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Übergänge

Objects of desire – methodology for film analysis in the sense of peircean semiotics and intermedial studies

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This article aims to analyse objects as signs of a filmic aesthetic. Objects acquire several functions in films: sometimes they are only scene objects or support a particular film stile. Some objects are specially chosen to translate the characters' interior or the directors' esthetical or even his ethical commitment with the narratives concepts. In order to understand such functions and commitments this paper analyse objects of Wim Wenders' films and apply it own systematic, which is based on peircean semiotics and intermedial studies. This theme involves Cinema and Design, but it involves point of views of other disciplines, such as literature studies, semiotics, history, psychology and sociology.

Dieser Beitrag zielt auf die Analyse von Gegenständen als Zeichen einer filmischen Ästhetik. In Filmen erhalten Gegenstände verschiedene Funktionen. Manchmal sind sie nur Teile der Besetzung; manchmal dienen sie auch zur Charakterisierung eines Stils. Manche Gegenstände sind aber kalkuliert eingesetzt, um sowohl diegetische Stimmungen von Personen-Konstellationen als auch ästhetische und sogar ethische Betrachtungsweisen vom Regisseur in Bezug auf erzählerische Konzepten zu vermitteln. Damit diese Funktionen und Betrachtungsweisen festgestellt werden können, versteht diese Arbeit die Gegenstände in Filmen von Wim Wenders als Ausgangspunkt für die Filmanalyse. Dafür wird eine einige Systematik verwendet, die sich auf intermediale und peirceische Konzepte basiert. Dieses Thema beschäftigt sich hauptsächlich mit Film und Design und bezieht sich auf Standpunkte anderer Disziplinen, wie z.B.: Semiotik, Literaturwissenschaft, Geschichte, Psychologie und Soziologie.

Introduction

Film interpretation is not a new theme. It was born together with cinema and has accompanied it along the time. Since the boom of intermedial turn in the beginning of the 90es film researchers did not discover a new receipt to study media. In the field of film studies, they proposed a new look for the historical and material aspects of it, which arise from interpretative cues both in its diegetic and nondiegetic world. Films are seen as a part of culture or, more precisely, as an established communicative cultural apparatus. In this sense, also the semiotics interpretation of the signs can provide us with the elements required to understand design, desire and cinema perfectly correlated.

Object interpretation as the starting point of film interpretation is neither a new approach. It is an Andrè Bazin's proposal. In the book *L' analyse des films* (1988), Jacques Aumont and Michel Marie call our attention to this particular manner, which Bazin used to talk about films. However, these authors do not supply the reader with any analytical model, which makes Bazin's proposal accessible. This paper tries to fulfill this task.

This theme, that involves as much cinema as design, allows the joining of diversified theories and disciplines of the knowledge (sociology, psychology, anthropology, history...)

in the approach of the investigation of Wenders' films by focusing the objects. In detriments of the countless possibilities, the theoretical orientation used here, starts with the contextualization of the object through the material culture and it culminates in the methodological and analytical construction condensed into the intermedial studies and peircean semiotics for the pertinence of the moment.

Objects are polysemic. The communication process emerges from the daily life (temporal and repetitive, therefore also polysemic), a multiplicity of senses, plurality of connotations, which ordinary material objects can acquire as signs. In the dimension of this proposal, the meaning of the word object is the object as a sign – not as a correlate of the sign in the process of semiosis – in the esthetical context of the cinema.

Desires are polymorphic. The human desire, as a conscious (or unconscious) expectation of possessing something, can be expressed in various forms. The goal of the desire, the urge, may be a person, a partial, real, or delusional object. It breaks the limits and the firmness of our needs or biological instincts.

> When in the 'Interpretation of the Dreams' (1900) Freud corresponds the satisfaction of the necessity to the accomplishment of a specific action, while the accomplishment of the desire would be linked to the perceptive identity and it could occur through hallucination. The main point is the own subject-object complementarity related to the human desire. The object doesn't stop being necessary but it admits such **variability** that can even be a hallucinated object. The subject is not free from the object but it becomes freer as it constitutes itself as the object; **its existence is conditioned by a choice from the subject**, a choice that can also contradict the models of biological adaptation of man to his environment (Gerpe 1998: http://www.rubebo. psc.br/artigos/melanco.htm) (our griffins).

That possibility of choice in the election of a desired object – amid the diversity of shapes and susceptible senses to awake a desire, an aspiration – can let us see the identity of whom makes the choice. In that sense, the filmic performance can work as a stage, the favorable atmosphere to give vent to the human urges. The illusion of immediate reality provoked by the movies is responsible for the strong empathy and identification of its spectators. It is mutual recognition.

Which would be the objects of desire of the acclaimed German film director Wim Wenders then? In fact, would there be, actually, objects capable of revealing Wenders' desires? Which interpretants can an object inside a film generate? In the intention of investigating those pertinent subjects of design and cinema, to find those objects and their contexts, and finally to analyze them specifically in the sense of a methodology built for such purpose. It is the goal of this article.

The material of the culture

Surely, we are surrounded by objects and consequently surrounded by History and many stories. An object is more than color, shape, texture, material, and functionality. It is reason, ideology, context, emotion, and sensation; above all it is communication: "Just as a story, an object is a text, a way of exhibiting shapes, and a vehicle of transmission of meanings" (Glassie 1999: 46).

Objects can tell stories. They are signs disposed to the constant turning of interpretants generated *ad infinitum*. They are fruit of the semiosis of who creates and attributes their significance in a continuous dialogue of incentives, sense and sensibility between interiority

and exteriority. A *continuum* between mind and matter in the same sense of synechism in Peirce (1839–1914). Objects are sensorial and emotional instruments of construction, preservation, and differentiation of identities. They can identify and characterize the material culture in time and space and we maintain such a close connection with objects as we do with human beings in daily life. This power of mobilization from the objects probably comes from the pleasant sensations of continuity or permanence of something that can emanate from it.

> [...] the objects exist first to personify human relationships, to populate the space that they divide amongst themselves and to possess a soul. [...] Anthropomorphous, these domestic gods, that the objects are, embody in space the attachment of the permanence of the group (Baudrillard 2002: 22).

The material culture involves what man creates and uses in his ordinary life aiming to extract from the environment, his *Umwelt*, what he needs. And what does man need? Materiality and immateriality. Thus, objects work as mediators of human relationships or as mediators between man and world. This is how we will approach the specific relations of the objects of desire in Wim Wenders' films.

One of the probable roles of design and cinema – material and immaterial simultaneously – is to turn the outside world (*Umwelt*) possible for the inside world (*Selbstwelt*). That is the contact point, the convergence of the alterity of both worlds, which is a way of sharing the world (*Mitwelt*). For Heidegger (1889–1976) the man is out of the things. He lives amid the things, being (*dasein*) separated, but he could be submerged into things. It defines our being in the world through three different ways (Escudero 2001: 203):

– The objective world of things – *Umwelt*;

– The social world subjectively shared with other people – *Mitwelt*;

– The subjective world of the individual interior experiences – *Selbstwelt*.

