

Fiction and resistance in the archive culture

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ABSTRACT

It is notorious the leading role that has taken over, in the contemporary cultural scene, the various forms of *documentalism*, which, however, have not refrained from making use of procedures that are characteristic of the fictional narrative. In parallel, the database has been occupying an increasingly significant territory, disputing space with narratives concerning the manner of structuring our experience of the world. Given this situation, the article asks which place taken by the fiction proposes itself as a place of resistance, discussing from the selected works the relationship between everyday life and history in the representation of social tensions.

Keywords: Fiction, resistance, everyday, history

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RESUMO

É notório o protagonismo que têm assumido, na cena cultural contemporânea, as diversas formas de *documentalismo*, que, no entanto, não deixam de lançar mão de procedimentos característicos das narrativas ficcionais. Ao mesmo tempo, os bancos de dados vêm ocupando um território cada vez mais significativo, disputando espaço com as narrativas no que diz respeito à maneira de estruturar nossa experiência do mundo. Diante deste quadro, o artigo indaga qual o lugar assumido pela ficção que se propõe como lugar de resistência, discutindo, a partir de obras selecionadas – tais como o romance *Prova contrária*, de Fernando Bonassi e o filme *Hoje*, de Tata Amaral –, a relação entre cotidiano e história na representação das tensões sociais.

Palavras-chave: Ficção, resistência, cotidiano, história

*“Thought, to me, is just that: the courage of hopelessness.
And is that not the height of optimism?”*

Giorgio Agamben

A GAINST THE UNIVERSAL values and their abstractions, the late modernity increasingly focused on the scope of everyday life as a kingdom of the particular will, in spite of history. In the wake of the teleological closings and the illusionism of the market culture, the cult of the unfinished, of the unforeseen, put under suspect the subversive potential of fiction narratives as creators of imaginary worlds that tension the limits of possible.

Then, it is clear the protagonism assumed, in the contemporary cultural scene, by the reports identified as non-fiction, the various forms of *documentalism*, that, however, do not cease of using procedures which are characteristic of the fictional narratives. In this sense, Michel Marie (2008: 11) opens the preface he wrote for the book *Mas afinal... O que é mesmo um documentário?* [After all... What is documentary?], of Fernão Pessoa Ramos, with the following assertion: “The time for the documentary has finally arrived. A marginal genre which crosses the whole history of cinema, it always appeared as a victim of ideological discrimination that favored fiction”.

On the other hand, with the digital technology, the database has been occupying an increasingly significant territory in the context of new media, disputing space with the narratives regarding the manner of structuring our experience of the world. In parallel, in the field of theoretical and philosophical thinking from the hegemonic centers, never so many pages were devoted, echoing the voices of Nietzsche, Warburg, and Benjamin, to the compliment to archive logic as an antidote to the projective temporalizing of history which was predominant in the 19th century: this is still insistently evoked on the 21st century, such as an eternal ghost conjuring against the danger of totalisations. A ghost who, by the way, is an old acquaintance of the Latin American cultures. The violence of colonization, the constant abortion of projects and, therefore, the impossibility of full assimilation of the past are on the basis of our difficult relationship with the evolutionary vision of history brought by European conquerors. Thereafter, the uneven modernization made us accustomed to living with anachronisms, without necessarily expecting them to illuminate paths.

A teleological view of history is, however, inextricably linked to the teleological vision of the role of art in the society. At various times, it was the dream of a radical transformation of reality that fed the dreams of aesthetic

revolution: the proposal of approach or withdraw between art and life was held through various paths, under the sign of a modern view of history. As observed by Jacques Rancière (2011: 41)., the belief in fiction in the 19th century associated with a symptomatic reading of society conducted by literary hermeneutics, from whose the micro-events in everyday life intertwined to the great ones:

This is indeed what literature does by leaving the great racket of the democratic stage to the orators in order to tunnel into the depths of society; by inventing their hermeneutics of the social body, this reading of the laws of a world on the body of mundane things and in words of no importance whose history and sociology will be shared as a legacy by Marxist science and Freudian science.

