

Conservative culturalism in *Narcos*¹

O culturalismo conservador em *Narcos*

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Abstract: *This paper investigates the conservative culturalism discourse in the two first seasons of Netflix series Narcos (2015-2016). The conservative culturalism (SOUZA, 2015) is an idea-force that defines Latin-American societies as insufficiently western places, marked by perversity and corruption. Narcos narrates, from an American perspective, the rising of drug trafficking in Colombia and the trajectory of Pablo Escobar. Thus, it mediates schematic representations of Latin Americans. Narcos domesticates some aspects of narcoculture and, at the same time, celebrates them in an audiovisual industrial format. In this article, I discuss those issues by analyzing narrative elements of the series, which, between fiction and document, circulates, with some controversy, as an account of the recent history of Latin America.*

Keywords: *conservative culturalism; narcoculture; documentary reading; representation; Narcos, Netflix series.*

Resumo: *Este artigo analisa o discurso do culturalismo conservador nas duas primeiras temporadas de Narcos (2015-2016), série da Netflix. O culturalismo conservador (SOUZA, 2015) é tomado, neste texto, como uma ideia-força que define sociedades latino-americanas como espaços insuficientemente ocidentais, marcados pela perversidade e corrupção. Ao narrar, a partir da perspectiva estadunidense, a emergência do tráfico na Colômbia e a trajetória de Pablo Escobar, Narcos medeia representações esquemáticas de latino-americanos. Domestica*

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aspectos da narcocultura ao mesmo tempo em que a celebra em formato industrial. Neste artigo, discuto essas questões por meio da análise de elementos narrativos da série, que, entre ficção e documento, circula, com alguma polêmica, como relato da história recente da América Latina.

Palavras-chave: *narcocultura; leitura documentarizante; culturalismo conservador; representação; Narcos; Netflix*

Introduction

The first two seasons of the series *Narcos*, released on Netflix in 2015 and 2016, narrate the emergency of the cocaine traffic in Colombia, the purchase of the drug in the United States and the story of Pablo Escobar (starred by Wagner Moura), investigated and chased by American policemen, from late 70's to the 90's. Although it involves producers, directors and actors from different countries, including Brazil, *Narcos* brings, mainly, an American perspective of the Colombian culture, society and politics. The series point of view is expressed by the voice of the character Steve Murphy (Boyd Holbrook) – agent of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), department of fight against narcotics -, which leads the narrative. However, the perspective is also built by other narrative elements that manifest the discourse that Jessé Souza (2015) called, in another context, conservative culturalism. According to Souza, conservative culturalism is a type of idea-force that defines Brazil, but also other countries from Latin America, as a cultural space governed by signs of personalism, passion and sensuality. Our societies are seen as places in which personal relationships and interests, corruption and perversity prevail over law and collective and public values.

We consider that *Narcos* reproduces this discourse of the conservative culturalism and represents Colombians and other Latin Americans through the lenses of stereotype. *Narcos* is affirmed as a product of fiction and entertainment, however, it strongly evokes what Roger Odin (2012) defined as a “documentarizing” reading, therefore, a form of reception which takes a film or part of it as documental. The series, “based on actual events”, articulates through its montage, drama and photography, tele-journalistic material, images of newspapers and other documental elements that sustain the truth of the facts narrated there.

Facing that, I intend to analyze the first two seasons of the series as mediatic texts between fact and fiction producing, reproducing and disseminate some of the reductive representations of Latin Americans in a context marked by narco-culture and its narratives (RINCÓN, 2013; BRAGANÇA, 2012). This study articulates, thus, cultural and narrative

analysis, with focus on relations between audiovisual products, television critique and socio-historic context.

In the first part of the article, I discuss aspects of *Narcos*' fictionality and the way the series proposes relationships with historic facts and characters, demanding a "documentarizing" reading. This hybridization between fact and fiction circulates in a mediatic culture which has a fascination by narco-narratives. The narco-culture is criticized in the second part of this article, with identification of its subversive characteristics and the possible domestication of them by industrial formats. The final analytical movement conjugates the reflection of how the narco-culture elements in *Narcos* work with the series conservative speech. I analyze two main narrative aspects: the filmic point of view, in which we watch the degradation of a hero by immersion in the Colombian culture, and the intertextuality with the magic realism, aesthetic presented as autochthonous and the reflection of incivility.

