Journal of Arts & Humanities

From the Dark, into the Dark: New Europe Meets Old BRICS on the Way

Carlos Frederico Pereira da Silva Gama[1], Barbara Tigre Maia[2]

ABSTRACT

In 2012, the European Union (EU) received the Nobel Peace Prize amidst political and economic crises. Just before the nomination, the EU released (and withdrew) an advertisement on European enlargement. Rather than contemplating incumbent members, it presented EU's alleged set of enemies - countries from the BRICS group, which benefited from the aforementioned crises. It portrays a gripping landscape in which the EU is the embodiment of rational, peaceful change whereas Brazil, India and China are rendered allegories of unfettered destruction. The juxtaposition between crises and the Nobel brings to the EU's status in a shifting world to the table. Brazilian, Indian, Chinese stereotypes get mobilized to stabilize ongoing notions of European identity and polity. BRICS countries and the EU are set apart in moral terms. Through the advertisement, BRICS and the EU get positioned in an ongoing struggle for international ordering. Enjoying the opportunity of Nobel Prize to critically approach the EU as a political entity, the paper brings EU's portrayal of others to the fore, focusing how historical claims are made to work, challenging EU's concatenation of representations. The paper, inspired by a handful of International Relations critical contributions, problematizes such representations on grounds of how practices of making claims about history work through popular culture fixing roles for the EU and the BRICS in a shifting world order.

---

[1] Country Desks Coordinator at BRICS Policy Center, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Email: carlosfredericopdsg@gmail.com.
[2] London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), UK, Email: btigremaia@gmail.com.

1.0   Introduction

At the beginning of the 21ˢᵗ century (and of a new millennium), the European Union (EU) celebrated 60-plus years of activity, as well as 20 years of its formalization by the Maastricht Treaty (1992). Celebrations were cautiously held amidst a deep political and economic crisis, triggered by the American subprime crisis of 2008 that culminated with Greece's 2011 bailout. The occasion was deemed appropriate to awarding the EU's with the *Nobel Peace Prize* in 2012. The Prize contemplated, according to the Nobel Committee, the EU's contributions to keeping peace in Europe[3]. What about peace in the world?

Roughly a year before the Nobel's nomination, the EU released (and quickly withdrew) an advertisement on European enlargement. Rather than contemplating the situation of incumbent members, in harsh fashion the ad presented EU's alleged set of enemies – all belonging to the BRICS[4] group, countries that have benefited from the same crisis that affects the EU –aggressively contrasted with, and contested by a peace-loving EU. The advertisement (which is still available on YouTube and all across internet[5]) portrays a gripping landscape in which the EU is the embodiment of *rational* and *peaceful change* whereas (people from) Brazil, India and China are rendered allegories of unfettered destruction. Against the background of a deadlocked EU facing a disturbing crisis in Portugal, Italy, Greece, Spain (PIGS), are non-Europeans to blame?

Figure 01: European Union receives the Nobel Peace prize	Figure 02: Europe faces crisis

Such Brazilian, Indian and Chinese stereotypes unsettle ongoing notions of the European identity and polity.

The juxtaposition between the crisis and the Nobel called our attention to the European Union's status in a shifting world. Enjoying the opportunity of the Nobel Peace Prize to critically approach the EU as a political entity, our paper brings EU's portrayal of others to the fore, focusing how historical claims are made to work, challenging EU's *concatenation of representations*.

Having this in mind, our paper problematizes such *concatenation of representations* on grounds of how practices of making claims about History are worked through popular culture. We focus the ad's representations, the roles of the EU and the BRICS in a shifting world order, inspired by a handful of contributions from International Relations and correlate disciplines.

---

[3] http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/eu-nobel/
[4] Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
[5] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkLkSHlSvTA

Figure 03: International stereotypes

We found disturbing, but noticeable, the representations portrayed in the advertisement – not only from the standpoint of citizens from BRICS countries, but also considering immigrate communities in the EU. It portrays a gripping landscape in which the EU is the embodiment of *rational* and *peaceful change* whereas Brazil, India and China are rendered allegories of unfettered destruction.

Our focus is the EU advertisement, in which BRICS and EU are set apart in *moral* terms. Our research strategy articulates BRICS' stereotyping in popular culture with ongoing ambiguities of the European integration process through cinematic politics. Through the EU's advertisement, BRICS and the EU get *positioned* in an ongoing struggle for international ordering.

Figure 04: Ordering struggles in a shifting world	**Figure 05: BRICS violate sacred ground from above**

Through tropes of motion and stasis, depictions of space and body action, the current contradictions and shortcomings of the EU project coalesce around borders erected between the modern subject in crisis and emerging global threats. Such representations not only infuse vitality in the fragmented EU body through seductive expansion; they also re-enact the sacredness of the territorial space against threatening transnational expansion *from abroad*. (see figure: 04)

We notice that BRICS' stereotypes are social constructs made widely available by popular culture. China, India and Brazil are framed as materially endowed civilizations, nevertheless reproachable for their vicious, *unacceptable* moves – in moral contrast with a humble, modest Europe. In such a

therapeutic project (ion), the future is re-enacted by retrospective updates of alterity stereotypes – instead of 'rising', BRICS shall be rescued from their *downfall*, their moral shortcomings, in order to be *reconciled* with an expansive notion of (European) moral realm that reiterated previous configurations of international ordering. (See figure: 05)

In a broadened ontological/epistemological palette, representations are not only metaphors gearing politics as usual, but also constituents of aesthetic discourse, enhancing our understanding of the workings of a socially constructed *international* realm. Popular culture partakes in the molding of political discourses.

2.0   Prolegomena: Behind the scenes

According to Barbara Misztal, celebrations and rituals are key devices for *institutionalizing memory. Images of the future* are built through *appropriations of the past;* in the process, representations become entangled with temporality – they become *markers of social change.* In this regard, we agree with Misztal: *who is invoking which version of the past – and for what purpose?*[6].

During the last few decades, the discipline of International Relations (IR) problematized some of its foundations. Among the '*findings*' of this reflective process there is growing concern with the categories employed by the discipline – which have been remarkably entwined with the practices of sovereign states[7]. Such *statist* categories are also employed by non-state entities such as international organizations, NGOs – and the EU. *The use of statist categories by non-sovereigns*ushers critical possibilities for IR's reflection and praxis. Set in motion by social agents *other than the state,* such categories seem poised to empower *alternative political practices.*

In Modernity, territorial sovereign states are associated with agential, as well as knowledge-generating, prerogatives[8]. The use of statist categories by so-called *others* opens gates for criticizing such prerogatives, destabilizing *international order* on grounds of *imprecise and shifting* political practices. Political practices taking place where they *should not be* and the absence of politics *where it is meant to be* (Walker, 2006) bring to surface the *contingency of orders* and the possibility of devising new, alternative ones.

However, those prospects do not preclude the possibility of reified uses of such categories by non-sovereigns, conforming *turbulences* to the contours of an existing order – such *reformist* movements may arrive in the guise of an apparent *criticism*[9], but the ontological and pragmatic foundations of *the modern international* stand still.

In our paper, the EU's ad is approached as a set of political practices. By delving into the ad and problematizing its array of representation, we consider the claim – that there is a definitive, a single account, from a single standpoint, of social change involving the EU – less and less compelling as a *future-oriented* narrative of enlargement, and more interesting as a display of complexities and ambivalences that pervades present EU's practices. Against the background of Greek acrimony, as well as tension in Portugal, Italy and Spain (an anti-group – PIGS), the EU comprises a political *cacophony*.

The EU's ad can be investigated in terms of its *ontology and deontology*, in order to unveil divergent layers *of subjectivity.* Multiple, contradictory, puzzling accounts of order overlap in the mind's eye. Its ontology and deontology bring to fore a modern account of politics and subjectivity, molded by *conceptions* of *risk, threat, crises and tragedy.* Those *layers* dispute the pragmatic claim of the ad – that a single, definitive, coherent and cohesive *future-oriented* conception of international order cantered on

---

[6] Miztal, 2003
[7] Bartelson, 1998
[8] Neocleus, 2008
[9] Bartelson, 2001

the EU remains compelling. We unveil representation(s) as (a) political practice(s) –divergent modalities (of ordering), employed in different contexts, by different social agents, for different purposes. Ambivalent layers *locate* the EU in a social world of divergent narratives, with a host of possible *futures.*

By questioning this claim - that that a single, definitive, coherent and cohesive *future-oriented* conception of international order cantered on the EU remains compelling– we are not denying that representations can be used for ordering. On the contrary, they empower the EU in varied fashion.

Despite unsettling, noise does not preclude ordering. Firstly, by defining the adequate roles of others in terms of their immanent possibilities. Secondly, by framing international relations as a realm of risk, threats, crises and tragedy – what may be a depoliticized account of social activity. Thirdly, by making available a set of definitions that works as 'symbolic technologies'[10] – definitions that produce other definitions and that reproduce a particular account of the social world.