In this panorama, we could locate design and cinema in the middle, as mediation between *Umwelt* and *Selbstwelt*, as *Mitwelt*. Design and cinema seem to change *Umwelt* in *Mitwelt* denoting *Selbstwelt*. They put man in contact with things and people of the world. This character of mediation, thirdness in Peirce, genetically presupposes the secondness inherent of the visual language and the firstness (iconicity) characteristic of the quality of feeling present in both design and cinema.

In cinema, the objects translate the characters' interior in a concomitant reveal-ing/dissimulating, explicit/implicit movement in a game whose rules are based on the ethical-esthetical commitment with the conceptual of the narrative. The objects, the design of a film, are consequences of a sign planning whose last goal is to show a certain story. Design, not as an illustration of the narrative/script (in the mere sense of adorning or describing the text) but as the own movement of construction of meaning, which was made possible by all of its constituent elements (colors, shapes, textures, materials...). It is an intersemiotic translation; a translation without losses due to language changes. Through the images of the cinema, the wealth of the icon is revealed in the variability of interpretants that can be generated by the interpreter, without losing the alterity the indexical level (characteristic of visuality) that leaves marks; clear footsteps in the linking road between the represented sign and the object (content) of reference. Images can say more about feelings than words:

> [...] it can be said that a sequence of written words is better at conveying ideational information than at conveying information about feelings, relationships and/or bonds of union. [...] that

> makes writing better suited for communication than for communion (Janney and Arndt 1994: 444).

The design of a film is part of it, integrates it and the design is also its own content. After all, "objects cannot be accumulated and dismissed as quickly as words can be uttered" (Nöth 1995: 441). The design can show us what was already present but maybe scattered in a narrative. It is the wealth of ambiguity. It delegates to the objects their own syntax and semantics. Objects are signs that mean ideas, ideals, and translate thoughts. They are part of the syntax of the film (as well as the assembly, the cut, the edition...) exactly because of their semantic designation. They constitute a grammar, a system of signs that allows the designation of things by the translation of what they could mean inside a film, which, in its turn, is another language. The design of the films clarifies the logic of the narrative and contributes to the understanding, placing dispersed contents in concrete relations.

The interpreter, based on his repertoire, rebuilds what is not literally expressed in the film. As observers and interpreters of the visual messages, we do not see simple marks in isolation. We see them in the relationship among themselves and in the relationship between them and the background of our own knowledge. Thus, we have not only what we knew literally but what we conjecture, we imagine, we presuppose... The repertoire rebuilds the road of the sign, revealing it. With the interpreter's constructive participation (semiosis) an image, object, shape, or color can say a thousand words. "What's in the brain that ink may character?" (Shakespeare sonnet 108).

And what can the design represent? Everything we can imagine. Everything that appears to our mind, every phenomenon. The objects in Wenders' films besides translating the characters' internal and external atmosphere collaborating to the narration of the story, also translate the director's ethics and esthetics. They are part of a larger text that we will discuss further on. Wenders' cinema is itself an object of desire and contemporary consumption.

Coveted Wenders

Film director Wim Wenders was born in 1945 in postwar Germany, a maculate territory of blood littered with debris, where at the same time, survivors, heroes, victims, civilians, soldiers, villains, criminals, and innocent people circulated, a territory which was under the United States allies' control, mainly. As well as Wenders, other film directors, artists, intellectuals, and thinkers of the first generation of the postwar period (Werner Herzog, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Volker Schlöndorff...) would come to be a cultural reference of Germany. They grew up in a society that was simultaneously organized on the ashes of Nazism and under the American tenderness in the attempt of, in one hand, purging away the inheritance and the guilt of the war, and in the other hand, nurturing that generation with the "new".

In the first years of the postwar period, this new did not come from the interior of the society. It was still unviable and it was to come. At that moment, the new was the different, the other. Immediately, this need could only be fulfilled by the presence of the Americans and their belongings because they were the most immediate and legitimate representatives who could symbolize the new in that territory. They were not European; they were the bearers of an identity formed on other bases and with other cultural pacts that could offer a new model (social, cultural, economical, etc.) to the semi-destroyed Germany. The Ameri-

cans contributed to those German children's fantasies with their objects, tools and systems; symbols of the new and even of hope in a country that restarted from scratch. Such objects were thrown out of trucks or military airplanes and distributed personally or exhibited in the society by the soldiers who were parked on the roads. There were American foods and candies like the chewing gum, chocolate and coke as well as, clothing (the jeans), musical rhythms (rock'n'roll, jazz, beat music), movie genres (western and gangsters films) and equipments (jukebox, pin ball). In addition, the English language was spoken among the soldiers and published on the labels of the products.

The 1960's decade is the youth of those first generation children and it was at this moment that the youths began to confront, critically the unpleasant and immediate past of Germany. They put in check the present moment of the society with the convictions that they were still living in a hurt, broken, shaky and above all, doubtable territory. All of the social areas were questioned, even the German language. Questions like: to what extend the use of the German language reproduced standards and ways of thinking that suited the Second World War? If the country was being reconstructed, was it not necessary to develop new models and rules based on new intellectual and social environment? The general feeling of that generation was frustration and certain impotence before the German language, as well as before their own expressiveness, and the whole social system. Because of this, few were the options offered to that generation that allowed them to have larger creativity or a more spontaneous contact with their own self-expression. The English language, however, represented an escape for a semantic refuge through which they could see the possibility of having a new way of expression, much more spontaneous, playful and neutral, definitively freer from the connotations of the past in comparison with German. English was listened by Americans on some radios, but it was also the language of rock, totally in ascension in the sixties. Wenders says about that: "It was the first thing I appreciated, like everybody else, that wasn't inherited" (Dawson 1976: 11).

Therefore, Wenders' reply "definitely" to a journalist's question "Did rock'n'roll save your life?" (Dawson, 1976: 11) can only be well understood if related to the disappointment with his mother tongue and to the importance of the musical messages of rock. The German actor and film director Klaus Lemke says something similar in the documentary *The White and Blue Lightness of the Being* (2003) about him and future film directors of the New German Cinema: "We suffered: nothing in German could sound as good as Mick Jagger. We felt very susceptible using the German language."[1]

In that same film, Lemke describes that Herzog, Fassbinder, Wenders, and himself were confined in an alternative bar in a garage of *Tückenstraße* in Munich: "[...] with cheap beer, a jukebox and a TV where we always watched Godard as well as American films".