Fact, fiction and "documentarizing" reading

Narcos, as in other series based in actual events, is a narrative in-between fiction and document. In the beginning of the first season episodes, there is the ambiguous message:

This television series is inspired by true events. Some of the characters, names, businesses, incidents and certain locations and events have been fictionalized for dramatization purposes. Any similarity to the name, character or history of any person is merely coincidental and unintentional.³

These are not the right lines of contract of the series, once this hybrid between dramaturgy and archive deals, with certain didactics, as we've said, of the emergency of the international traffic of cocaine from Colombia and the persecution to Pablo Escobar through the perspective, mainly, of the American agent Steve Murphy. The last sentence of the message, which talks about similarities and coincidences, was erased in

³ This and other passages referring to *Narcos e El patrón del mal*'s texts were transcribed and translated from the original vídeos available on Netflix.

the second season, which ended up reinforcing, in this opening text, the referential aspect, even if it is subverted to fit well to the dramatization.

However, if the series is partly submitted to a historic world, the relationships established with the elements of immediate reality are not from the same category of which Wolfgang Iser identifies in fictional texts. As Iser proposes (2002, p. 958), “there is in the fictional text a lot of reality that cannot only be identified as a social reality but also as a sentimental/affectionate reality”. However, while selecting elements of the real, the text transgresses it and, in combination with aspects of the imaginary, presents it as a scene, under the “what if” logic. This denudation, according to Iser (2002, p. 982), signals two aspects: the recipient must take the reality presented there between parenthesis and fiction as it is, and, even so, engage in the game in a way that the world represented there is taken as world, which implies a “temporary non-realization of receptors”.

However, *Narcos* is insufficiently fictional in the sense that, even though it is deliberately “staged”, their world is weakly put into parenthesis. Their fictional space, despite the initial message, does not want to be completely autonomous, as if the series wished to be also an informative narrative about recent history of narco-traffic on Latin America. According to this modulation, a Brazilian television critic wrote that *Narcos* “is a show committed to the facts”, which intends to “be popular, palatable to all audiences”. In the series, “the traffic in America gains a faithful portrait”.⁴ Even with its contrary evaluation, as in news in Brazilian websites “*Narcos*, five lies in the Netflix series about Pablo Escobar”⁵ and “13 mistakes of the 2nd season of *Narcos*, according to Pablo Escobar’s son”⁶, the perspective is maintained, because it only makes sense to ask this type of correction (and point lies and mistakes) of referential narratives, such as journalism and history narratives, for example.

4 Available at: <http://kogut.oglobo.globo.com/noticias-da-tv/critica/noticia/2015/08/trafico-na-america-ganha-retrato-fiel-na-serie-narcos.html>. Accessed in: June 13th, 2017.

5 Available at: http://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2015/12/03/cultura/1449162724_440714.html. Accessed in: June 14th, 2017.

6 Available at: <http://super.abril.com.br/cultura/13-erros-da-2a-temporada-de-narcos-segundo-o-filho-de-pablo-escobar/>. Accessed in: June 14th, 2017.

We know with Roger Odin (2012, p. 17) that a more or less documental aspect of a movie can be established in the space of a reading, without any intention from the enunciator, through an attitude which the intellectual named “documentarizing”. This is a type of reading that considers a movie as a document, i. e., as register, illustration of reality, either it is physical social or even referring to the cinema as an institution. For that, it is necessary that the viewer, in front of a film, builds a real enunciator (the camera, the cinema, the society, the performer, among others). The production of a documentarizing reading can be done, according to Odin (2012), both in an individual level, from the voluntary or involuntary act of the reader, or in an institutional level, in which pedagogic, historic, psycho-analytical instructions are produced. We can say that a large extent of the journalistic critique, at least in Brazil, made to *Narcos* works in that second level, as texts that instruct and propose a historic and social reading of the series.

However, either by the diegetic or extradiegetic elements (the way the series was promoted in Brazil, for example), we infer that *Narcos* deliberately proposes an ambiguous relationship between fact and fiction. The narrative is, thus, complex both in the point of view of analysis of its elements and the circulation referring to the way it produces representations of Colombia and Latin America, which, along with other narratives (journalism, literature, cinema and advertisement, for example), composes a symbolic element unfolding from the daily life (SILVERSTONE, 2002).