Those representations articulate the EU's self-images with a particular account of world ordering (in which *the international* is the *departing point* and the *arriving point* as well). The image of a future world is molded at the image of current EU's dilemmas. *Selective memory*, the *invention of traditions* and what Michael Foucault[11] once called '*presentism*', take part in the assemblage of a narrative of past that makes present projects possible – of a past made present aiming at the future (*future past*)[12].

Figure 06: Europe's future past

Any recapitulation of the EU's activities, from its inception until our days, involves the *framing of times,* attributing significance to past practices and reading current practices under a different light. Our paper considers the EU's ad a means to taking stock of the post-2008 EU crisis and its controversies. The ad embodies a particular standpoint regarding the EU's foreign policy agenda. It provides *guidelines*, filtered through the lenses of risk, threat, crises and tragedy. Such a setting presents a complex entanglement of the EU and *other* international social agents – in a sense that Ulrich Beck [13]considered '*biographic*'.

In such a scenario, governments provide *spectacular* solutions through stereotyping – attributing the causes of crises to (often vulnerable) human groupings, whose status is accordingly fixed. Threatening personas extract heir plausibility from exclusionary processes that set such human groupings apart from the rest – not far enough to be ignored and not close enough to be recognized. *Others* (from the BRICS countries) are portrayed as the counterpoint to a European identity.

3.0   Spinning the wheel: the EU and representations

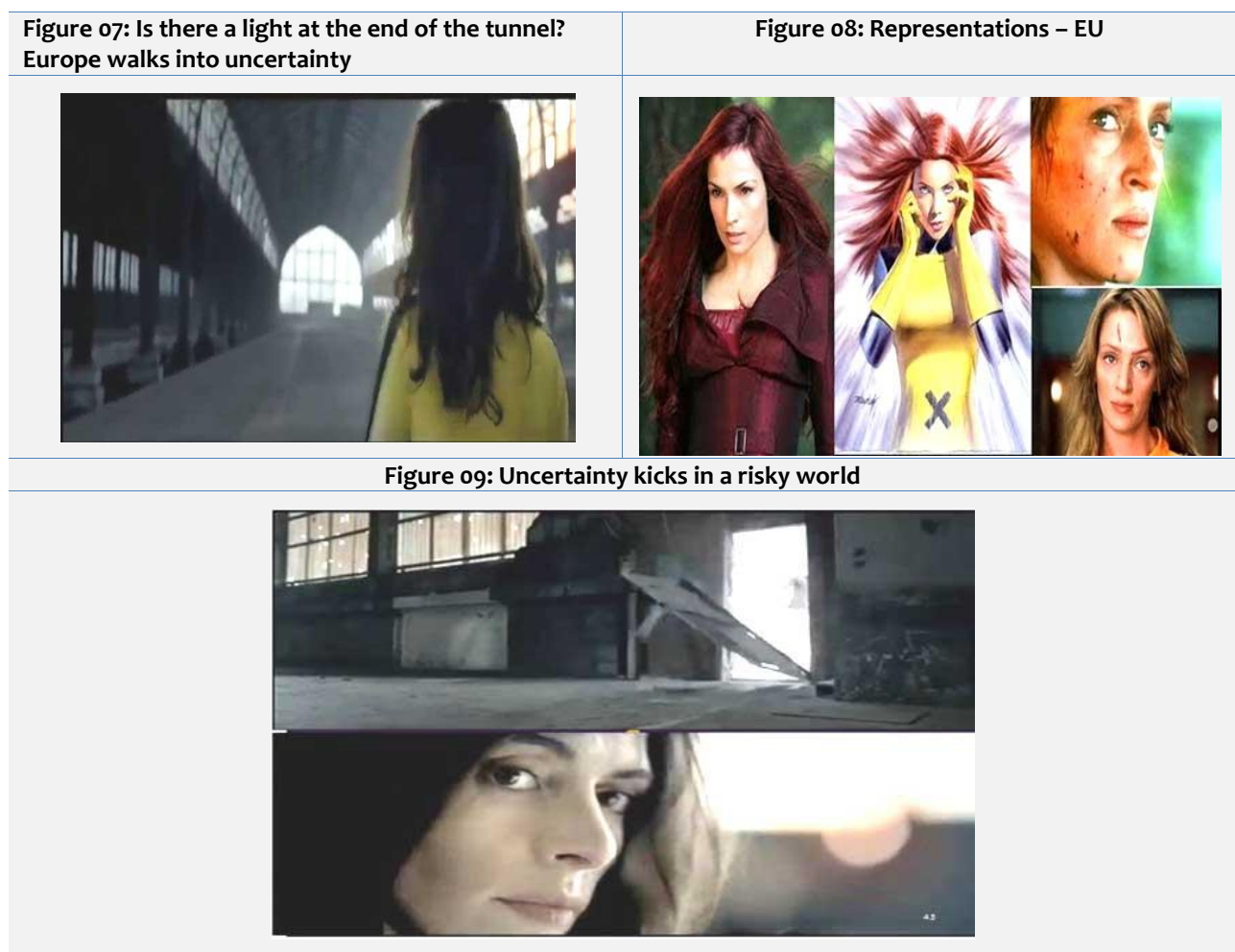
[10] Laffey & Weldes, 1997
[11] Foucault, 1984
[12] Koselleck, 1985
[13] Beck, 1992

In a representational wormhole, not only the EU's present is at stake in the context of crisis and fragmentation. Other narrative is at peril – the perception of a post-World War II unified Europe standing up next to contending superpowers. In the early years of a post-European international system, European states integrate in order to remain at the center, even though the center has shifted to America and the USSR. The successful regional integration process survives the end of the Cold War and USSR's implosion. Soviet Europe is rapidly integrated in an expansive (Western) European polity. In the longer run, the advertisement not only *responds* to the BRICS' bold ascension in the 21st century – it also depicts Europe, a successful expansive (continental) polity, thriving through its own decline.

In this sense, the ad's protagonist – an amalgam of *Kill Bill*'s *Bride* and *X-Men*'s *Jean Grey* – *faces* not only the systemic revisionism of BRICS countries (embodied by the Chinese Kung Fu master, the Brazilian capoeira fighter and the Indian Bin Mughal fighter and Bin Laden lookalike), but also contemplates her own (temporal) decay. The ad's opening shot sets *Bride Grey*'s travelogue through a wasteland. The protagonist is presented as striving for survival – and r*edemption*. (See figure 07)

Figure 07: Is there a light at the end of the tunnel? Europe walks into uncertainty	Figure 08: Representations – EU

Figure 09: Uncertainty kicks in a risky world

More than taking stock and telling the EU's history of the present (a history of a given subject), the advertisement contains subtle and significant statements on world *ordering* amidst a flurry of controversies. The EU takes the upper hand next to its non-European counterparts; Europe takes a walk through the valley of uncertainty while *others* still need signposts. Our focus, thus, is on the EUs' depiction of a shifting world order in which it is not alone. Facing the world economic crisis, the EU seeks *re-positioning (that new position an iteration of old ones)*.(see figure 08)

The uncertainty pervading the breadth and depth of a shifting world stems from this account of the EU. Facing crisis, old rules could fall by the wayside; order itself was under threat. The ad plays a

therapeutic role: it reiterates moral borders between conflicting subjectivities and, in this process, legitimates appropriations of the past by the EU, an entity often proud of its extensive *pedigree* and *adaptability.* Therefore, a specific conception of the international is produced, with the EU as a pivotal element. (See figure: 09)

In order to re-position, the EU has to re-map the world to which its activities refer. This re-positioning is not detached from context. It could have been a matter of catching-up – post-crises EU going with the motions of a renewed international realm. The ad's ambitions are not only aimed at catching-up with a mercurial future. Re-mapping portrays the past in order to fix the future. It delves into past to define near future *for others.*

By redefining the place of orders, the ad is not only repositioning menacing characters – *pushing old games of enmity into new playgrounds*. It is also a decontextualizing and recontextualizing move – a political attitude that aspires at updating, but transpires caricature, parody, pastiche and excess. Language transmutations are not net conversions – they inscribe and modify, they are scribbles over the *original* text[14]. Through this process of *scribbling* identity tropes between texts, the author (the EU) gets diluted in context, becomes closer to a hypostasized illusion, a vehicle for texting rather than the narrator of a cohesive and coherent text. Allegedly updating EU's narrative for 21st century threats and crises, the ad not only falls short of transposing Europe from 21st to 19th international systems – it produces the unsettlement of the EU's successful post-1945 narrative as it scapegoats BRICS.

For matters of re-mapping, let us look at language before delving into images. Supported by a host of critical contributions, we provide insights on the role of images in IR, focusing conceptions of international ordering mediated by accounts of identity.

