent cinema, they were called "title cards."

When advancing the narrative, the documentary exhibits some images of *Seu Limiro* during a poster production for *Santo Antônio's Caretagem*. The camera moves into a brief walkthrough of the masks on the table, intercalating images of the creator and his pieces. The author presents the film title and finally reaches a fundamental point where Cícero Félix's documentary differs from Justino Cosme's (Figures 14 and 15).

Figura 14. *Seu Limiro with a doll*



Figura 15. *Seu Limiro greets Cícero*



Source: Frames of the documentary “*Seu Limiro: Quando a Caretagem chegar*” (2022)

Justino Cosme's documentary opts for a distant interview, where the filmed person talks to the camera. In opposition to this, in "*Seu Limiro: Quando a Caretagem Chegar*" (2022), the character of *Seu Limiro* talks directly to the film's author. The "interview" becomes a conversation between the one who films and the one filmed, which causes the cinematic register to focus on the present time and the record of moments that constitute a memory frame (Halbwachs, 1990).

In that sense, the documentary builds a discourse not anchored by what *Caretagem* once was but on what it is and could be one day. The aspect of memory emerges during

the first part of Cícero Félix's film, using an approach interested in future time frames that are prepared in the present (Halbwachs, 1990). Moreover, the film title guides us to this perception because it states: "When the *Caretagem* arrives" ["quando a *Caretagem* chegar," in Brazilian Portuguese, our translation]. Thus, it raises an expectation and prepares the viewer to watch the film's second part, which portrays the *Caretagem* event.

The documentary projects itself as a "memory document" aiming at making a register of the moment the *Caretagem* returned. Another noteworthy observation of the participatory documentary approach is the interaction between *Seu Limiro* and the filmmaker, where an entirely pedagogical moment arises when he describes the process of creating the masks (Figures 16 and 17).

Figura 16. Cícero e Limiro holding the masks



Figura 17. Limiro explains his creative process



Fonte: Frames of the documentary “Seu Limiro: Quando a *Caretagem* chegar” (2022)

Seu Limiro shares his memories not to reminisce about the past of *Caretagem* but to reaffirm how it unfolds in the present. Somehow, producing under the risk of reality (Comolli, 2008), Cícero Félix's film is open to the influence of circumstances. The film is built at the moment of capture

(Ramos, 2001) and does not constitute a discourse about *Seu Limiro*; on the contrary, it is a documentary that unwinds from him.

It is crucial to highlight that although the documentaries mentioned exhibit different approaches, both develop in an attempt to constitute themselves as "memory document." This "memory document" has the capability of offering the spectator a series of moments of experienced reality, considering the cultural, historical, and affection values of those people.

Additionally, both documentaries finish with *Seu Limiro's* account of the *Caretagem*. Each documentary approaches the memory in its own way. However, both display that this manifestation's cultural identity is, to some extent, confounded with *Seu Limiro's* persona - they are indissociable. *Santo Antônio's Caretagem* survives throughout time as *Seu Limiro's Caretagem* [A *Caretagem de Seu Limiro*, one of the documentaries' titles].

At last, Halbwachs (1990) states that it "is by traveling through the framework of time that we find the images of its past occurrences; however, for this, time must be capable of framing memories" (Halbwachs, 1990, p. 101, our translation). It is in this time dimension that the documentary, as a "memory document", offers to the spectator and the researcher the possibility to navigate these framed memories, to visualize the intangible, to see beyond what the characters can and do tell.

Final considerations

While analyzing the films, we perceive Halbwachs' remarks when considering that memory can be negotiated, framed, and built. The documentary, as a "memory document," serves as an instrument to offer different narrative periods about a phenomenon, considering it encompasses not only what the characters narrate but also what the camera registers during the narrative.

Moreover, it is also worth mentioning that the documentary shows us the possibility of visualizing, through the film, the choices made by the author along its construction and the approaches during the filming, enabling the comprehension of the narrative and the context of production. These aspects emphasize the potential of the documentary film as an efficient instrument for collaborative actions with the community through the possibility of registering local memories, experiences, and perspectives - not only as a research result but as an extensionist practice.

Ultimately, what we learned from *Seu Limiro's* accounts in both documentaries is the relationship he established with the *Caretagem* as a living and vibrant tradition, in opposition to something that is in the distant past. A moment in the documentary "*Seu Limiro: Quando a Caretagem Chegar*" (2022) illustrates this, occurring at the 6 minutes and 14 seconds mark, when *Seu Limiro* says, "Look, Cícero and Jairo, we're going to do a chore, a movement

here. Our chore, our movement, will go down in history for our region here, God willing" (our translation).

By documenting this memory, we can access the somehow prophetic statement of the character because, in 2023, *Almir Vieira Farias*, known as *Seu Limiro*, crossed over and carried with him more than 60 years of popular tradition. The fact reinforces that, while Justino Cosme and Cícero Félix made an effort to document cultural and identity-related memories of those people, *Seu Limiro* presented himself as a creator of memories, dedicating himself to ensure that there were memories to be recorded.

In conclusion, through the films, we can access not only the discourse but also the desire and anxieties of these characters, who attempt to keep the tradition alive, socialize the popular history, manifest belonging and pride in experiencing memories and recollections, making them immortal through memory documents, through the documentaries.

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