

STUDY GUIDE



THE CITY OF THE FUTURE (A CIDADE DO FUTURO)

A film by MARÍLIA HUGHES AND CLÁUDIO MARQUES

BRAZIL / 2016 / 75 MIN
Portuguese with English Subtitles



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BEFORE WATCHING THE FILM:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Before watching a foreign film, it is important to know the current events and history of the country where that film comes from. Find two or three articles on the history of LGBT rights in Brazil and what they are now. If you can, try to find some information on the displacement and relocation of people under the Brazilian dictatorship in the 1970s. Below is a source on the history of Serra do Ramalhão, the town where the movie takes place.

“Completed in 1979, the Sobradinho dam displaced 70,000 people in the immediate vicinity of the [Sao Francisco] reservoir. A further 50,000 farmers and dependents were affected downstream around the estuary... **Serra do Ramalhão**, a major resettlement scheme intended for 25,000 farmers and their families, was an unmitigated disaster. Located 1,000 kilometers upstream on infertile, dry soils, it was set up with no consultation among the intended beneficiaries. The reimagining rural population was housed in 25 hastily constructed new villages (agrovilas), their numbers swollen by disillusioned returnees.”

- *Making a Difference: NGO's and Development in a Changing World* by D. Hulme

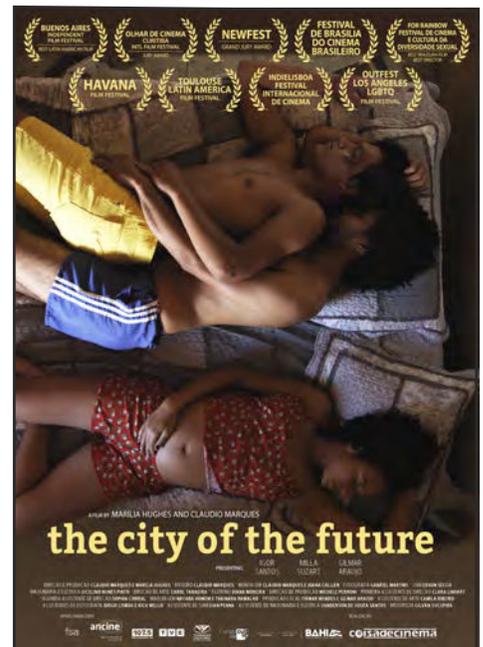
- Knowing this history, how do you think the film will deal with these issues?

INTRODUCING THE FILM

A **film synopsis** is a piece of text designed to summarize the film's narrative, genre, style, and key participants in a way that appeals to a wide audience. The synopsis is part of the film marketing process and tends to follow a traditional format. Read this official synopsis for *The City of the Future*:

In Serra do Ramalhão, Brazil, young teacher Milla finds herself pregnant by her colleague Gilmar. Gilmar is in a relationship with Igor, but Milla asserts that the baby will belong to all three of them. Despite some initial conflict between the three, and in defiance to their community's reaction, they form an unconventional but remarkably uncomplicated family. Billed as the 'city of the future, Serra do Ramalhão was constructed in the 1970s in order to rehouse thousands of citizens that had been forcefully relocated. The location forms an important backdrop for this elegant, gentle film which is full of hope for a new generation building their own family of the future.

- From the film synopsis, can you imagine the genre and tone of the film? From this same text, try to identify the main elements from the film's plot and the socio-political background to the film.
- How do the trailer, poster, and still images encourage you to watch the film?
- Can you make any assumptions regarding what the film is about just from the marketing materials (i.e. trailer, poster, and still images)?



AFTER WATCHING THE FILM:

CINEMATIC ART/TECHNIQUES

- ❑ Think about the opening shot of the film -- Gilmar and Milla riding on the motorcycle. What does it symbolize? What do the characters' expressions tell you about their relationship?
- ❑ How does the set design reflect the themes in the film? Think about the houses the characters live in -- what are they like? How do the filmmakers film them in such a way to reflect the history of the town?
- ❑ What is the color palette of the film? Generally, are the colors bright, or dark? What is the lighting like? Why do you think the filmmakers make these decisions? What themes do they reflect?
- ❑ Diegetic and non-diegetic music play a major role throughout the film.¹ Select scene(s) that contain music and explain its use in the narrative: the emotions it produces for the audience and the tone that it creates. Think especially about the scene where Gilmar and Igor dance together at the music club. When do we hear this song again?
- ❑ Analyze the closing shot of the film: the three character's hands on Mila's pregnant belly. What do the filmmakers mean by ending on this shot? How does it highlight the main idea of the movie?