Besides sharing the common desire of creating a new cinema in Germany, with new esthetics, they shared in confidence the current difficulty and distrust with the German language and culture. A series of facts were happening in the beginning of the sixties – the Berlin Wall, the Cold War, the failure of the student revolt, the disappointment with the hippie movement, the uselessness of the war in Vietnam, and the repression of the dictatorships – which increased the so called state of linguistic indisposition and turned it into a general evil of humanity until the point people had communication difficulties with one another. It is verified, simultaneously that, a sentimental apathy arose as an immediate effect of the lack of communication among people. It was the bankruptcy of their own linguistic system as an immediate translator of truths and personal feelings. To speak, to talk about something, involves narration, and to narrate implicates a certain organization of knowledge

and feeling from the point of view of a subject that may not necessarily be suitable. It is necessary, therefore, to purify the words, to go beyond the meaning, to first try to get close to the truth.

Wenders' cinema was born in the historical moment of those debates and it cannot be understood without them. The film *Summer in the City* (1970) is an autobiographical testimony of this crisis. Wenders stands out:

> [...] the fixed shots make it [the film] another a documentary about the ideas people had in 1969 and 1970, the way people felt. [...] An enormous disappointment and a feeling, as in a dream, of being completely powerless: that is, for me, what film is about now. Not just powerless, but motionless and emotionless (Dawson 1976: 19).

The analysis of Wenders' work and words proves that there was in him a desire of not only documenting that situation but also of unmasking, reacting and even finding a solution for this state of crises: personal indisposition and collision among language, truth and society. His attitude of dedicating himself to the images to the detriment of the protest in the streets is atypical inside of the social and juvenile context of the 1970's. However, once again, it can only be understood inside the German cinematographic situation. While in Hamburg and Berlin, young film directors produced *agitprop* films, the first students of the School of Film and Television of Munich proposed the esthetic movement called "New Sensibility". They refuted to take any political position, preferring the refuge in the world of the subjective experience to rediscover a new sensibility for the reality. That group did not declare itself as a nonpolitical one; it was only another form of reacting to the social adversities with less aggressiveness and more sensibility. It was about rediscovering that the reality, starting from a direct contact with objective data, refuted any type of political or social interpretation. Wim Wenders puts that position in the following words:

> It was just a way of saying that it was necessary to restart everything from the beginning and the only safe starting point was from my own personal experience. I had the sensation that only from true personal experiences it was possible, in fact, to communicate something; something that later and suddenly became relevant crossing the personal, becoming something really general (Wenders 1992: 38).

In any way, that more personal attitude put Wenders' work in contact with the ideology of the counterculture movement mainly with the vanguard movies of that time, for instance, the French *Nouvelle Vague*.

In *The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty* (1971), the theme of the personal crisis is played and dramatically deepened with the theme of communicative and affectionate incapacity. In *Alice in the Cities* (1974), the same subject is present: initially the protagonist, a journalist, is linguistically blocked because he cannot write an article. However, he is offered a chance of sentimental relearning which will take him, unavoidably, to restart writing. In *Wrong Move* (1975) the protagonist is, once again, in search of his expressiveness, however, it is not a question of a general difficulty with the language but the difficulty of treating the language from the artistic point of view. Another differential is that even though the protagonist finishes lonely contemplating nature, his search is shared little by little with others until becoming a collective experience. In *Wings of Desire* (1987) the linguistic problem seems to be already resolved but not the sentimental problem, so that, an angel wants to become human to discover what is to feel and love. To show that theme Wenders – suspicious of the narrative potential and of the communicational abuse of the images – opts for the minimalism of the verbal language to favor the image as the first vehicle bearer of meanings because the

verbal should not be the only one to handle the transmission of messages. Thus, the meaning of his films should be firstly looked for in the own image of the film.

That style corresponds to a post-modern posture of making films described, for instance, by Serge Daney (1983). According to the specialist, the fundamental characteristic for the post-modern films is that behind an image another image is always wondered. Of course we can understand "behind the image" as a metaphor of what is "in the image", the constituent elements of the image, and what the image intends to lead to. Here, we believe, is the importance of the analysis of the material culture in Wenders' films because there are objects that besides executing the mere function as scene objects – in the sense of being intrinsic or technical constituent of a scenery – they are used intentionally and repeatedly in Wenders' esthetics. For example, the coke and the jukebox, not as a coincidence, were the most wanted objects in the childhood and youth of Wenders' generation. Those and other elements seem to fulfill an intention of the film director in attributing to the images a certain meaning or increase its quality that other image elements, verbal or non-verbal, would not be as effective. As the analysis will demonstrate, the objects start to accomplish and/or to serve to one or several functions.

In the same way a gesture and a characters' glance can say more than their own speeches, the analysis of objects works as a guide inside and among the images. And if the images work as well as Wenders' answer to the real world, the objects are as safe buoys that float on the surface of the image in the fragile limit between the real-esthetic and the real-objective. This points simultaneously to the cinematographic fiction and to what the film director – as a well-behaved son of the counterculture – wants to communicate regarding his own posture, ideology, or even a probable personal solution that he glimpses as an ideal.

Coveted methodology

Wim Wenders was known for his films and for their quality. His artistic production, however, is not limited to his contribution for the history of the cinema, it is much wider: it counts on critics, pictures, commercials, picture-poetic books, scripts, books with texts, interviews, and CDs (in general, with the same predicate of the films). Therefore, to verify Wenders' objects of desire and to analyze them, it was necessary to delimit a corpus, selecting films and objects and creating criteria and methodological categories for analysis.

We started from Wenders' filmography that, itself is already diverse: it includes short length films as well as feature films; fictional and documental; monochromatic and polychromatic; for television and for cinema and of European and American productions since 1967. Our proposal is limited to the black and white and colorful film features produced in the first decades of Wenders' work because such films contain his specific esthetic elements – they anticipate his future works – and they are, therefore, the most representative of his career. The chosen films were:

1 – *Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter* (*The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty*) 1971, first fiction feature film. Colorful.

2 – *Alice in den Städten* (*Alice in the Cities*), 1974, first fiction feature film. Black and white.

3 – *Falsche Bewegung* (*Wrong Move*), 1975, third fiction feature film. Colorful.

4 – *Der Himmel über Berlin* (*Wings of Desire*), 1987, eighth fiction feature film. Black and
   white and colorful. Apex of his career, considering the prizes, the critic, and the recep-
   tion.

Those selected films were watched countless times and in varied ways: some uninterrupted,
others pausing. We also operated a precise form of analysis of the images by capturing of
specific scenes with a digital camera. It is important to emphasize that this strategy was only
intended to vivify in our memory the perception of the moment and not to analyze the film
in static images (which seems nonsense to us).