Concerning the analysis of the narrative, the method should comprise this bi-front aspect, because the mimesis in *Narcos* is also strongly generic: the police narrative, the duo of “cops”, the scenes of mafia movies, the scenes of chase, the character Murphy, which ends up becoming a complexed and justified version of the Hollywood “tough guy” regarding the ambiguities and deterioration of the hero (DYER, 1998). In this case, Murphy is perverted precisely by the violence and lack of rules in Colombian culture. “But don’t call me a bad guy yet”, Murphy asks the viewer in the opening episode, until he can narrate a little more

and, thus, demonstrate what transformed him into this type of corrupted hero. “Sometimes, bad guys make good things”, he says, reinforcing his ambivalent role.

On another hand, *Narcos* is filled with archive, especially photos. Two of them call attention to the way the filmic *mise-en-scène* is built to remit documental images. The first is a reconstitution of the registration of Pablo Escobar in a police station in Medellín in the second episode of the first season. The scene alludes the production of a popular image of Escobar smiling while holding the numbered plate (the real picture, which will later be used as proof against the drug dealer, is superposed to the fictional image and will return in other episodes of the series). The other picture appears in the final episode of the second season. Taken right after Escobar’s death, it frames the fat, bloody body of the drug dealer, shown as a trophy by the policemen who chased him. Among them, there is Murphy. The picture becomes, thus, historic evidence of the agent’s participation in the events. Besides the photography, images of news reports, of television announcements, among other archives that also instruct the reading of the series as a document.

These documentarizing elements contribute to the constitution of the conservative culturalism, once they affirm the entertainment also as a teaching moment. In the documentarizing reading, it is possible to have fun and learn with the series. But the forms of entertainment are not neutral, once they carry the industrial perspective of Hollywood, which has historically proposed a reduced set of Latin American roles, one of them being the drug dealer. The fictional and historic space is dislocated, in *Narcos*, to Colombia, but it keeps the format of American police narrative, that, articulated to the document ends up reinforcing and fixating Latin American stereotypes.

From narco-culture to conservative culturalism

Narcos reveals the fascination of cultural industry for the so-called “narco-culture”, defined by Omar Rincón (2013) as the exaltation of drug traffic as a popular way of living, with opulent and ostentatious style

- because it is important to show you achieved something in life. “Narco-culture” is a symbolic territory that unites Latin America. It creates a new labor division which includes sicarios, “beauty queens” and patrons, as well as their aesthetic versions, under the veil of a fairly flexible Catholicism. Although it is based in the family-religion-property tradition, narco-culture is a Latin American response to the neoliberal exclusion:

The drug culture says that in order to get out of poverty gain power, everything works: to rise in whatever field and with other forms, without respecting the laws, rules, institutions, values, bodies, ethics, lives: a mentality that says it is not worth the effort, nor the long road, or legality, or democracy or human rights: a mentality that became our ethic-aesthetic: it is appealing because it says who we are (RINCÓN, 2013, p. 196-197).

If narcoculture results from the asymmetries of capital, it is exploited by the system itself, which produces narratives such as *Narcos*, in which subversive aspects are domesticated if compared to other forms of expression, such as narco-runaways and some literary narratives or even more ambivalent audiovisual fictions. To Rincón, the cultural industry is fascinated by violence, rebellion, women and the accelerated world of traffic. Latin American intellectuals, in turn, are seduced by the latter, marginalized and close to the abyss. Therefore, we live a paradox: “On one hand, traffic is fought with guns, and, on the other, its aesthetic is celebrated” (RINCÓN, 2013, p. 209). To a certain extent, this is also *Narcos*’ paradox: the speech points and condemns the western insufficiency of Latin America, but it does not stop from aestheticizing violence and corporeity in our lives.

In the series, violence is taken to the centerstage through recurring images of torture, execution, rape, among other violations that affirm the banality of horror in Colombia. In the episode nine of the first season, Pablo Escobar, in his luxurious prison, La Catedral, murders, with a cue stick, a partner of narcotraffic. The camera frames Escobar, dirtier and dirtier at every blow he makes, and in other shots, shows images of the disfigured body. In the following scenes, sicarios throw parts of the corpse in an oven - after showing a severed hand and taking a ring from

it. The edit articulates this scene with another, in the same prison, but festive mood: sicarios cook a barbecue with cheerful Colombian music in the background. More than once, this counterpoint between extreme violence, raw realism and ordinary or festive scenes is used as a resource that points towards the naturalization of crime and towards how, in that society, some lives are suppressible.