4.0 Writing images

According to Michael Shapiro[15], discourse is not transparent communication between subjects about things – discourse is a linguistic practice, and language is a kind of mediation, governed by (subjective) rules of interpretation and meaning-allocation. We shall be aware of a series of *pre-texts of apprehension,* which inform the kind of mediation language will provide, engendering manifold *styles of scripting.*

The kind of mediation provided by language is not detached from space and time. Language always mediate through historically interpretative practices – interpretative practices that stipulate how *a world* shall be seen. Deontology produces ontologies. In what regards the language-world relationship, Shapiro speaks of *modes of representation* – not language as the mirror of the real, but language as mirror of the interpretative practices of a given space-time conjuncture. Language is decisively informed by the construction of boundaries, references to meanings.

Adopting a critical approach to language, Shapiro implodes *monolithic* conceptions. There is no clear-cut *language*; there are several *languages,* all following different historically constituted *modes of representation*, boundaries that stipulate how the world *shall be* interpreted. Representations are artifacts – but artifacts *played as facts*. They comprise boundaries generating different spaces in which actions, things and identities are played out. Shapiro takes modes of representation seriously, which implicate separate *spaces of intelligibility*. By critically unpacking language (through the historical practices which fostered modes of representation), we have '*textual politics*'.

As reality is not immediately accessible and, most relevant, partially constituted by linguistic practices, coping with language is a matter of unveiling immanent alternatives – *simultaneously possible worlds* (in a pragmatics of possible representations). Any reality is mediated by a mode of representation. Modes

---

[14] Derrida, 1979
[15] Shapiro, 1989

of representation articulate different spaces in which actions, things and identities are played out – and on the other hand, the playing of some representations silence *alternative readings*, produce selective *erasures* and *forgetting*, empower *particular users* of language, relegate *others* to the margins of a given discourse. By approaching those spaces and boundaries, we can the conditions of possibility for a given *reality*. Subjects and objects are produced and debased through linguistic practices:

> *'Our language assigns us roles, either directly or indirectly; to reshape language so as to reshape myself is to reshape another's self, both by changing the ways in which I appear and perform in his universe and by changing the ways in which he can define himself'.*[16]

Based on his critical conception of language, Shapiro [17]speaks of '*cognitive imperialism*'. Shapiro criticizes the epistemology of modern social sciences; they postulate a detachment from the set of phenomena intended to explain. Apparent value-free sciences clash with what Shapiro call the foundation of identities – *enunciation* located in space and time. Discursive practices of social sciences, far from axiological neutrality, entail knowledge-power relations. Under the mantle of value-free speech, social sciences either obliterate identities that do not fit the mold or classify those *unnamed others* according to modern subjectivity (they become sketches of modern selves). The social sciences would be responsible for homogenizing identities – literally, in a worldwide *scale*. Different identities would be fixed as unbridgeable alterity (difference-as-*threat*) or as undeveloped sameness (difference-as-*immaturity*).

Cognitive imperialism prominently figures among the rhetoric strategies employed in the EU's advertisement – both downplaying differences among Brazil, India and China (stereotypes) and reinforcing their (unbridgeable) alterity (with a negative sign – alterity as barbarism) before a (cohesive, rational, civilized) EU.

Also speaking on Modern identities, Robert BJ Walker [18]considers that this identity was made possible through a series of cleavages – symbolic and material boundaries – between the modern subject, the world and other human beings, manifested in a specific, peculiar molding of time and space. Such process allows the modern subject a *security/safety reserve of its own* while it objectifies other beings and selectively absorbs them – rationally reconstructing a *safe* world. Modern subjectivity stems from a foundational exclusion (split between subject and *world*) and a series of subsequent *selective absorptions*. Initially the world is objectified and subsequently *others* will be absorbed as well – both framed in space and time. In Modernity boundaries do not progressively disappear; they are constitutive of modern subjectivity and decisively inform the relationship between this subjectivity and the *rest*.

The emergent modern subject's quest for ontological security becomes fixing (in time and space) that allow the reproduction of its identity (as rational manager of reality). This operation implicates bringing in, in selective way, pre-modern Nature and other humans beings (considered non-modern) within the new modern space and time. This *bringing in* is made possible through previous *symbolic cleavages* that fix the identity of other human beings as non-moderns. The modern subject's self-definition as rational manager of reality is an exclusive prerogative.

IR, in Walker's view, is the discipline responsible for controlling difference in space. The sovereign state and the *international* realm of sovereign states promote, respectively, the consolidation of *modern* identities and the expansion of the *scope of modern politics* prospectively towards encompassing the Earth's entire surface.

---

[16] Pocock, 2009, 47
[17] Shapiro, 2004
[18] Walker, 2006

The *international* realm is an outcome of modern subjectivity, structured in (territorial) space and (progressive) time through the motions of sovereign states. The sovereign state implicates the inexistence of political activity beyond its boundaries (*mere relations*); it is also the vehicle to bring in *others* deprived of autonomy. The *international*, thus, depends on the foundational exclusion of *world* as well as on selective absorption of elements of this *world* by sovereign states. IR is a Modern narrative; it performs the *miracle* of conflating the *world* with the *international* through a binary account of sameness and difference.

The *international* realm, thus, benefits from the modern resolution of the problem of difference and similarity, of unity and particularity: a symbolic discrimination in space (*citizen/friend* vs. *foreign/enemy*) and in time (*civilized* vs. *barbarian*). The *international* institutionalizes difference in unity through binaries (many states that manifest diverse forms of life, a sole system of states – 'anarchy'). At the same time, the *international* excludes a plethora of other life forms and other political forms.

Modernity is an encompassing move – selectively incorporating in sovereign space and in progressive History the world that rests beyond. The *international* is the political manifestation of Modernity's aspiration to totality; notwithstanding, it is founded upon exclusion, and it depends on the existence of *others* to persist as a spatial-temporal solution to the problem of difference and similarity, of unity and particularity.

In Walker's terms, the EU as portrayed in the advertisement is an expansive modern subject, controlling difference in space through a moral discourse on time. The EU's narrative is an encompassing modern one, in which the presence of others provides tension as well as legitimacy to a totalizing political project.

Speaking on encounters between Europeans and 'others', for Beathe Jahn[19] the foundational event of Modernity – the encounter between Amerindians and Europeans – involved discrimination and inequality. Nevertheless, there is more to Modernity than this. Jahn characterizes the encounter as a simultaneous unsettling of identities. They are in permanent flux. The (partially) unexpected, unsettling event proved decisive in the context of European reorganization of its (medieval) identity to a new (modern) one. The symbolic and physical violence implicated in this process represented a gloomy entrance for Amerindians in Modernity – but identities, dominant or recessive ones, are always in flux. They get fixed in a specific space and specific time, in a specific fashion through active building.

However, the experience of difference made possible by interaction proves a more powerful debaser than pro-active building and fixing. This is a dynamic feature of human interaction – *predating, making possible* the modern account of sameness and difference. Against the grain of unexpected difference, the European reorganized their identity looking back to Romans and Greeks. Europe de-centered by America gets (retrospectively) re-centered in Rome and Greece. In what regards the modern international system, its foundations, according to Jahn, are cultural ones.

In this sense, a scenario in which the EU gets de-centered in the international system by former colonies from America and Asia is not simply a shift of positions in an anarchical, horizontal table. It undermines the conditions of possibility for the European identity – founded on a hierarchized, spatialized encounter with alterity. In Jahn' sterms, the EU's advertisement represents a reiteration of European mythologies facing an existential threat from rising former colonies.

Philip Darby, in '*The Fiction of Imperialism*'[20], reconstructs the narrative of the encounter between Europe and its others through literary narratives. Darby questions the borders between academic and literary texts – both express ideational and material phenomena typical of Modernity. In this sense, the literary text would be overloaded, in ambivalent fashion, with Modernity's central quest for

---

[19] Jahn, 2000
[20] Darby, 1998

subjectivity. 19[th]century literature would be a more interesting guide to Imperialism than, say, international relations theory.

In those texts, Darby signals an emerging antinomy. Incoming European invaders (imperialists) mobilize the cultural repertoire of native populations (others) in order to legitimate the colonial project. The outcome of such a process is a blurring of identities – an eclectic mismatch of the old and the new, nevertheless positioned hierarchically. Natives and invaders have their identities changed, but the split between them remains (in temporal terms). Modernization as colonization is a fundamental moment for all involved, destabilizing all identities.

One of the interesting features of Darby's perspective is that he posits Europe as a relatively stable subjectivity next to natives, whose identities are more flexible and, therefore, adaptable. Europe suffers because, in order to curb natives, it has to loosen its own take on subjectivity. Colonial identities are hybrids – but in historical perspective, something not uncommon for natives, whereas they would represent a true split with monolithic perspectives on Europe.

In Darby's terms, the EU's advertisement mobilize the cultural repertoire of a former colony (American popular culture – Hollywood, comics, and the videogame industry) in order to legitimate its own integrative process facing the rise of BRICS. In order to stereotype BRICS as decadent civilizations lacking a moral compass (and conversely convey Europe's own rationality and morality) Europe also becomes embroiled in stereotypes (extracted from the same sources). Europe and its former colonies become interlocked in ambivalent representations, even though hierarchies are running rampant. BRICS are more flexible – they have different identities – in contrast with aspirations of a single, coherent, monolithic European identity.