During the analysis, our attention went back to the appearance of industrial objects of
daily life (micro objects) excluding, therefore, architectural objects and means of trans-
portation (macro objects). As a result, a high number of objects were detected. Therefore, we
started with a *quantitative analysis* that selected objects by the number of times that they
appeared in each of the four films and a *qualitative analysis* that selected the objects starting
by their relevance and expressiveness. Thus, we found 17 objects which we considered
Wenders' favorites: a suitcase, a mirror, a TV, a jukebox, a photographic camera, a cup, a
coffeepot, a coke bottle, an armchair, a rocking chair, a newspaper, a radio, a notebook, a
postcard, a photograph, an umbrella, and a key. Such group contains objects that are linked
or distinguished for having common characteristics, for instance, the TV, the newspaper, and
the radio are means of communication. Starting from this selection of common characteris-
tics, we tried to establish an interdisciplinary connection between the objects (design) and
Wenders' esthetic language (cinema) considering concepts that would synthesize such
characteristics.

From this context, a taxonomy of thematic categories emerged which originated from
Wim Wenders' filmography, more specifically, from the four selected films. We considered
such taxonomy appropriate because film titles are not random, they are esthetic condensers.
Besides, it was not necessary to use extra film language for the definitions, what preserved
specificities of the cinematographic language. Below, we listed the thematic categories to
which the selected objects are interlinked. Those categories are still correlated to other
concepts, ideas, and feelings that mentioned here can expand the application of the category,
increasing the analysis of the objects.

1- *Anguish*, term obtained from *Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter* (*The Goalkeeper's
   Fear of the Penalty*).
   Objects: armchair, rocking chair and mirror.
   Correlations: affliction, dissatisfaction, introspection, doubt, feeling of limitation, claus-
       trophobia, oppression, closeness, tightness.

2 – *City*, from *Alice in den Städten* (*Alice in the Cities*)
   Objects: television, photographic camera, radio, newspaper, jukebox, photograph, post-
       card and notebook.
   Correlations: civilization, culture, information, sociability, complexity, concentration,
       expansion.

3 – *Movement*, from *Falsche Bewegung* (*Wrong Move*)
   Objects: suitcase, umbrella, key.
   Correlations: on the way, opening, transit, transition, departure, arrival, in, transforma-
       tion, impulse, circulation.

4 – *Sky*, from *Der Himmel über Berlin* (*Wings of Desire*)
    Object: clock.
    Correlations: time, space, hour, chronology, eternity, fortune, adventure, mind, wings,
        without limit, non temporal.

Among this group of "desired objects", we chose four of them for the analysis: the armchair, the television, the suitcase, and the clock. Each is the most representative of its category, as much for the amount of times that they appear in the films (result of the quantitative analysis) as for the way that they appear: in unusual or usual shots which provides them with larger relevance and expressiveness (result of the qualitative analysis). Besides the criteria of *relevance* and *expressiveness*, we also considered the *functionality* to explore details and to specify the role of such objects in the films.

    We believe, naturally, that there is no limit for the capacity of rereading and reanalyzing; in other words, there are no limits for the possibilities of relation that a language can give expression to not even for contexts created by a language. Cinema and design are languages themselves, they generate contexts and communicate something to us, and to analyze them inside the objective of this work, we are supported by a terminology predominantly linguistic to create the criteria and the qualitative functions for the lack of more appropriate nomenclature for the approach of the theme. This discussion of the universalization of the application of the linguistic model as warranty of the methodological rigidity in other areas of the knowledge is as appealing as controversial. Jean Baudrillard in *The System of Objects* (2002) uses the linguistics as basic perspective for his analysis, not without exceptions: "Differently from the language, the technology doesn't constitute a stable system. Unlike the monemes and the phonemes, the tecnemes[2] are in continuous evolution." (Baudrillard 2002: 15).

    The studies of the recent and emerging science of image – *Bildwissenschaft* – point to the lack of pertinent and individual terminology in the extent of the images, as we could verify in the series of conferences on that theme which recently took place in Kassel, Germany[3]. Given that preamble, we sketched in the sequence each criterion and function that we propose for analysis:

1 – Criterion of relevance. This criterion depends on the results of the quantitative analysis, in other words, the number of times that the objects appear in the film. An object with a high number of appearances has larger potentiality of being a favorite item and, consciously, used by the director of the film. The same can happen to the object that appears in a single time, however, with emphases. In a second stage, it should be considered if such objects have relevance, larger or smaller, to the context in which they are inserted. For instance, if the theme of a film is death and a bottle of milk appears several times, won't that be an object specifically chosen to "co-act" with death? In short, the excessiveness as well as exclusiveness are indicators of the relevance but the degree of that relevance will depend on the way that the object is related to the context of the film. If such objects go by that sieve, we start to analyze them for their expressiveness, the second criterion of the qualitative analysis.

2 – Criterion of expressiveness. This criterion considers the concepts of Brecht to identify how an object can cause impact, in other words, it calls the spectator's attention for the shot or cinematographic edition. An object should be considered more or less inside this criterion if its occurrences are more or less expressive than expected. However, the impact that an object is capable of causing (while quality of feeling, characteristic of the firstness in Peirce)

can be showed in different ways. Thus, we subdivided expressiveness in the following subcategories:

2.1 – Amazement: strategy built from deviation of standard use of cinematographic language (in technical terms, of framing, assembling, and edition) whose objective is to call the spectator's attention for some aspect of the object inside the scene. For instance, if the objects appear in unusual shots it seems to be *nonsense*.

2.2 – Particularization: detail that shows something out of the ordinary as, for instance, when a close up is so close and slow it causes a deformation in the image of the object. Considering the example of the bottle of milk, the camera produces an extreme zoom of the bottle so that we only see a white surface. Would such scene cause an impact inside the theme of death?

2.3 – Surprise: the unexpected that causes admiration and/or fright. The shock that the disposition of a certain object can raise in a scene. The surprise reveals what was unconsciously hidden. For instance, when a character interacts with an object that does not match his/her profile, surprising the spectator and revealing the character's unknown facets.

2.4 – Ecstasy: exaltation of senses and feelings, ecstasy! In the production of excitement, the communication is rendered concrete. Roland Barthes names this excitement in the extent of the picture of *punctum*: it's what directly reaches the observer and jumps in its direction. The *punctum* of an image is not the same for everybody; it depends on the private interest of each person. It is through the *punctum* that the observer establishes a communication with the image, surrendering to it. It works as if the image threw the desire beyond what it allows us to see. Parallelly, we could consider that in the movies there are scenes in which the objects work as *punctum* attracting the spectator's attention to themselves. In this case, the ecstasy is the best translation of the current sensation. The color of the object, its shape, a small detail, and its disposition in the atmosphere... they can work as *punctum* snatching the spectator's sense and sensibility, mobilizing the desire.