Available in a platform which counts with over 90 million subscribers (the clear majority in the United States) *Narcos* is an important mediator form and its schematic aspects of representation spread stereotypes not only of Colombians, but of Latin Americans in general, in a speech which reproduces what the sociologist Jessé Souza called, in another context, conservative naturalism.

The discourse of narcoculture is, as we've said, the discourse of para-legality, which every method are valid to socially ascend, which includes corruption and violence. In that, he can easily supply elements to a conservative culturalism. But the speech of narcoculture is also, in its ambivalence, the speech of "peoples morale", the defense of "their own", the tactics against underdevelopment and produces other narratives around the daily life of traffic. In them, the "stories are the same they tell in the news, but in another version: now [the traffic characters] are brave and loyal; subjects born in the country and who defend the people; Robin Hoods that give what the law and the government takes away (RINCÓN, 2013, p. 202).

The narco-imaginary can be understood, according to Maurício de Bragança (2012), as "debris of modernity", expression which the author develops from the discussions of Beatriz Sarlo (2010) around a Latin American cosmopolitanism coming from below, referring to our peripheral, ill-formed modernity. However, as Bragança proposes, these "debris" sustain a revanchist attitude and the antagonism in relation to the American politics, mainly of immigration. The drug dealer's line in the first episode of *Escobar, el patron del mal*, series produced by the Colombian channel Caracol, summarizes this revanchism: "There's a long time we brought vices from there. Now it is time to return the favor".

In the perspective of a conservative culturalism, however, the social ambivalence is erased, and our ill-formed modernity becomes only an index of delay. *Narcos*, in a *pop* and plain dialog with aesthetic aspects of narco-culture, reproduces through their representative scheme, the idea-force of conservative culturalism. Among the aspects of what I will appropriate for analysis at the series are the life led by the sign of corporeity, affection and passion, which affirm the fake character of our civilization. In this society, acts the immaterial, not the material; the contextual relationships are worth more than the contractual, which makes them prevalent, inevitably, according to this vision, personal interests, corruption, perversity (in the etymological sense of the term, *pervertio* “put aside”, “made unlike the rules”). That implies the activation of a counterpoint, of “another external” with a positive character almost always idealized by an American character, evidencing the inferiority of our subconscious.

In this article, I chose two narrative elements of *Narcos* for analysis: the filmic point of view, linked to the trajectory of character formation of Murphy, lead character in opposition of Pablo Escobar, and the intertextuality with the magic realism. The hypothesis is that these aspects are meaningful in the constitution of the place of utterance of the show and in the projection of audiences as they weave conservative cultural representations of Latin America.

Some Colombian “lessons”

The voiceover which leads *Narcos* is, as we’ve said, from the DEA American agent Steve Murphy, which narrates our present. The line is cynical. In some passages, it puts in perspective the aspects much more economic and political than humanitarian that move the United States in the “war on drugs”, while the actions of the character remain serving interventionist attitudes. We understand the cynicism, from Safatle’s point of view (2008, p. 68), as a “reflexive ideology”, which undress and even criticizes the mechanism and its function to precisely remain to exercise it. “The cynicism appears as a bigger element of the diagnosis of

an era in which power does not fear criticism that unravels the ideologic mechanism” (SAFATLE, 2008, p. 69). Thus, *Narcos* openly criticizes the imperialist and economicist politics of the Reagan government (1981-1989), with inclusion of the television announcement in which the first lady, Nancy Reagan, releases the popular slogan “Just say no” in the anti-drug campaign. However, the clarifying and criticism of Murphy in any moment make any difference in the field of action of character, convinced with the necessity and functionality of American practices, which can be extended to the discourse of narrative.

In the condition of viewers, we are not limited to Murphy’s field of vision, because, as the own filmic semiotic, other realities, notably the referents to the private and the public of Pablo Escobar, are not. The voice, however, always goes back to key moments of the episodes to adjectivize some events, establish relationships between characters, review and temporally articulate the actions and, thus, build and reinforce a point of view. Would that be the return of the voice also as a form of conscience to avoid we get too close, mainly in the second season of Escobar? It is through this voice, for example, that the Latin American lefts are ridiculed, and the American efficiency is praised as our idealized counterpoint.