So, what about popular culture as Modern language – productive as mediation? Arjun Appadurai[21] stresses that mass media, by mobilizing imagination, becomes a pivotal political site in Modernity – allowing for leakages that transcend and violate the borders of sovereign states. Imagination is a fundamental asset in the mental daily workings of modern humans – it is the raw material of collective self-images. Imagination, as the prelude to expression, has constitutive effects, apart from mediating. The juxtaposition of different images catalyzes political action, instigating '*new lives, in other places and times*'. By its turn, the juxtapositions of different imagined landscapes remains at the core of contemporary political controversies – especially because the sovereign state often loses the monopoly on those images that steer subjectivities.

Agreeing with Shapiro that *writing and critical thinking are radically entangled* we adopt, in this paper, an approach informed by *cinematic politics* as a critical method. Shapiro's *cinematic politics*[22]does not simply regard the use of cinema for matters of foreign policy. It is a critical *intervention* – through engagements and juxtapositions between different though models and historical moments, he intends to make the present surprising and contingent. Shapiro emphasizes the *radical temporality* of cinematic composition through its mode of presentation, which *resists* the perspectives of portrayed characters and groups. Tracing his approach to Kantian critique, Shapiro stresses that the world cannot be understood without mediation; mediation structures betray human intervention (production).

Cinema produces an enlarged subject (as the EU's stereotype) that presumes communicability with a wider audience. Such a fantasy, a projection, can by its turn shape further human experience. Cinema (and mass media in general) is a productive activity, providing coded conceptions of subjectivity that can be, by their turn, unpacked by cinematic politics –politics of critique.

In those terms, time to cut back to the ad, to consider its depictions of space, time and subjectivity.

---

[21] Appadurai, 1996
[22] Shapiro, 2009

5.0 Cutting back: Entrapment unfolding a shadowy theatre

The space portrayed in the EU's ad combines motifs from different aesthetics. It invokes vastness and darkness, as in Gothic architecture. The presence of stained glass windows in clarity at the end of the *tunnel* conveys a sacred ambience, a cathedral-like appearance shining in clear-dark contrast with redemption at the tail end of incoming obscurity (the beginning of the protagonist's walk). Also bringing to the fore cathedral monumentality, Greek columns sustain the (never to be seen) ceiling; such a steady presence is combined with rational proportions, absence of sculptures, sullen detail – features of the Classical aesthetic. The sacred motif of the cathedral bridges the Gothic and the Classical – an overlapping, ambivalent space. The uncertainty that befalls the trajectory from dark chamber to luminous glass panels becomes a metaphor for an international system in crisis.

Figure 10: From the dark, into the light

Crisis provides a remixing of such a space – it becomes expressionistic, as features associated with Gothic (vastness, obscurity) prevail over the rational setting. As the BRICS appear, they obliterate the Greek pillars and linear trajectory of the protagonist from different angles (a balcony, above the surface, breaking through the door). It becomes a haunted space. The dimensions of such a space are recurrent reproductions – empty arcades formed by Greek columns. Emptiness is bordered by a subliminal roof and sustained by the aforementioned Greek columns. Columns are not just columns, they have pedestals – they have a differentiated status (this kind of column, in Ancient Greece, was associated with masculinity and virility – the Dorian column – in contrast with the Corinthian column, associated with femininity and beauty.

In the beginning of the ad, the EU is struggling to get in a new world order, rambling in the dark. By the time the ad folds, the EU, whose practices are often contested, becomes *quasi-omnipresent;* it has become the spokesperson with the lamplight; it spotlights the future, authoritatively, to others. Under the ad's light, the EU's practices, in contrast with unpredictable events threatening the very idea of order, manifest of orderly, rational change *through risk;* a forecasting EU fixes its face in a rear-view mirror. By *reimaging the past, international-as-colonial* tropes are reiterated in order to *deter immanent imagination (*as a political *practice*[23]*).*

Through the ad, space is rendered meaningless, devoid of value – a hermetically sealed *box*. This locked box is produced by resisting inter-subjective attempts to fill in the alleged void with the production of difference, through (homogenizing) dire straits of survival and necessity. As discourses on space overlap and contrast, on the one side a political locked box becomes interwoven with the international realm, a depiction of politics as *impossibility*. On the other side, space becomes embedded in human bodies. Modernity is framed as entropy – an ambiguous, clash between emptied Nature and embodied standardizations of humanity.

---

[23] Appadurai, op.cit.

The Cold War's imaginary fills IR pages with landscapes of doom, mutually assured dead-ends, ethical deserts in which choices have to be made under external pressure. The advertisement reiterates this apocalyptic imagery, updating tropes for the crisis' aftermath. Allegedly *future-oriented* EU extracts its prophecies from the past, restating conceptual *foundational myths*. The context of such concatenation is relevant.

Inside the aseptic framing, *Bride-Grey* seems an insured character. Safe, tried and true; she delivers the goods. She could do no wrong.

When we think of complexity, we usually scratch the surface out of preconditions, not knowing alternatives. Vast scopes debase confidence. Complexity is second-order uncertainty. After the Cold War, the EU was unsettled by sudden change, criticized for its shortcomings. After the 2008 world crisis, it has crumbled as a coherent, unified, expansive polity.

In IR texts, the Cold War arrives as a condition and halts dynamics. Freezing all but one conflict, accommodating ambiguity under the wings of necessity, the tragedy of entrapped territorial states brings to mind Hobbes' gladiators looking one another in the eye, a taunting posture in which is impossible (if desirable) to prevail. No prevalence, both get prey to renewed layers of insecurity. As long as the hateful look remains, a dire set of choices remain in Modern political conflicts. In such a landscape, all kinds of political conflicts, all kinds of violence, have to be *contained*, in order to provide cohesion to taunting gladiators, which *represent factions of a world order*.

6.0 Down the camera eye, at war with the world

The mapping of the late-20th century international system presupposed that social changes be made *intelligible*, in order to assess the breadth and scope of incoming challenges (in the case of the advertisement, incoming challenges to the EU). Historical interpretations *map* human practices – supplying social agents with instruments for transforming their own time, as well as critical resources for approaching the past and for constructing different futures.

In is in terms of intelligibility that the advertisement plays a *therapeutic* role – deterring fragmentation and controversy. By framing the EU, China, India and Brazil as taunting figures, the ad resorts to monolithic subjectivity – therapeutically draining the corrosive leaks from Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain. It also performs a *pedagogic* role – telling audiences that an enlarged EU is the moral cornerstone of the international realm, contrasting with dangerous, savage revisionists aiming at hearts and minds. Future pedagogy is oddly rooted in the past, as appropriations of the past amount to prospective, rather than retrospective, policymaking. As such temporal depictions go,

> '…we cannot take any distinction between past and present for granted, but must be prepared to analyze how this distinction has been drawn in order to support or debunk different political positions'.[24]

The advertisement's conception of an international system in disarray, shaken to its core due to crisis, threatened by revisionist bullies is no innocent storytelling. Assuming that meaning constitutes agents, as well as it is constituted by them, Laffey & Weldes define concepts as symbolic technologies – '*inter-subjective systems of representations and practices that produce representations*'[25]. Concepts are social and inter-subjective, contextually produced and context-producing [26].

---

[24] Bartelson, 2007, 123.
[25] Laffey & Weldesop.cit., 209.
[26] Fisk apud Laffey & Weldes, 1997, 209.

What kind of practice would concepts be? Sets of capacities around which people could build knowledge of themselves and their world(s) – concepts, thus, actively produce meaning, rather than simply being containers. Concepts empower and constrain – they make possible some modalities of action, whereas precluding others. They are embedded in materiality and other social relations – all representations entail power relations [27]. *The power of concepts does not arise from their use by powerful agents, but from their capacity to generate representations*. In what regards *circulation* and *dissemination*, concepts are constantly spamming *from context to context* – they are constantly checked, contested, and constantly demand justification and legitimacy.

Caught between contrasting perspectives, social sciences strive to answer '*…the question of what determines the meaning of concepts within a given context*'[28]. The production of concepts is a social phenomenon. Concepts are elements of constitutive practices (instead of neo-positivistic causal variables). '*They are inextricably involved in the production of interests*'[29].Different political positions – different interests – make possible *a socially built distinction between past and present*, by mobilizing concepts.

Further on, by unfolding in a hypostasized Cold War landscape, the *EU versus BRICS* narrative is held in a trap. Old images are translated from context to context, from relationships between sovereign states to relationships between human beings – both Modern subjects [30].In the ad, subjects framed by popular culture.

In the beginning, the camera eye is skewed. Woman put aside, it focuses an open-ended landscape, water and sky. Floating subject stands still with seamless regularity of social life broken, pushing for a different regime of movement and passage – ungrounded grounds. As the assemblage blind our ways to the EU's past, the latter vanishes before the present; it is only from present interventions that the past will extract its voice from. If a country was, or was not, considered to be European is of diminished relevance in the context of the EU's expansion during crises. Different political trajectories are also less relevant in such a context – the ground wet, slippery.