3 – Criterion of functionality: A relevant and expressive object certainly will execute one or more functions inside the context of the film. We will be more than convinced that such object will become a strong candidate as an "object of desire", in other words, an element consciously elected by the director not only for its scenographic qualities (see scenographic function), materiality or physical qualities (see esthetic function) but also for its discursive value. For the functionality, we created the following subcategories:

3.1 – Scenographic function: this is the most trivial function that an object can occupy in a film. It is linked to the creation and adaptation of the scenery in relation to an environment. Its function will be, therefore, of an object of the scene. For instance, the director that likes a bottle of milk can put it inside a refrigerator, in other words, the most probable place to find a bottle of milk at the nowadays.

3.2 – Semantic function: it is the one that tries to establish a meaning (interpretant) between the object (object) and the image in which it appears (sign). We work in a level of denotation and connotation with the metaphorical, metonymical and synecdochial capacity of the scenic assembly. This function counts with a series of known, and already crystallized, combinations in the filmic language. For instance, the milk is known as a symbol of purity. If the bottle of milk is broken, we can infer that such purity was corrupted. However, the great

wealth concentrates on the construction of different associations, more for similarity than for contiguity, generating less obvious interpretants.

3.3 – Synesthetic function: it refers exactly to the awakening of new sensations, in general, other than those an object more commonly provokes. The synesthetic function is appellative also because it seeks to deeply reach our perception, working our visual, verbal, chromatic, olfactory and musical repertoires among others, to cause emotion and commotion. Because in the cinema many languages are simultaneously in touch, what sensation would a bottle of milk cause us if opposed with a cold European climate and an opera as a soundtrack? And how about this same bottle in a sunny day with an *allegro* of a sweet flute as a sound-track?

3.4 – Referential function: refers to other arts, languages, and contexts from out of the film. This is the criterion that measures the intensity of the incorporation and demarcation of references from "other texts", as in intertextual studies. This function can be more intense as the other text is more mentioned, interpreted and etc. (Broich and Pfister 1985: 26). Depending on the degree of this function, intermedial occurrences can be detected; in other words, there are processes of constitution of meanings through the contact between the film and other means of communication that can be detected.

3.5 – Dialogical function: it intends to the re-contextualize the reference. This criterion considers Bakhtin's dialogism to identify the resulting tension in the confrontation of the meaning of the reference in the original context, regarding the meaning in the film (new context). "The reference will attest dialogical tension if a critical positioning in the re-contextualizing happens; if it only confirms the sense of the old context, the reference will have a low degree of intertextual dialogicity" (Malaguti 1998: 41).

3.6 – Ideological function: ideology = it attributes the origin of the human ideas to the sensorial perceptions of the external world. Marxism is the group of ideas presented in the theoretical, cultural, and institutional extents of the societies. It is characterized by ignoring the materialistic origin in the necessities and inherent interests of the economical relationships of production; therefore, it ends up benefiting the dominant social classes. Totality of the forms of social conscience includes the system of ideas that legitimizes the economical power of the dominant class (bourgeois ideology) and the group of ideas that expresses the revolutionary interests of the dominated class (proletarian or socialist ideology). System of ideas (beliefs, traditions, myths) interdependent, supported by a social group of any nature or dimension that reflects, rationalizes and defends its own interests and institutional commitments (religious, political or economical). Ideology is a group of philosophical, social, political etc. convictions of an individual or a group of individuals.

3.7 – Aut(h)o(r)-reflexive function: it considers the author's relationship with his own film. With this criterion, we referred to the relevance of interferences of elements and the author's own personal data in during of the film and of their appearances in the screen. We are, therefore, speaking about a relationship of elements inside the film that refer to the outside reality. The aut(h)o(r)-reflexivity will be more intense if the film director appears in the film (like Hitchcock, for example), if he acts in the scene, if his voice comments scenes off the record, if he touches or moves objects or if some objects, landscapes and other autobiographical items were inserted in the film. Depending on the criterion of the expressiveness (see item 2 above) an object will get more or less evidence in the aut(h)o(r)-reflexive function.

3.8 – Esthetic function: it refers to the design of the objects. This criterion seeks the constituent materiality of the objects as through the shape, color, texture, material, dimensions, functionality as well as the esthetic movement in which they are inserted, and through which we will detect the artistic intention, the theoretical presuppositions, and the cultural origins of the esthetic manifestation. The design of the objects does not have the intension of maintaining significant for an unlimited time but as an expression of a particular culture, in a particular time, it ends up reflecting the *Zeitgeist*, the spirit of that time. In the intention of recognizing the *Zeitgeist* of the objects this function is also applied.

These proposed criteria aim to give the initial steps towards a typology to differentiate and to evaluate the visual occurrences of objects in fictional environments. Our starting point was the cinema but we consider that others fictional environments (virtual, artificial, printed) can also be analyzed through the application of this same taxonomy, in the intention of contributing to other areas of the knowledge, above all, those dedicated to the images. However, this methodological construction should not be understood as a naive proposal of statistics or "measurement" of criteria and functions. The challenge of this study is the development of a specific terminology and typology of the studies of the image. Thus, we believe that such criteria should still be enlarged and adapted.

Desire in analysis

As well as the linguistics, the recent science of the image also refers to translation taking the term in its wide sense. It refers to the transcription and transposition of elements from a context to another in which the meaning of the second is predetermined by the original one. The original one is also in the new context, however covered by it. Wetzel affirms in his article on the website "in the images, the visibility is also 'transdetermined' [...] by a passage of visual condensation. [...] Each image contains, therefore, material of another image, and at the same time it offers another image" (Wetzel 2002: www.uni-konstanz.de/paech2002/ zdk/beitrg/Wetzel.htm). In this context of semiosis, we placed our work: when we see an object in the film, we are only in front of the image (sign) of this object. In front of the idea of this object visually transmuted and transposed to the screen in agreement with the current technical-economical processes. Therefore, the object-sign in the screen is the object of reality just partially; it carries with itself data that goes beyond the esthetics of reality and that are formed inside the own infrastructure, of the fictional image in our case, the film fiction.

Armchair

The analyzed films come from the decades of 1970 and 1980. The esthetic movement which characterizes this period is the post-modernism, with the rejection to the modernists' utopian objectives of looking for universal esthetics and exerting in the production of more playful, colorful and funny objects. However, the design of the objects that we see in these referred films is a reflex of the previous movements: exactly the modernism and the German functionalism. The spirit of the modern movement – characteristic of the reconstruction of postwar Germany – is based on the utilitarianism, the absence of ornaments, the use of metallic and synthetic materials in architecture and design. With ethical interest, the modernism intended to solve the basic needs of the society, as much in the practical-functional level as in the

esthetical one. Methodologically, the functionalism bases itself on rational and quantifiable criteria to produce objects with rigorous functionality. In the sense of style, simplicity it seeks neatness, cleanliness, and purity through the use of geometric shapes, adoption of the orthogonal structure, modulation, basic colors (above all, black and white) and technological materials. The functionalist German legacy – dominant theory of modernism – constitutes the structural base in which the industrial design was developed by *Bauhaus* (1919) and *Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm* (1953) to its apex in the decade of 1960. Thus, the objects of the films excel in sobriety of colors and shapes reflecting exactly the German *Zeitgeist*. With the armchairs presented in the films, it is not different, after all "the configuration of the furniture is a faithful image of the family and social structures of an epoch" (Baudrillard 2002: 21).