In a criticism to the series, Rincón (2015) contextualizes the war of testimonies that already composes the cultural history of narcotraffic in Colombia. They go from the official version to the local audiovisual narratives, as the previously quoted Escobar, el patron del mal, about Escobar resistance, and Cartel de los sapos, perspective “narco” of the story. The Netflix series, in turn, according to Rincón (2015), “emphasizes the righteous heroes, the true ‘made in USA’ who come and save this little uncivilized country”.

This is a memorialistic portrait of a witness involved in the events which narrate so that the viewer understands from an American perspective, the formation of traffic in Colombia and the persecution which culminated as we see in the last episode of the second season, in the death of Pablo Escobar. In other instance, which qualifies this first one, this is

also the formative narrative of a character whose ambivalence refers to a certain preponderant trope in the American cinema, the tough guy. To Richard Dyer (1998), the tropes (the good guy, the pinup, the rebel, the independent woman, among others) are recurring representations shared socially, built by easily identifiable traces and which have a certain aesthetic function in narratives. From Orrin E. Klapp, Dyer talks about the relationship between types and stereotypes in fiction, proposing that type must be understood as a representation belonging to a hegemonic group which produces to the extent that the stereotype is the representation of the marginal and the banned in relation to this group. That implicates power relations in which determined groups can be defined as central and point others as peripheral, stereotyping them. In *Narcos*, Murphy composes a type which refers to the place of enunciation, and, in a wider way, to the own point of view of the series – one “us” -, while the Latin Americans are “them”, to who we reserve the stereotype.

Murphy lives tortures and exterminations, becoming, thus, an accomplice of this actions. In other events, he himself is responsible for triggering violence, as in the first shot which open *Narcos* in media res. But Murphy refuses the role of the villain: “If there’s anything I’ve learned in Colombia, is that good and bad are relative concepts”. As the tough guy, Murphy is a corrupted hero, recurrently male role which faces contradictions regarding moral and social categories. However, again as the tough guy, the violence used is functional. In the narrative, Murphy is led to this condition. As he explains in the first episode, the decision of Murphy and his wife, Connie (Joanna Christie), of combatting traffic in Colombia is a “mission”, because the couple – him as policeman, her as a doctor – experienced the death of young people in Miami due to the traffic. The event that precedes the arrival of the couple to Colombia is the death, watched by Connie, in a hospital, of a young woman carrying cocaine capsules in her stomach. The same way his father, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, decided to enlist in the American troops to fight in the Second World War, the DEA agent decides to fight in the war in Colombia, building, initially, a set of analogies between the conflicts.

But the war hero characteristic is corrupted by the para-legality of Latin America, by the filtered narco-culture and returned through the lenses of a conservative culturalism. “They don’t follow the rules, why should we?”, asks the agent. The resurgence of brutality expressed even in the daily life, alcoholism, his wife’s abandonment, among others, are events in this narrative of a fall of a character transformed into this type. There is a significative scene: Murphy, with his wife and their recently adopted child in a car, drives through Bogotá. The street is narrow and there is a bad traffic. Murphy gets distracted and crashes into a taxi. The taxi driver and the policeman get into an argument. Visibly upset, Murphy takes off his gun and threatens the Colombian driver. Next, he shoots the tire of the taxi and goes back to the car. At the end of the scene, shot in the back seat, we see the incredulous look on Connie’s face.

These seem to be Murphy’s Colombian lessons, or Latin American lessons. In these years, the character does not incorporate anything else: he seems completely unrelated to the language, there is no reference regarding his habits (cooking, drinking and clothing, for example) or with any other cultural aspect.

But who Murphy narrates for, who is the “narration recipient”, (this viewer included in the filmic text)? Rincón (2015) evaluated that *Narcos* is a series created for the “gringos of Miami”, not for Colombians, whose narco-series are those locally produced by RCN and Caracol that, beyond industrial formats, conjugate the country’s cultural matrixes. For the critic, beyond the mistaken point of view of the series, Wagner Moura’s effort to emulate the accent and behavior of the local “narco” are not successful.