Over the second half of the 20th century, we watch to the overthrow of the idea of a central reality of history, and of the ideal of emancipation, modeled by a self-awareness that would transform reality. In the theoretical field, it started to be a consensus that the period of aesthetic utopia has ended, that is, the idea of an art radicalism which invests in the transformation of social life conditions became obsolete. The representation of everyday life gained, then, other meanings: it is not about the writer entering surreptitiously in homes to reveal the convulsions the private space hides under the apparent tranquility of bourgeois homes anymore, nor about bringing out the tensions muzzled by social norms. In the 19th century realistic novel, the everyday always aimed to go beyond itself, towards something beyond the mere personal satisfaction. The life aesthetics dreamed by Madame Bovary, or the ambition of Julien Sorel regarding public life referred to the social order as a whole, they were not wishes consumable in the immediate pragmatism. The modern hero was representative of his time because, although in a singular and unique way, he embodied the dreams of his time.

In contemporary times, the predominance of the first person in the literary narrative reflects the retreat of social time in favor of the here and now of a subject who no longer commits to the construction of something new, who do not understand itself as someone who acts in history and could transform it. The own overabundance of mediatized facts contributes to expand the vision of history as pure topicality, and to intensify the fear of a complete fictionalization of the world. In this sense, highlighting the importance of fiction as a critical instrument of social transformation can be a thankless task at a time when rumors proliferate on social networks, putting the term *after truth* on the agenda as a defining expression for our time.

FICTION AND SYSTEMIC LIE

The denouncement of the establishment of some kind of systemic lie associated with, among other factors, the performance of the media, even though in fashion currently due to the political facts occurred in central countries, is not something of today. It comes punctuating the theoretical discourse since at least the second half of the 20th century, as it can be seen, for example, in works published in the 60s, such as *The image: a guide to pseudo-events in America*, of Daniel Boorstin (1962), *The society of spectacle* (1967), of Guy Debord, and “Truth and politics” (1972, originally published in 1967), of Hanna Arendt. In the latter, the author, considering that truth and politics never get along very well, draws the attention to the fact of only in our modernity the lie would have reached its absolute limits, becoming “complete and definitive”, happening a hyperbolic growth of the lie in the political field:

We must now return our attention to the relatively recent phenomenon of mass, fact, and opinion manipulation, as became evident in the rewriting of history, construction of images, and in the politics of the governments. The traditional political lie, so prominent in the history of diplomacy and statecraft, used to concern either true secrets – data that had never been made public – or intentions, which anyhow do not possess the same degree of reliability as accomplished facts [...] the modern political lies deal efficiently with things that are not secrets at all but are known to practically everybody. (Arendt, 1972: 311)

In 1996, Jacques Derrida gets back to Arendt’s article, when reflecting on the possibility of constructing a history of the lie. The philosopher considers that lies are inseparable of the social practices, and defines it as “the deliberate efforts to deceive the other”, distinguishing it from error and ignorance. Concerned with avoiding the moralistic approach, he wonders whether the word and the concept of lie would be appropriate to designate the phenomena of our modern techno-media and testimonial politics, for which Hanna Arendt so earlier would have called our attention. Hence, he formulates a few questions: would be the lie a relevant concept? If so, what is the criteria of lie? How to conduct a history that deconstructs the opposition between truth and lie, without discrediting it? Against the traditional distinction among this terms, he remembers that totalitarian regimes (confessed or not) need a belief in the stable and metaphysically ensured opposition between truth and lie, also emphasizing that, the more a political machine lies, the more it makes the love to the truth a slogan of its rhetoric (Derrida, 1996: 24).

Through this bias he opposes the idea, which would permeate the reflection of Hanna Arendt, of an stability of the concept of truth and, consequently, of

the concept of lie, moving away from what he considers the implicit optimism in “Truth and Politics” – optimism that would lead Arendt (1972: 329) to state:

Power, by its very nature, can never produce a substitute for the secure stability of factual reality, which, because it is past, has grown into a dimension beyond our reach. Facts assent themselves by being stubborn, and their fragility is oddly combined with great resiliency – the same irreversibility that is the hallmark of all human action.

For Derrida (1996: 31), on the contrary, we must consider the place of an absolute lie that can always survive indefinitely without anyone ever knowing of such lie, or without anyone else to know or remember it.