Figure 11: Slippery when wet

7.0   Into the dark: *New* Europe meets *Old* BRICS on the way

There is not a standard image for conflict in IR. IR's imagery often resorts to theatre – to featuring. IR assembles its conflictive imagery brick by brick. In order to portray conflict in IR, the EU's ad invokes a variety of representations to portray its characters. The ad is, therefore, an array of representations for narrative purposes. It invokes popular culture in no-nonsense way in order to convey a narrative of civilizational therapy – movies, videogames and literature on alleged moral enemies of the West.

[27] Foucault, 1984
[28] Bartelson, 2007, 108
[29] Laffey&Weldesop.cit., 195
[30] Foucault, 1982

Popular culture works as a legitimizing device; it is also part of a machinery of world-producing[31]. The EU's ad portrays animagescape of a doom-laden IR space filled with overtly contradictory characters (instead of contextual agents). It attaches moral significance to the casting of BRICS and the EU itself.

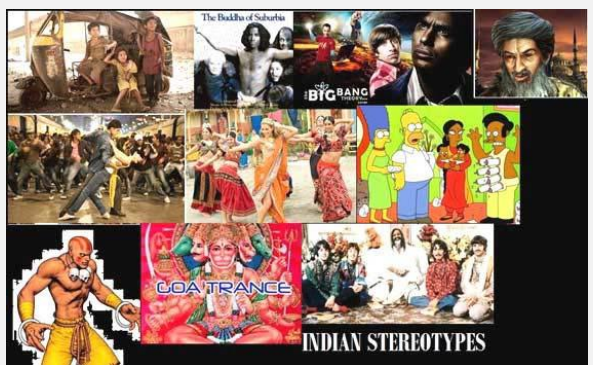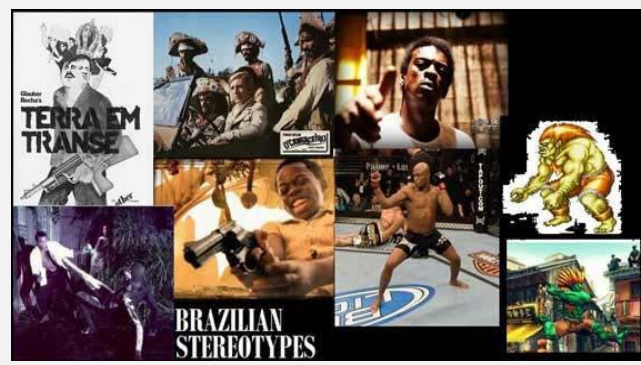| Figure 12: (New) European stereotypes	Figure 13: Chinese stereotypes
Figure 14: Indian stereotypes	**Figure 15: Brazilian stereotypes**

An odd distillation of stereotypes comes to the fore. The EU becomes, on the one hand, Quentin Tarantino's *Bride*: a deceptively vulnerable woman traumatized, heartbroken and scarred by Oriental bullies who start a killing spree for revenge and soul-searching. On the other hand, *X-Men*'s *Jean Grey* – a tragic character, endowed with supernatural psychic abilities that, nevertheless, she keeps for herself until under threat by brutal enemies. After gaining slow control on her powers with the aid of *Professor X* (*Charles Xavier*, a Holocaust survivor), *Grey* acts rationally and orderly amidst a chaotic world – at least until she faces the loss of her beloved ones in the hands of alien entities and (as the Bride, traumatized by such event) she becomes *the Phoenix* – a cosmic entity with boundless power and, playing the id to *Xavier*'s superego. Eventually unable to deal with the *Phoenix* inside herself (falling prey to id – as the *Bride*'s killing spree), *Grey* sacrifices her own life for the sake of her *X-Men* companions, after committing mass murder in a galactic scale (the *Phoenix* exploded a planet for the sheer pleasure of unfettered power).

Between the ambivalent amalgamations of *Bride* and *Grey*, the EU faces its mythologized enemies, frozen by popular culture into straight jacketed stereotypes. Those countries provide a steady and relevant influx of immigrants to Europe.

A Chinese character dressed as a Wushu (Kung Fu) fighter with cold-blooded resolve and sheer ferocity. From *Bruce Lee* the character embodies the ambivalence of traditional China and its readiness to sacrifice and relentless wiliness to fight through exquisite technique. This deceptively calm civilization ready for world conquering by its own fists indulges in a fight for recovery of worldwide status only as it befalls from the 'Middle Empire' to a crumbling polity under the thumbs of an envied West. China is tense in a temporal transition – often violent – that represents a desperate attempt of ascending after a noticeable decline and de-centering.

---

[31] Appadurai, 1986.

Chinese stereotypes were popular in the Western world since the 19th century, after the forceful opening of the 'Middle Empire' by European imperialism. Especially influential were villains molded at the image of 1913 book character (later on featured in films and comics) *Fu Manchu*. A master criminal who favors martial skills and traditional Chinese knowledge of medicinal herbs instead of weapons, *Fu Manchu* was variedly depicted as an Eastern intellectual with fake degrees in renowned Western universities, a recalcitrant member of Imperial Family on the losing side of Chinese revolutions or even a member of secret societies targeting Western imperialism, Fascism and Communism alike. In all those depictions, Fu Manchu is portrayed as a backward character, one aiming at the past and resisting the present – often, by violent means. Other villains that followed in *Fu Manchu*'s wake were its French 'cousin' *Pao Tcheou*; *Flash Gordon*'s archenemy *Ming the Merciless* – an alien tyrant.

In *James Bond*'s enemy *Dr. No*, a half-German, half-Chinese member of a criminal organization who collaborated with Soviet Union against US during Cold War we have another array of stereotypes. He is depicted as a megalomaniac with infant traumas (he rejects his father, thus the nickname 'No'), a criminal endowed with a brilliant mind, which costs him his hands with failed radiation experiments. Not that this halts his violent spree – with metal hands lacking dexterity, he becomes a monstrous, hateful creature as well as a fearful, deadly opponent. *Johnny Quest*'s enemy *Dr. Zin* and Marvel Comics' *The Yellow Claw* – a scientist and martial arts master whose knowledge of Chinese arts managed to keep his vitality going on for 150 years, supporting his desire to supplant Western civilization – are other exemplars from this line of descent.

Then we have ascary Osama Bin Laden lookalike from India, a bearded swordsmen floating up the skies with Yoga powers and carrying the renowned Mughal axe from Muslim Indian fighters. Adapting Mughal imagery to Osama Bin Laden, the Indian representative was educated in the West, was considered a friend of the West, was even armed by the West – now turns its back on Western support and turns against the West (always with violence – away with the doves – but morally ambivalent, hideous and – magically – trickery).

Indian stereotypes alternate harrowing mysticism (gurus, saints, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, feasting, meditation, Yoga, religious festivals), unfettered inequality (widespread poverty, castes, *dalit*s, arrogant richness) and a powerful drive for modernization (nuclear weapons, nationalism, heavy industry, call centers, internet, algorithms, Quantum physics). Indians are expected to combine in alchemic fashion the sage, the magician, the scientist, the moneymaker and the soldier. Indian stereotypes were disseminated in a variety of sites, sometime by the colonial power (British pop music), others times by the new hegemon (videogames, TV shows – *the Simpsons*, *the Big Bang Theory*) and even by India's own ascension to worldwide prominence as a member of the BRICS group (*Bollywood*, hit movie *Slumdog Millionaire*). India is stereotyped as a culture locked between a mysterious, dense past and a chaotic, ignited future of nuclearization, urbanization, liberalization, modernization. This temporal limbo is often conferred violent tones in popular culture.

Finally, we have an Afro-Brazilian *capoeira* fighter, moving like Capcom's *Street Fighter II* character *Blanka* – a primitive being that once has been an Anglo-Saxon boy (named *Jimmy*) who fell from the skies (from an airplane) and, in contact with Mother Nature, was turned into an unruly beast with supernatural abilities (Rousseau in reverse).

Brazilian stereotypes fall between the extremes of Rousseau's good savage – bonded to bodily metaphors of sensuality, hospitality, laziness and heavy partying (Walt Disney's *Ze Carioca* and *Carmen Miranda* come to mind) that often are conflated in ludic activities (soccer, samba, tourism), countered by a pervasive sense of threat from social inequality, translated as ever-growing corruption and organized banditry popularized by hit movies such as *Tropa de Elite* and *Cidade de Deus* (but also present in old classics *Black Orpheus*, *Terra emTranse* and *O Cangaceiro*).

Invariably rendered a bipolar character torn apart between pleasure and pain – sometimes both, as in sexual tourism, human and drug trafficking and the 'exotic' depictions of Brazilian *favelas* (slums) extravaganza – Brazilians are stereotyped as people shackled to ambivalent past, hungry for a future (rags to riches stories were features in *Cidade de Deus*, *Central do Brasil* and *Tropa de Elite*). Recently, this amalgam of violence and pleasure was tattooed in the remarkable figure of Mixed Martial Arts champion *Anderson 'Spider' Silva*.