The armchairs stand out in Wenders' films not for being functional objects (scenographic function), which usefulness seems obvious to us, but for accentuating a softened, or even renounced sociability. Sitting in capriciously comfortable armchairs with generous angles of inclination of the support and the depth of the seat (esthetic function), the characters no longer need to keep a glance or stare at one another. The position that the body takes in an armchair is a true invitation for a "ride" or retreat of the glance. Relaxation of the body and seclusion of the soul (semantic function). This is the way that the traditional armchairs work in *Wrong Move, The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty* and *Wings of Desire*. In *The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty*, the rocking chair made of dark wood padded with checked red and black fabric occupies a prominent place in the ticket seller's room (murdered by Bloch) exactly beside the bed. The high and reclined back support and armrest precisely describes a seat in which the body and the mind rest. In the framings of the scenes inside the room, this chair is emphatically sought by the focus of the camera (particularization). A similar situation happens in *Wrong Move* in one of the rooms of the industrial's house visited by Wilhelm and his friends. There is an armchair with armrests of light brown wood and stripes predominantly red and white.

In *Wings of Desire*, two armchairs appear with great expressiveness in different moments of the film. Firstly, the elegant armchair situated at the top of one of the stairs of the library. With metallic structure, a black leather coating, straight and simple lines, the armchair is the picture of the predominant modernist esthetics in the films. It is a great motive for a long close up even when no character uses it (particularization). Strategically positioned at the top of the stairs, it provides not only the resting place of an old man who suffers the weight of time but also the delight of a magical atmosphere of the interior of the library, populated by books, men, angels in black and white syntony (synesthetic function). Still immersed in the monochromatic[4] Berlin, the *Wings of Desire* brings us now the old man searching for his own time that was lost with the end of the *Postdamer Platz* of his youth. He sits in a traditional spacious armchair of large armrests in the middle of the deserted square, unnoticed (surprise). The design of the armchair, the armchair, the old man's thoughts, the old man: relaxed, forgotten, and lost.

In *Alice in the Cities*, the girl sits down in the lobby of the airport in an armchair with a TV coupled to the arm, proper for a waiting room. It is a rigid armchair in plastic without any refinement or special comfort, sustained by a metallic structure that interconnects other identical armchairs. The design, in this case, is favorable not to move away the look but to address it to the TV. It is not a deep nor comfortable seat, the opposite; it is hard in material and in shape. It shelters the body and maintains it alert for the reception of the TV viewing for a limited time.

In the fictional reality of the analyzed films, the armchair works as a representative object of the *anguish* category. Metaphorically, it contains in its own structure the sensations of dissatisfaction, introspection, and closeness.

Television

The presence of media is important in Wenders' films. Such aspect is confirmed by the number of times that the means of communication appear in those four analyzed films. This fact calls our attention and requires an even closer analysis to find out why they are important and how they are related in the whole of Wenders' filmography. Our analysis found out that the TV, for example, takes several functions and allows a critical-cultural interpretation, as following:

1) Scenographic function: when objects have only a product value and are inserted in places where they usually are in real life. Examples: televisions and radios in waiting rooms, books and newspapers on shelves, on the table or beside the couch.

2) Semantic function: when objects play a role such as an actor does. They have a narrative value.

3) Synesthetic function: when objects cause a sensation in the characters, they increase their perceptions in relation to themselves and to the world. Objects cause emotion, irritation, pity, and so on.

4) Referential function: when they remind us about other films.

When we started our analysis, we noticed that television fulfills the criterion of expressivity in a high level. Television does not only call our attention but also influence the characters that are watching it in the film. Considering these above functions, television is the object that is most showed, themed and criticized. Due to its expressivity one scene of *Wrong Move* deserves a closer analysis. The scene that shows the group of travellers in the industrialist's living room. At that moment we see that the television is on and surely has a scenographic function (in the sense that the television is placed on a usual place) but the curious thing is that the TV shows nothing at all, just blue and grey flickering flashes. Besides this nonsense, it is still involved in its plastic protective wrapping. In this case, the screen fulfills a dialogical function too. It contextualizes a kind of critic that is out of the film. We can interpret that the film criticizes how some objects lose their real objective (information and entertainment) and turn into an ornament. This aspect enters a bigger dimension when we relate it with the theme that is being discussed by the travellers in the living room. They are just talking about loneliness in Germany. Now, we can ask ourselves: does a television decrease the feeling of being alone or make it stronger? Does the television have anything to say to us? Does it show the reality or only one kind of reality? These questions are connected to the discussion about the influence of TV. It is known that irritation is one kind of negative effect that television can cause on people. Some surveys pointed out that the accumulation of discontinued images combined with established texts cause this irritation. Television texts are in most of the cases stereotypes and only repeat messages of the world by changing the way the message is beamed. In the mentioned scene at the industrialist's house, the TV-screen reinforces irritation and discontinuity. Someone who suffers from loneliness can also feel

such emotions. The pale blue produced on the screen also translates the coolness of the loneliness.

In this context, we should remember the scene in the film *Alice in the cities* when a TV is completely broken by Philipp. He is in a hotel watching TV and then he falls asleep. A setting up shows that what he dreams can also be seen on TV. It appears that we notice the sounds and images of a TV even when we are not aware of it. After a while, Phillip, in an irritated and uncontrollable state, destroyed the television inside his room as if fighting against something or someone. But since television is an inanimate apparatus, the influence of this object depends on the viewer's personal feeling and not on the television itself. A TV really says things to people though nothing personalized, just generically. It only produces reactions and feelings from the viewer's point of view. The way he or she reacts by watching a TV-image can cause or not cause a sensation. If a sensation is caused, then television has a synesthetic function, as we see in this scene.

For little Alice the semantic aspect is more important than the synesthetic one. She does feel something towards the presence of a television but it is not as strong as what she considers or interprets as a TV. In this sense, she "sees" something else in the TV while Philipp feels more than we can "see". For Alice, the television can be a good substitute for her mother while Philipp is incapable of establishing a place for the things he is watching. He does not even know what he misses. Can children find substitutes for their feelings more easily? If so, are they better than adults in finding meaning in life? When Alice is in the waiting room at the airport, she is occupied watching TV. The TV is curiously sustained by the armrests of the chair which can be pulled closer to the person. In this way, the television seems to involve the TV watcher. When Alice sits in front of this television, we have the sensation she is being embraced by it. Here, the TV acquires a positive aspect, almost a human one. In another scene, Alice falls asleep while watching TV. The TV plays the role of a companion.