NARRATIVE

- ❑ Think about the educational film Gilmar shows his students at the start of the movie. How does it contrast with what you found in your research and with what the source above says?
- ❑ What are the filmmakers trying to say by including this antiquated newsreel footage? Why do you think Gilmar shows this to his students?
- ❑ The film is interspersed with interviews from the dislocated residents in Serra do Ramalho. What purpose do you think these interviews serve?
- ❑ The first time we see Gilmar and Igor kiss is in a cave under 5,000 year-old cave drawings. Why do you think the filmmakers made this decision? Why is it significant?
- ❑ How do the characters change throughout the film? Do you think there is a character arc in Gilmar, Mila, and Igor? Why or why not?
- ❑ What do you make of Gilmar's character? Do you like him? Why or why not? What about Mila and Igor?
- ❑ How does the town react to the Gilmar and Milla's sexuality and their polyamorous relationship?



(continued on next page)

¹ Non-diegetic sound is sound whose origin is from outside the story world. Voice-overs are typically non-diegetic, since the narration does not appear in the film's story world. Usually, the music soundtrack of a film is non-diegetic." "Term Index." The Columbia Film Language Glossary. <https://filmglossary.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/term/>

NARRATIVE *(continued)*

- ❑ In the middle of the film, Igor says to his mother, “Father is whoever raised the child. Where is my father? Did he raise me or was it you?” What do you think he means by this? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
- ❑ How does Mila react when she finds out about the affair between Gilmar and Igor? Do you agree with her? Do you think she should have acted differently? Why or why not?
- ❑ Can you identify the central conflict in the story? What about the inciting incident? ²
- ❑ Gilmar says to Mila, “I don’t want to be thrown out of a place where we were born. That’s what happened to our parents.” How does this line highlight the main conflict in the film? How does it underline the connection between the different issues, the town’s history and LGBT rights?
- ❑ Why do you think Igor represses his sexuality? Think about how he plays violent video games and rides horses in rodeos, typically a male-dominated setting.
- ❑ Think about the setting of the rodeo and the horses. Why do you think the filmmakers chose this setting? Why do you think this setting lends itself to homophobia and machismo?
- ❑ Why do you think the filmmakers chose to set the climax of the film in the middle of Halloween?
- ❑ What did you think of the film’s ending? Was it a happy ending? Why or why not?



² “The inciting incident is an event that hooks the viewer into the story and sets everything else that happens into motion. This moment is when an event thrusts the protagonist into the main action of the story.” -- “The Inciting Incident,” Scriptmag. <https://www.scriptmag.com/features/inciting-incident-needs-page-10>

THEMES

- ❑ Gilmar and Milla both try to educate their students on the history of their town. Why do you think they do this? What role does history play in the film? Why is teaching the history of Serra do Ramalho important to them?
- ❑ Why is learning about the past important? Why do you think Gilmar and Milla press their students to learn about their past?
- ❑ A big theme of the film is deception and betrayal. How were the residents of Serra do Ramalho betrayed? How does the film reflect this? Can you find any other examples of betrayal in the film?
- ❑ At the beginning of the film, Gilmar's mother says, "what's in the past is in the past." Why do you think she says this? How does it conflict with Gilmar's view? How does it represent their generational differences?
- ❑ What do you think the film's title means? How does it reflect the themes of displacement and the history of Serra do Ramalho? How does it reflect the relationship between Gilmar, Mila, and Igor?
- ❑ Can you make any connections between the history of displacement in Brazil with the history of LGBT rights? How are the two issues connected in the film?
- ❑ How does the film question our traditional conventions of fatherhood? How does it question our ideas about masculinity?
- ❑ What do you think of the polyamorous relationship between Gilmar, Mila, and Igor? Do you think their family is sustainable? Do you think their unconventional family works? Why or why not?
- ❑ Do you think polyamorous relationships will be accepted more widely in the future? Or do you think they will continue to be taboo? Explain your answer.