All those stereotypes perform downward moves – Chinese fighter comes from the skies with Kung Fu moves; Indian Bin Laden moves his sword down from the skies; Blanka-like back flips, arriving from the skies in bare feet.

The array of BRICS stereotypes is in disarray. They do not gather efforts to face the EU – literally, China, India, and Brazil face EU by their own, and turn backs to one another. The EU just faces BRICS without any hints of depression or deception, regret or fear – unmoved and unmoving. As the story goes, human intercourse ebbs and flows in silence – spaces and times incommensurable, not converging to, or spamming from, an Archimedean point. Scenes go until a gong (Chinese?) followed by a groin breaks the silence. *Bride-Grey* turns her back (to past?) and sees China jumping and questioning the severity of the roof. She is unafraid, more flapping than fearing. She does not move. China is not on a column, but on a platform above others – a different level of analysis. As China jumps, we can see a rough amendment to those columns and the roof. Not all windows are clear-cut during China's jump. Before India is actualized before the camera eye, literally doves fly (a priori hostility).

The outcome of interaction is an unsettling cornucopia. The aesthetic contrast and overlapping of landscape and selves seems puzzling. It no longer coalesces into a single, coherent and cohesive narrative.

Erecting boundaries through the camera eye, the advertisement posits that each persona do not *see* her/himself as participant of the same social game, as elements of the same setting. The subject – the EU – is unveiled panoramically, in large scale, through the unfolding of a conflictive world, which gives away the subjectivity of others.

Figure 16: Suspicion	Figure 17: Distress
Figure 18: Awe	**Figure 19: Rage**

Figure 20: Entrapment

Entrapment, in literature and cinema, has been framed as an ambivalent political site. Redemption and loss, immanent solitude and transcendental Armageddon crowd the same landscape of dusk and dull. As a framework for unfettered creation and as site of utter destruction, from entrapment disquieting eschatological biases flow.

What is visible under the fog of representations is not something trivial. Spaces and selves are presented as fragmentary entities. A past in flux makes subjects in flux make more sense. Non-sovereign entities need extra justification. They become meaningful through arrangements.

The encapsulation of views fosters a particular division of the sensible[32] following moral lines. Such representations provide attrition a context; they build interaction through assemblages of dynamics and inertia, by-producing separation as hierarchy. In such a setting, underpinning violence is contained; spaces are allotted for specific subjects, objects and practices. A worldview based on a self-image (EU's) becomes legitimate. Human bodies collide and fill the empty space, otherwise impregnated with political possibilities. In this sense, the *travelogue is* a one-dimensional History. Human activity in the world produces side effects, in the guise of renewed *challenges* with *global reach*. The EU responds to such challenges, highlighting continuities between world orders in the *workings of ordering*.

The camera eye sets apart and integrates – it orders. It sets subjects apart following moral lines. However, the play of selves does not take place in a playground. Such moral entities are integrated (socialized) through interaction as attrition and conflict in unequal, hierarchic landscapes. It produces a moral ordering (of the international realm) through spacing. What had been a landlocked space becomes a safe haven, a sanctuary for nostalgic purity.

Figure 21: Introspection	Figure 22: Ecstasy

Figure 23: Breathe in the air

Representations stemming from popular culture *do* insecure moves that render the game a relentless flow of unstable signs interpreted ambiguously. They move – and by moving morality through the mores of their moves, a layered depiction of the international realm is attained. Firstly, we notice how the camera eye becomes obliquely unsettling – cutting from the EU to consider individual moves from China, India, and Brazil.

---

[32]Rancière, 2001

Nevertheless, there are patterns to this unsettlement. Whereas BRICS do not see one another, the camera cuts periodically from BRICS to the unmovable look of the EU, which is conferred the privilege of making judgments on each individual move. In the words of Cynthia Weber, '*ways of seeing – perspective and its mediation – are equally, if not more important, than what is seen*'[33].The look becomes pivotal because it is the discourse of the author – a singular voice who, by 'impartially' observing and recording his observations, '…*constitutes the textual subject and object*'[34]. In the process, other voices are silenced – emanating from objects that are seen through the lenses of the author, who are framed, mediated by the look. If those objects adopt the discourse of the author, they will apparently become subjects, but they will remain subjected to this authoritative interpretation. Weber alludes to Jacques Lacan, for whom the look emanated from a single viewpoint, whereas the gaze, on the contrary, could never be reduced (through symbolic violence) to a single viewpoint, as it floats between a plurality of different viewers (perspectives).

Across metamorphoses, dangerous moves by hostile others confer the EU coherence, as the world revolves with no destination in sight but Europe stands still.

Figure 24: The fall of China	Figure 25: Watch out!
Figure 26: Taunting India	**Figure 27: Rapprochements**
Figure 28: Break on through	**Figure 29: Reflection**

Focusing incommensurable bodily moves from BRICS – jumps, spins, backflips, knocks – contrasted with the emptiness of entrapment, the contemplative respect shown by *Bride-Grey-EU*, the camera eye articulates specific trajectories.

---

[33] Weber, 1994, 338.
[34] Ibid.

Figure 30: Kung Fu Trance	Figure 31: Indian war dance

Figure 32: Brazilian bombshell

BRICS arrive above the surface and they never quite firm their feet on the ground, in contrast with the inertial sullenness of the EU's look (a look that sanctifies the entrapped wasteland). Different BRICS moves bear an underpinning logic of assemblage – their dynamic trajectories threat the ground from the skies, from different corners of the world. The incongruence between such moves, the severity of the landscape and EU's silent resolve unsettles of the emerging rhythm.

Figure 33: China feet above the ground	Figure 34: India feet above the ground

Figure 35: Brazil feet above the ground

Secondly, this cinematic contrast produces ambivalence as order. On the surface, we could point to a naïve spatial opposition (dynamics versus inertia). Then a more complex picture emerges, as *inert space* becomes *safe haven* through the active refusal to act by the part of the EU. On the one hand, different

fearful top-down trajectories – bodies, moves, threats. BRICS are not really a group – they look rather contingent an arrangement, a gang. On the other hand, those trajectories become meaningful in the EU's eyes, against the background of fixity – the entrapping fixity of space and the sullen subjectivity of the EU, not acting but pushing, conflicting in the mind's eye. BRICS are framed against the background of the entrapped box, whereas *Bride Grey* is endowed with close-ups – as if she were inside herself (a true subject). Her close-ups are attempts on individualization by the EU – in sharp contrast with peripheral body parts of BRICS and distant shots.
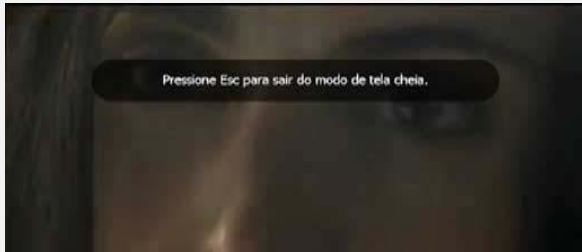
Figure 36: Reflection	Figure 37: Projection

Safe havens from what? There is nothing to hide. What are they hiding from? Within the scene, international order leaks to things obscene. Through contrast, boundaries are erected between spaces, times, subjects, objects – moral boundaries keeping subjects in their *adequate* places.

Thirdly, by the stereotyping of others, a leaking EU freezes metamorphoses. The concatenation of contradictory representations confers the EU coherence, as the world changes incessantly and the bloc seemingly stands still; it even enlarges, the model for the world-about-to-be (by deferral of other possibilities, current possibilities and positions, already sketched in this world). This is a modern narrative technique. By adopting *risk, threat, crisis and tragedy* as referents, EU's advertisement departs Modernity as *immanent critique,* for the sake of *colonizing* the future.

In contrast with Europe's linear trajectory, feet firmly planted on encapsulated spaces of necessity, BRICS provide unpredictable attrition from the borders. BRICS jump from above, fly beneath the surface or burst through the door. Their apparition unlock heart-thumping sounds associated with (prototypical) bodily motions – Chinese Kung Fu moves, Indian levitation techniques and sword buckling, Brazilian capoeira backflips. Those bullies unearth intimidating vocalizes and unsettling sounds – feet and hands waving, knocking in the air, doves flying, swords clattering, doors banging – which disrupt the initial stark sonority.

Figure 38: China from the balcony	Figure 39: India above the ground
Figure 40: Brazilian groove	

As BRICS depart from the ground, they unsettle sacred ground; they are fighting unjustly, profaning the entrapped space with their growls and sound effects, oscillating between the pre-modern and the modern. Only the chosen ones will remain on sacred ground. Trial by force does not suffice to award an invitation (or a Nobel Peace Prize, by the way). Modernity as a social project presumes invitation. The EU is allowed, welcome in such a space where BRICS treacherously pop up and disturb. Inside the EU, members can get together to fight enemies (immigrants in this case). BRICS never replicate such a pattern no matter how powerful they may be. By becoming sacred ground, the entrapped space *personifies* the EU: a clustered subjectivity that, as *the Bride* and *Jean Grey*, will react to their respective environments.