In *The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty*, the television is shown just after the crime and also plays a role, the role of the witness. This interpretation is possible through the setting up effect. Bloch fell asleep after his criminal act. When he awakes, he has a very mysterious face, a threatening face. His eyes are wide open looking at the room as if he were looking for something. Suddenly, the camera drifts around the room and focuses a luxurious plant. Finally, it stares at a white TV which is just beside the plant. In this sequence, we can see Bloch cleaning his fingerprints from objects and surfaces. Why is the TV shown in this scene? Why is it white? As soon as a TV is shown in these films, it has something to do with the narrative level. Thus, it acquires a semantic function. Here, the TV takes the place of a witness and because of its color, the esthetical function is reinforced: white is a symbol of neutrality.

In another situation, television works as a referential marker. Wenders makes the television to be a palimpsest also when it only has a scenographic function. Through the television, the film dialogues with its filmic tradition using citation and showing parts of other films. This trick can be understood as a filmic allusion. Doing that, the film director can show how a film can reflect its own intentions, also when it is shown on TV. On one hand, it means cinema can take different forms, maybe in an inadequate screen. On the other hand, it means cinema can also be seen through television. In *The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty*, the referential function is not as intense as it is in *Wrong Move*. Bloch goes frequently to the cinema and only watches a television when he wants to be informed about real things (news, football). In the second film, we can watch fragments of some films together with the

characters. In *Alice in the Cities* and *Wings of Desire*, we have similar scenes: Philipp also watches TV when he is with Lisa in the hotel and Peter Falk is also seen as he plays himself.

As we can see, the presence of television in these films varies a lot. Sometimes television is a modern intervention with plenty of potentialities, sometimes it is a disturbing element, almost a useless object. We should remember that TV is one of the icons of the serial production. Considering this, a TV is free from any kind of personal and handcrafted value. It is everywhere for everyone, in the public and in the private sphere, it has several models, prices and shapes. It speaks any language. We can say that television is democratic. On the other hand, it also isolates people in an anti-social way by keeping the viewer away from the external world. It is indeed a democratic platform since it accepts and distributes almost all information created by society. In this sense, it represents one object of the *city* category as well as the best and the worst of society. The fate of television is to be an inevitable controversial object.

Suitcase

Wenders' films often have to do with journeys or travellers. Historically, these films are classified as road movies and its origin roots in the American westerns. The dramaturgy of road movies is related to elements, themes and characters of the way of life which is carried out by being on the road. The suitcase is one of these elements.

At the first sight, a journey seems to be something abstract whose existence only will be real when its process is finished. A suitcase is a concrete and palpable cultural element and it transmits or anticipates the idea of a journey. Besides the suitcase, we can consider similar objects such as a case, grip, chest, rucksack, sack and purse. Particularly, the suitcase as a sign, for example, implicates another one: the journey. Although we can consider journey and suitcase correlated, they take part of the same semantic field where a suitcase is a sub item of the journey. Like tickets for travel and hotels, a suitcase is always present when the theme of a film or a text is a journey. It is the symbol of it. Suitcase is the top object of all travelling items because it can carry all of them inside. It is an object of personal use and for this, it can show its owner's personality or indicate one moment of his or her life. For example, one of the first scenes of *Marnie* by Hitchcock remains unforgettable for focussing in the foreground, a bright yellow purse carried by the protagonist, a kleptomaniac, who steals and deceives people. After all, a color "is a metaphor of cultural significations which are put in an index" (Baudrillard 2002: 38).

Mignon's (*Wrong Move*) and Marion's (*Wings of Desire*) suitcases fulfill a scenographic function but their esthetical value is bigger: their suitcases are a kind of a big sack hanging on their shoulders, very flexible (made from leather or fabric) and somehow they reflect their circus-style. Wilhelm's suitcase (*Wrong Move*) is black with metal. It is made of a rigid material. All these characteristics reinforce his personality, a bit serious and self-centered. His suitcase is a curious model, something between a journey suitcase and a business briefcase, something similar to a detective's case. And if we take his tan overcoat into consideration, Wilhelm seems to be a secret agent in an official journey and this image is very far from a young writer's stereotype. In fact, this costume design is usual for the esthetics of the 70's. The discretion of that period was thought to reduce the effects of the flower power style of the 60's.

The number of times that a suitcase appears does not justify its selection among the films we have chosen and the same cannot be said about the criterion of relevance. As we have

already inferred before, although the suitcase is not every time present, it helps us to classify this film as a road movie. Other elements are present: we will see Wilhelm going away from his hometown by train. Alice goes from one country or city to another until she finally finds her family. Bloch also arrives in hotels and Marion wanders around the city after the circus goes away. The road movies are present in Wenders' filmography and some occurrences confirm this profile. Nevertheless, he amplifies the relevance of this genre by putting it in contact with the *Zeitgeist* of the seventies: people are more worried about an internal and mental journey than about the journey itself. The trip itself is not so important; the ego trip is what the film is about. Their movements and decisions are indexes of a transformation process through which they are living. In this sense, Wenders inverts the principles of a road movie. If the origin of this genre establishes that the traveller should leave his home and face challenges along his way to conquer new territories, a contemporary road movie consists of showing men looking inside for himself, for his self or for something which justifies his being on Earth.

In *The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty*, there is a scene that emphasizes a suitcase. Although the suitcase rarely appears in this film and is not so important in terms of quantity, its occurrences fulfill much more a scenographic function. Its expressivity grade is notorious for its strangeness and particularization. One shot, however, puts the suitcase in evidence in a very peculiar scene. One of Bloch's first acts when he gets into the hotel is to put his suitcase on the reception desk. The camera focuses this moment very close and we can see the suitcase in the left angle below the screen. But as soon as the suitcase is on the desk, Bloch turns on a television that is also at the reception. His suitcase, a personal object, suddenly loses its importance and the television, a totally impersonal object, dominates Bloch. It seems to us that Bloch turns the TV on in a desperate act, in search of a clue, something to tell him what he should do next.

The same does not happen with little Alice. In *Alice in the Cities*, the scenes with a suitcase call our attention for their capacity of surprising us. This reinforces its semantic function. Alice considers her suitcase the most important object. It is also the most familiar object around her and she likes it as if it were a pet! She sits on her suitcase, she rests herself on it and embraces it as she would do with her own mother, if she were there. At the hotel in Amsterdam, Alice's suitcase lies on her bed for a long time. It remains there even when she is sleeping. Another different aspect is that Alice is the only character who opens a personal suitcase in all of Wenders' films. She does it to pick one piece of clothing. At this very relevant moment, the synesthetic level of the suitcase is high enough to catalyze her expectations towards it. As spectators, we are eager to know what Alice is going to take out of that suitcase. We are also curious to see inside the suitcase. Maybe we create an image of the interior of her suitcase inside our minds. Do we also anticipate what we are going to see? As soon as the suitcase is opened, it incites us to ask ourselves what Alice is looking for. We may feel Alice touching fabrics, buttons and cloths. We see colors, shirts, and dresses. Alice is also eager to call Philipp's attention and that is why she strategically picks a dress up. She wants to tell him to leave the woman and see how she is well dressed. In this context, the suitcase can be seen as an object which carries indexes of our origins, our biological and social heritage. Finally, it stands for what we can call cultural baggage, a place where we take our abilities from to live and survive.