In Brazil, the series was widely promoted, both by advertisement and cultural journalism. It was mainly emphasized, the participation of Brazilian people in the international production – beyond Moura, José Padilha, producer and director of a few episodes; Lula Carvalho, photography director; Rodrigo Amarante, composer and singer of “Tuyo”, opening sequence; André Mattos as actor. This coverage celebrates, as a certificate of quality, the arrival of part of the Brazilian cultural

production in the cosmopolitanism of the American cultural industry. Perhaps, that can also unfold for a niche Brazilian audience of Netflix, with a greater flexibility to empathetically adopt Murphy's point of view than the Colombians, Latin Americans just like us.

The autochthonous bizarre and inexplicable

The references to magic realism, in the condition of a key aesthetic in the understanding of Colombian culture and society, constitute another trace that serves to *Narcos'* conservative culturalism. The mentions to this aesthetic open the first and close the second season of the show as landmarks of the narrative. The initial episode, "The arrival", a text intends to prepare the viewer for the absurdity of events that will follow: "The magic realism is defined as what happens when a realistic scenario, highly detailed, is invaded by something too strange to believe. There is a reason for the magic realism to be born in Colombia". The text is shown over an image of mountains covered by a mist, which the soundtrack helps build, initially, as a mysterious place. While the soundtrack gains a Colombian rhythm, we go down in an aerial travelling to the city of Bogotá, in a contiguous space to the mystical.

The expression magic realism, in fact, was created in Germany in 1925 by the historian and critic Francis Roh to designate a return movement, in painting, to realism after the expressionist turn in previous years. Even in Literature, as Zamora and Faris recuperate (1995), magic realism, before becoming a label related to Spanish speaking Latin American fiction, can be found in preceding works of modern fiction, such as *Decameron* and *One Thousand and One Nights*. According to the authors, the expression started to designate a set of narratives in which "the supernatural is not a simple or obvious aspect, but an ordinary aspect, a daily occurrence – admitted, accepted and integrated to rationality and materiality of literary realism" (ZAMORA and FARIS, 1995, p. 3).

However, even though it is not characteristic of our time or exclusive of the Colombian literature, the argument returns, in *Narcos*, in its final episode, "Al fin cayó", now in the voice of the narrator, Murphy:

If you look for “magic realism” in the dictionary, you will find a literary style that inserts fantastic and mythical elements in a work of realist fiction. It was in Colombia where everything started. And who spent some time around here knows why. It is a place, where, daily, the bizarre goes hand in hand with the inexplicable. But, just like Gabriel García Márquez’s work, weird shit comes in critical moments. When everybody is tense, is when everything is about to change.

While Murphy dialogues with the viewer, the montage articulates a lot of images, such as the bizarre defense of the Colombian goalkeeper René Higuita, folkloric parties and an indian healer. The opening scenes of the episode are, also, a fantasy of Pablo Escobar: being president of Colombia. The viewer of the show knows, through the events narrated in the first season, that the drug dealer had, indeed, a political project. Through a dream of the character, the narrative makes this project a reality. In the imaginary inauguration, Escobar lights up a marijuana joint and gives it to the former present César Gaviria (Raúl Méndez). In this episode, there are also mythical elements, as the neckless for protection a sicario gives to Escobar, with a sword of the Archangel Miguel, the Virgin Mary and the baby Jesus of Atocha, in a clear reference to the narcoculture. Or even, the detail of the teacup, that, spilled by Pablo Escobar’s wife, soak the napkin and imagetically anticipates the death of the drug dealer.

The narrative itself produces a sequence that could be, in certain aspects, magic realism. Escobar, tired of living in hiding, decides to take a risk and goes out alone in Medellín to take an ice cream. In the ice cream shop, no one recognizes him, not even a military man - which, in the series, can be explained due to the fact the drug dealer got old, fat and let his beard grow. But when he sits in the square to wait for the ice cream, he receives the visit of a dead cousin, Gustavo Gaviria (Juan Pablo Raba), which naturally sits beside him for an affectionate conversation.

The magic realism, as Zamora and Faris proposes, is a complex movement that involves counter-hegemonic ideologic aspects, questioning

realist and collectivist conventions, once the narratives evoke, through myths and legends, communitarian practices based, many times, on oral stories and in rituals. “In cases like that, the works of magical realism reminds us that the romance began as a popular form, with communitarian imperatives that continue to operate in many parts of the world” (ZAMORA and FARIS, 1995). But in *Narcos*, the visceral identification of Colombia with magic realism works as, beyond an intertextual form of the narrative itself, a projection in a bizarre environment, as if an aesthetic in the field of art was a direct reflection of socio-cultural aspects. In this logic, the eccentric, unlike what suggest Zamora and Faris, is not a space of emergency of difference and other possible logics to the hegemonic, but the signal of a pre-civilization stage that, more than once, wants to show Latin American’s lack of development.