The central proposition of balance-of-power theory is that great powers balance against hegemonic threats. Curiously, stereotypes from each BRICS country never merge to form an alliance. They never look one another in the eye. They are strangers in a situation of mutually benefitting unilateralism: as they face the EU (which becomes the epistemic center of an emerging system – the hegemonic center) they leave their traces (they move, they occupy space).

Another noticeable feature is the assemblage of BRICS' performances. Next to the EU, they are (underdeveloped) equals; otherwise, they are not alike. BRICS get ordered in a starting grid, which China at the forefront, India in the middle and Brazil down the line. What could have been thought of as a more pluralistic world stemming from emergent powers from the South becomes traditional measurement of capabilities – some threats more compelling than others.

In this sense, the BRICS group makes no sense at all, plain nonsense – apart from a gang of daring bullies united in Kenneth Waltz' depiction of Rousseau's stag hunt. They acquire their meaning through their contrast with the EU – by resisting the EU's sullenness and silence they emerge as sketches of subjects, they become relevant for world affairs. They not only arrive later on (in symptomatically Modern philosophy of history) – they depend on a center of meaning to become intelligible.

Figure 41: Assemblages of word ordering	Figure 42: Recognition (before the EU's presence)

The encounter between EU and BRICS takes place on temporal grounds, as exposed by Jahn and Keene. They only see one another after the enlargement of the EU – filling concentric circles of space with reproductions of its own self. BRICS face one another under European threat –balancing by default. Close-ups of Bride-Grey in contrast with detached, skewed framings of BRICS' stereotypes bring to the fore temporality as a feature of individuality. A full-embodied subject is contrasted with incomplete wannabes – that makes sense for an EU enlargement ad, but context spills through the text. As the EU agonizes with the ghost of split, cohesion and coherence are projected as EU virtues against the frantic dynamics of BRICS – moves that brings those bodies from the ground to uncharted places. Movement dilutes subjectivity and immobility becomes nobility. Through skewed operations of desire, the pre-visible was made visible. Old BRICS want to be like new EU. Immigrants have to bow down.

8.0 Cut-Ups and final remarks

History is embedded in politics, as a multiplicity of political projects can reclaim the same concepts. The work of remembering (producing our identities as entities with a past) imbricates with, is constituted by, groups and social forms in which we participate. What is mobilized as memory is deeply affected by what has been shared with others – memory of an inter-subjective past, a past lived with and in relation to other persons[35].

It is not without a hint of irony that the ad reiterates faith in the EU's future by demonizing three former European *colonies* – Brazil (1500-1822), India (1861-1947) and China (1861-1911). 21st century nostalgia for colonial mythology is a strange ritual already depicted by Franz Fanon[36]–crumbling post-imperial polities place the burden of political shortcoming on the back of decolonized violence, and by such revisionism, Europe becomes victim of former colonies, rather than a set of decaying empires.

The old threat to Europe used to be immigrants from allegedly 'non-democratic' countries – as the stereotype of the Polish plumber comes to mind. That largely applies for EU's ad, but with a new bump along the road – this time, European plumbers may want to live and work there, in the BRICS, there the world's economic growth is burgeoning. Political models from BRICS countries – Communist China, India with its caste system and Brazil, a contradictory and violent country with a woman at the wheel – cast a shadow over Europe. Enlargement becomes a recalcitrant marriage between receding polities.

Interpretational disputes arrive as past is mobilized in the present – *through remembering and forgetting*. Who takes part in this narrative?

The relevant presence of Brazilian, Indian and Chinese communities in Europe also brings to the table the issue of internal relations of the EU – traditionally considered a sound destination for those in search of a better living, the image of progress. By portraying BRICS as threatening characters engulfed by the (enlarged) EU, the prophylaxis of the discourse that heals the EU's broken body infuses the body politic with fences – teaching those (suspects in advance) minorities a lesson. Noticeable are domestic implications for BRICS countries' peoples –teaching citizens many *lessons* through violence is a logic that postcolonial states inherited from colonial empires[37].

Another feature of the postcolonial state stressed by Muppidi and Shapiro is that it is only partially an entity founded on materiality and reason. Postcolonial states often perform *magic* actions (practices that provoke shock and awe among citizens) in search of legitimacy. The bold and brash moves by stereotyped BRICS can be framed as magic actions – ranging from stamina prowess shown through idiosyncratic (national) martial arts (Chinese Kung-Fu, *Brazilian capoeira*) to otherworldly feats (Indian flying supernaturally high with a sword firmly in hand). In this assemblage of representations, BRICS have to show their virtuosity in their particular features, in order to be virtuous before their citizens. Moves become tokens for public displays of preening nationalism. The logic that sets BRICS apart from one another remains, whereas the split between the distinct tracts of every move they make and European *immobility-as-nobility* is reinforced. Modern body-mind dichotomy is updated across the ad – in the guise of the split between the unmovable EU and frantic BRICS. *The latter,* diluted sovereign bodies; *the former a self-centered* brain from where morality flows.

Figure 43: Deterrence	Figure 44: With the world at her feet

---

[35] Misztalop.cit., 6
[36] Fanon, 1961
[37] Muppidi, 2004

Figure 45: With the world at her feet	Figure 46: With the world at her feet

The assemblages engender a partition of the real as magical trickery. One the one hand, barbarism: a savage other already constituted (we cannot hear his talk, only his growl). On the other hand, civilization: the self-idealization of the West coalescing against the background of (suppressed) others, so eloquent we can '*hear*' its thought. International interactions, the plethora of *moves*, become a *vehicle*, which *actualizes* the temporal and normative status that splits humankind into conflicting factions.

There is another magical layer at work, a slyly implicit one: the interaction of the protagonist's action and the audience's expectations (who sees the ad). Representations leak from the camera eye to the mind's eye. The EU is simultaneously behind the wheel and part of the road – an ambiguous subjectivity that drives the story from within and that relies on leakage to convince audiences beyond the screen. The EU is depicted as a meta-subject, both within the world and representative of this world, a microcosm that makes the difference for cosmic affairs.

Figure 47: Shining stars

Modes of representation in IR frequently frame social reality as *tragedy*; social agency as rational *risk-assessment* and *risk-taking*; society as a *risk-prone* environment in which emerging *threats* coalesce into recurring *crises*. Under this light, the EU is rendered a *hyper-modern* subject and makes sense, in sharp contrast with tumultuous BRICS, which are troublemakers lacking in Modernity. Notions of *History*, *subjectivity* and *agency* are reiterated by modern tracing of *challenges* with *global appeal*. They coalesce around the conception of Modernity as *a culture of risk*.
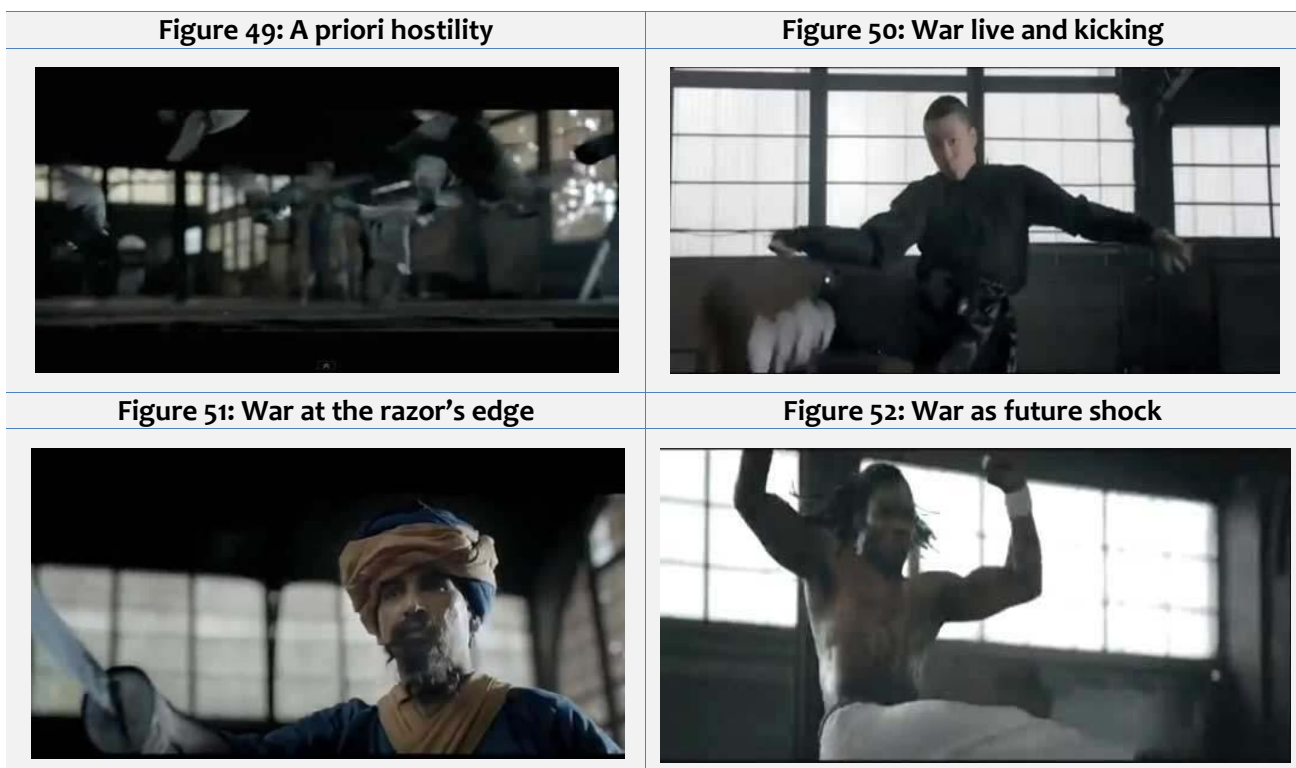
According to NaeemInayatullah & David Blaney[38], the discipline of International Relations has been impervious to the problem of difference – difference is translated in terms of progress and development and conditioned by the Western nation-state. This defining trait of IR has a long-standing pedigree stemming from one of the founding fathers of social sciences, Aristotle, which associates social orders and civilization with the state, and the absence of such a sign of natural immaturity or plain wickedness:

---

[38]Inayatullah & Blaney, 2004

'Hence it is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without a state, is either a bad man or above humanity; he is like the 'Tribeless, lawless, hearthless one, 'whom Homer denounces – the natural outcast is forthwith a lover of war; he may be compared to an isolated piece at draughts'.[39]

Figure 48: Europe UberAlles

The ad ends with a resonant message – that EU's unities are stronger together. That reiterates Aristotle (or Homer apud Aristotle) in order to calm down a tension-filled European population – facing crumbling sovereign states and still unable to find a comparable alternative in the EU (no state of states, no unified polis with a demos [40]). By placing the card of war in the hands of BRICS, their subjectivity (as mature, stable, cohesive, coherent sovereign states) is questioned. The utter inability to recognize one another meaningfully, or the EU in a civilized intercourse, place BRICS among the isolated pieces at draughts – immature sovereigns with a penchant for cold-blooded aggression, '*lawless, hearthless*' entities.

| **Figure 49: A priori hostility**	**Figure 50: War live and kicking**
Figure 51: War at the razor's edge	**Figure 52: War as future shock**

Stereotypes reiterate, by contrast, social models in crisis – responsible sovereign states (Portugal), amalgams of regions (Spain), imperial Europe (Italy-Rome) and democracy incarnated (Greece). The EU

---

[39]Aristotle, 350 B.C.E
[40]Camargo, 2008

brings back the past because it did not advance far enough to stabilize during crisis; no longer a Westphalian space, the EU projects its subjectivity to transcend internal problems. The ascension of arrogant new powers is humiliating, for the former center of the world. Newcomers had been European colonies; now Europe considers them deplorable. Banished by the EU, the ad already performed its role by bringing to mind the EU's self-images.

Byreinfusing vitality in the broken political body through images, EU's symbolic tattoos persist on BRICS' stereotypes (banishing the ad it no big fuss, thus). BRICS have been morally 'banished', after all. Those underdeveloped quasi-anarchic entities provide no meaningful moral answers to the future of an anarchic system in crisis. It is on Europe that the future (shall) rest.

Figure 53: Enlarged EU engulfs BRICS	Figure 54: BRICS cleansing
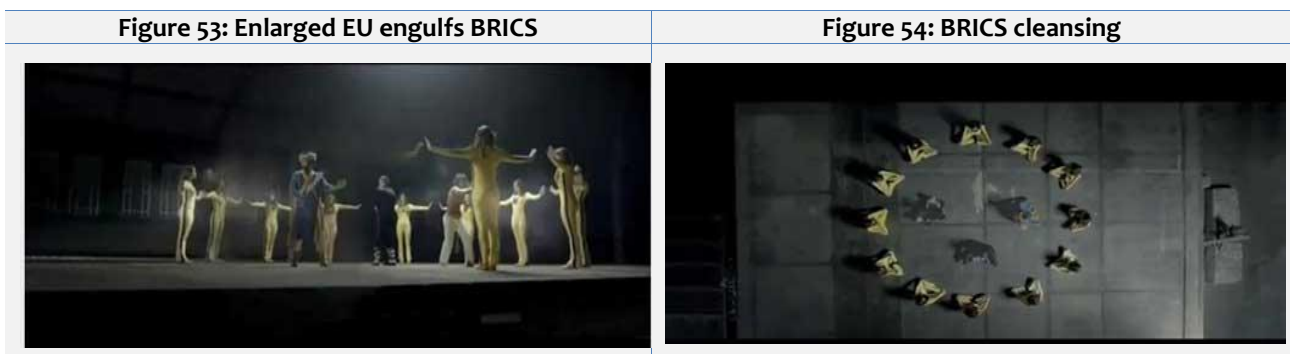
The concentric encircling of BRICS by an enlarged EU dissipates the menace, *cleansing* the landscape from the dark 3D shot to a blue 2D plain. BRICS face one another by facing the EU and at the face of the EU BRICS vanish from sight. Hope shines bright with the stars, for a safer, sounder future (tense-filled sonorities brought back to an acquiescent whistle). A narrative closer to 1945 than to 2012.In addition, from whose 1945 side? A non-trivial matter.

Our paper, therefore, provides a different approach to order, one that is curious about where order stems from – not in terms of *which agents order the world*, but in terms of *what is the grammar from which the agents and the world become ordered.* In this matter, representations are fundamental ordering devices. *Who is mobilizing whose depiction of the past, and for what?*

References

Appadurai, A. (1996). Modernity at large - Cultural dimensions of globalization. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

Aristotle. (350 B.C.E). Politics. Retrieved from: http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.1.one.html. Access in: January 1st 2013.

Bartelson, J. (2007). Philosophy and History in the Study of Political Thought. *Journal of the Philosophy of History*, 1, 101-124.

Bartelson, J. (1998). Second Natures – Is The State Identical With Itself? *European Journal of International Relations*, 4(3), 295–326.

Bartelson, J. (2001). *The critique of the state*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beck, U. (1992). Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity. London: SAGE.

Camargo, S. (2008). A União Européia: Uma Comunidade em Construção. Retrieved from: http://www.scielo.br/pdf/cint/v30n2/v30n2a06.pdf. Access in: January 1st 2012.

Darby, P. (1998). The Fiction of Imperialism: reading between International Relations and post-colonialism. London; Washington DC; Cassel.

Derrida, J. (1979). Scribble (Writing-Power). Yale French Studies, 58, 17-147.

Fanon, F. (1961). The wretched of the earth. London, Grove.

Foucault, M. (1982) The Subject and Power. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4), 777-795.

Foucault, M. (1984). Politics and Ethics: An interview. In: RABINOW, P. The Foucault Reader. New York: Pantheon, 378-380.

Inayatullah, N. & Blaney, D. (2004). International relations and the problem of difference. New York, Routledge.

Jahn, B. (2000). The cultural construction of international relations. New York, Palgrave.

Koselleck, R. (1985). Futures past: On the semantics of historical time. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Laffey, M. & Weldes, J. (1997). Beyond belief: From ideas to symbolic technologies. European Journal of International Relations, 3(2), 193-238.

Misztal, B. (2003). Theories of social remembering. Berkshire: Open University Press.

Muppidi, H. (2004). The politics of the global. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

Neocleus, M. (2008). Critique of security. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Pocock, J.G.A. (2009). Political thought and history: Essays on theory and method. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rancière, J. (2001). Ten theses on politics. Retrieved from: http://www.ucd.ie/philosophy/staff/maevecooke/Ranciere.Ten.pdf. Access in: January 1st 2012.

Shapiro, M. J. (1989). Textualizing Global Politics. In: DER DERIAN, J. & SHAPIRO, M. J. International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern readings of world politics. New York: Lexington Books, p. 11-22.

Shapiro, M. J. (2004). Methods and nations: cultural governance and the indigenous subject. New York: Routledge.

Shapiro, M. J. (2009). Cinematic Geopolitics. New York, Routledge.

Walker, R. B. J. (1993). Inside/outside: International relations as political theory. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Cambridge Studies in International Relations).

Walker, R. B. J. (2006). The double outside of the modern international. ephemera - theory & politics in organization, 6(1),56-69. Retrieved from: http://www.ephemeraweb.org/. Access in: October 20th 2007.

Weber, C. (1994). 'Good girls, little girls, and bad girls: Male paranoia in robertkeohane's critique of feminist international relations' in millennium, Journal of International Studies 23, 337-349.