In *Wings of Desire*, Damiel's armor represents his "heaven suitcase", his only piece of an angelical inheritance. When he falls down from heaven, his armor hits the ground some minutes later and his journey as a human being starts with this piece of armor. This object has

a high level of expressivity for being an unusual personal object nowadays. Its semantic function is extreme, since this must be seen as metaphor of a suitcase. This object was worn by a medieval knight to protect his chest along his journeys or when he was fighting. Damiel only owns this object and it can stand for the idea of protecting his inner angelical side against any human act. He does not own anything else besides this and his angelical abilities. He decides to exchange it for other accessories that can guarantee his life on earth: a hat, a watch, a jacket and a tie.

Our analysis pointed out that the use of a suitcase can be more expressive and relevant if we consider the semantic and synesthetic function to emphasize the *movement* category, it means, external changes (space and time) or personal transformations (individual). Due to its personal value of keeping and containing qualities, the suitcase as an object creates an atmosphere for suspense, suspiciousness and surprises because we never know what its owner will take out of it.

Clock

Wall clocks, pocket clocks, urban clocks, wristwatches… are really emblematic objects; they are regularity markers, symbols of permanence and internalization of time. They appear with prominence in all these analyzed films. In *Alice in the Cities*, the girl and Philipp wear a watch and they play scenes in which the object gains expression. The first relevant scene is the one that captures Alice's face in the airport in foreground, "framed" by a series of wall clocks that announce the schedule differences in several cities in the world and they denote the differences of the internal time of the characters. Philipp wears a traditional watch: a round dial with quite readable numbers and a black leather straps. He is always wearing this watch even when he is sleeping. This object appears several times in slow close ups (particularization). Alice also wears a watch and she consults it as if looking for an answer for the time that doesn't go by and doesn't bring her mother and family back to her (semantic function). We also find a typical scene in Wenders' films: close up in big round clocks (always black and white) common in train or bus stations (scenographic function). For being characterized as road movies, *The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty*, *Alice in the Cities* and *Wrong Move* count on that classic scene of passage of time in which we see the focus going into the direction of those station clocks.

In *The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty*, Bloch commits a murder and slowly stares at his own watch (also a classic rounded model with black leather straps) as to try to precisely demarcate the importance of that instant. It is interesting to notice that the protagonist, who also sleeps with his watch, always wears it with the dial turned to the internal side of the wrist, as he would like to hide and dissimulate the time.

> The objects don't just help us dominate the world because of its insertion in the instrumental series – they help us also because of its insertion in the mental series, dominate the time, making time discontinuous, classifying it in the same way of habits, submitting them to the same association forces that govern the arrangement in space. The watch is a good example of this discontinuous and "habitual" function. […] the watch as an object helps us appropriate time. As well as the vehicle "devours" the kilometers, the object-watch devours the time (Baudrillard 2002: 102).

Still in *Alice in the Cities*, Wenders explores the presence of the clock in less usual places than in a kitchen, worrying about always focusing it, putting it in a scene and in interaction

with the characters. The wall clock in those scenes controls the characters and devours them as a delicacy. The old wall clock made of heavy dark wood and with large dimensions that we see at the industrialist's disorganized house in *Wrong Move* works as a "living thing" that occupies space and characterizes the environment. After all, "the old object is always, in the exact sense of the term, a family picture" (Baudrillard 2002: 83).

In *Wings of Desire*, characters that live in differentiated temporal scales coexist: the angels in an eternal time, durable; and the human beings in their social, cultural time. However, even inside the human beings' group, it seems that different temporalities that result in diversified visions of the world exist. Damiel falls in love with Marion, a lonely circus acrobat, who is the cause of the abdication of his angel condition. As a man, Damiel will be introduced to colors and tastes of the world: firstly, through the *graffiti* in the wall that separates Berlin (and Germany). A simple metaphor can be inferred: the wall separates the city, two lifestyles, the spiritual from the physical, and the lack of temporality from the chronology. The old man uses the library to try to rescue Berlin's and his own sense of history: the library and the old man as guardians of the collective memory. Then in his reminiscences around the wall and the *Postdamer Platz*, in search of his own time. The use of spaces as markers of time is a precious resource that Wenders uses along the film. However, the presence of the object clock is also relevant in the film. Damiel exchanging his armor for clothing and more appropriate accessories of the terrestrial world, acquiring a watch and admiring it as a jewel (ecstasy). In an expressive scene, the character is confronted with a clock projected in the screen of an exposed television set in a shop window. He stops, he is fascinated with the unusual situation and checks his watch comparing the hours, being certified of his position on that space-time so different from the permanent time of his origin. The *sky* category, played by the clock, more than considering the chronology of the elapsed time reveals the lack of temporality of the human relationships that is shown in Wenders' films.

Design designating desire

No desire subsists without the mediation of the collective imaginary. Wenders' desires are also our desires.

> Every desire, even the most intimate, still seeks to the universal (Baudrillard 2002: 188).
> Each object is [...] the exponent of a desire (Baudrillard 2002: 105).
> All desires [...] are materialized in signs and in objects (Baudrillard 2002: 207).

Let us admit that our daily objects are, in fact, objects of a passion, these affectionate investment does not stay behind any human passion. Daily passion that frequently prevails on all the others and that sometimes reigns alone in the absence of the others. Temperate, diffuse and regulator passion, whose importance for the individual's and the group's vital balance, we don't really know. The objects in that sense are, out of the practice that we have of them and at a certain moment, something else, deeply related to the individual, not only a material body that resists but a mental fence, a property, a passion (cf. Baudrillard 2002: 93–94).

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Wenders, Wim 1987: *Der Himmel über Berlin*

Wittlich, Angelika 2003: *Die weiß-blaue Leichtigkeit des Seins.*

Notes

1   All the German transcriptions and translations were made by Simone Malaguti.

2   According to the author, tecnemes would be simple technical elements, different from the real objects.

3   Conferences: *Bildwissenschaft – Probleme und Perspektiven eines Forschungsprogramms*, from 11 to 13 February 2004, Universität Kassel – Kunsthochschule – Kassel, Germany.

4   *Wings of desire* was produced in black and white and also in colors. The beautiful photography of the film is signed by Henri Alekan. Wenders honors him naming the circus seen in the film of "Alekan".