Final considerations

Narcos, in its first two seasons, constitute as fiction that, deliberately, acts as a “documentarizing” reading (ODIN, 2012). This is due to different aspects: the adherence of the narrative to events and historic characters, in which the series is opportunely inscribed in the mediatic vogue of narco-culture (RINCÓN, 2013), celebrated in many other audiovisual products, but also in news, literature and music (the drug ballads, for example); For its didactics, which intends, mainly through the voice of the American narrator, to explain to the viewer how the emergency of cocaine traffic happened in Colombia, the dissemination of drugs in the United States and the story of Pablo Escobar; the scene, who links drama and archive images in the condition of document. At the same time, the series have a strongly generic mimesis, structured from the industrial format of police narratives of cinema and television (the scenes of chasing, the duo of cops, the voiceover of a policeman, the sex scenes, the formation of a social type whose violence is presented as necessary), directed in a global market.

In the articulation between fictional and factual elements, the conservative culturalism is formed (SOUZA, 2015) of the series, with

emphasis in the representation of a sensualistic Latin American environment, personalist and naturally corrupted that is led by a logic that escapes rationality and points towards our western insufficiency. The United States appear, not without criticism, as a counterpoint through the efficiency and intelligence of federal agents. Murphy and his wife are altruistic citizens that, in order to help young victims of traffic and drugs, are going to “fight” it in Colombia. In this article, I mainly analyzed two narrative elements: the filmic point of view and the intertextuality with magic realism. The point of view conduces the narrative in a didactic way to the viewer, affirms the American perspective of the show and creates a discourse of motivation for the transformation of hero in a more ambivalent type, corrupted by the Latin American environment. The magic realism, in turn, is described as autochthonous aesthetic, born in Colombia and that brought, in literature, the eccentricity of that culture.

The contemporary audiovisual series are known by the way they have been working in a less dualistic manner both in their narrative contexts and their characters, considered “thicker” if compared to those American television products that dominated our television in the 80’s and the 90’s.⁷ *Narcos*, as we’ve said, do not stop making criticism to the United States - as, for example, the decision of that country to intervene in Colombia only when cocaine became a problem of financial frontiers, or even, the methods and alliances made by CIA on Latin America. Evidently, the series can arise conflicting readings around its speech. In the release of the second season, for example, Wagner Moura, after receiving critics to the first season, mainly in Colombia, declared in interviews that “*Narcos* is not about good American cops going to South Americans to save poor people from the bad guy. [...] The heroes are the Colombian people, who decided to fight against the terrible narco-terrorism installed in their country in the 80’s.”⁸

7 See the discussion of François Jost (2012), that, from the perspective of Northrop Frye, describes heroes of contemporary American TV series.

8 Available at: <http://cultura.estadao.com.br/noticias/televisao,e-hora-de-deixar-pablo-escobar-par-tir-diz-wagner-moura-sobre-protagonista-de-narcos,10000073573>. Accessed in: August 8th, 2017.

However, the interview, as a para-text shared through the mediatic text to which it refers, can have the function of establishing and orienting a type of reading, sometimes contrary to some that was already formed. In the analysis of the series, the critic of *Narcos*, when put in front of more predominant discursive aspects, can be pertinently interpreted as cynical, once it has, in general, an affirmation of a conservative culturalist view.

Finally, the main issue of this article can also be investigated in analysis studies compared between the series and other audiovisual narratives of narco-culture, as the Colombian production *El Patrón del Mal*, of different cultural background. Such collation can contribute for the identification and analysis of aspects and nuances of conservative culturalism. *Narcos* is also an open series. The final scene of the second season is a room of officials designating the agent Javier Peña (Pedro Pascal) for a next mission, a *topos* of serial investigation narratives (let's think of *Mission: Impossible* or James Bond movies). Again, we see here how aspects of the industrial format and the genre conform the narrative. In the third season, agent Peña investigates the Cali cartel, also in Colombia, pointing towards another historic background. All of that demands study of these industrial formats and the relation they establish with recent history of our continent, putting in motion, between entertainment and document, more or less schematic representations of Latin America.

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