On the other hand, Derrida (Ibid.: 12) notes that if the lie supposes, as it seems, the deliberate invention of a fiction, not all fiction or fable is tantamount to a lie, neither the literature, and remembers the famous text of Oscar Wilde entitled “The decay of lying”, in which the writer, not without some elitism, puts himself in contrast, in 1889, to the prevailing realism in fiction, making a compliment to the lie in art – text from which we quote, below, a short excerpt:

The Decay of Lying: a protest — One of the chief causes that can be assigned for the curiously commonplace character of most of the literature of our age is undoubtedly the decay of Lying as an art, a science, and a social pleasure. The ancient historians gave us delightful fiction in the form of fact; the modern novelist presents us with dull facts under the guise of fiction. (Wilde, 2015: 89)

By evoking Wilde’s protest against the decay of lying in the realm of Arts and Literature in the same space in which comments the assertions of Arendt against the hyperbolic growth of lie in the political field, Derrida (1996: 18) refers to the relationship established between fiction and freedom in the scope of artistic creation: for him, fiction would have “in principle the power to say everything, to break free of the rules, to displace them” and “the institution of literature in the West, in its relatively modern form, is linked doubtless to the coming about of the modern idea of democracy”. Assertion that coincides with the thought of Rancière, for whom the problem of the relationship between art and politics would not be the transition from fiction to real, because we would be faced with two ways of producing fiction. However, the dominant fiction, the consensual fiction would have as a characteristic the denial of its own character of fictional construction, posing as real in itself, constituting thus a sort of anti-fiction. Such distinction allows Rancière (2010: 55) to

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defend the existence of an essential solidarity between fiction and democratic politics. Says the author:

The politics begins with the ability of each one in changing its common language and its little pains, to approach the language and pain of others. It begins with fiction. Fiction is not the opposite of reality, the flight of imagination that makes up a dream world. Fiction is a way of sculpting reality, of aggregating names and characters, scenes and stories that multiply it and deprive it of its unequivocal evidence.

The fear that fictionalizing everything, that a great bubble of lies created by instituted powers with the aid of media would preclude the access to events occurred in the exterior world, however, has been contributing to the change of status of the fictional narratives, including in the territory of art. For Marc Augé (1997: 36), the significant change in the fiction regime operated by the accelerated evolution of technologies – since the golden years of cinema but, mainly, from the emergence of television – provoked, as a reaction to the circularity of images remitting to other images and so on, the search for an anchor point in the *real*, which can be, for example, the figure of the author.

Furthermore, the mistrust in fiction is also derivative of the mistrust in the possibility to talk for another: the idea is that each one is the narrator of its own history, since the interposal of a third-person narrator, the existence of a script imposing a prior point of view would further repel the reader/viewer of the human experience to be captured. The ethnographic view becomes, then, prominent; valuing then the oral testimonies, performed presentially, the reports of individual past, the details of everyday life.

In a critical turn, another reading and interpretation of the Great History was proposed, denouncing the privilege it awarded to the revolutionary subject in spite of the anonymous voices, of the everyday life dimension in itself¹. In this new perspective, however, the everyday lost the glamour of the secret revealed bit by bit, glimpsed from behind the walls that protected the privacy of homes. The moment of ascension of the historiography of the private is also the moment in which everything is displayed, everything is confessed, everything can be publicly exposed by the protagonist of the life in focus. Paradoxically, the appreciation of privacy does not oppose to visibility. Privatization of life in the contemporary times does not mean, as stated Sennet (1998: 41), a clear separation between private and public life. It means that the logic of intimacy, of “personhood” governing the private sphere expand and start to guide the public life: a trend that crosses, in different shades, from mass media to the field of art.

¹ The expansion of anthropological studies, the emergence of the New Cultural History and of the so-called Cultural Studies, in the second half of the 20th century, are at the base of this turn.

FICTION, EVERYDAY LIFE, AND HISTORY

In the case of Brazilian contemporary prose, the recurrence of the so-called self-fiction, i.e. a literature which is driven to the staging of the self, sometimes confusing itself with a “writing of the self” – to use the expression of Michel Foucault (2004), lead Ricardo Lísias to reflect upon the degree of politicization of his narrators. The author remembers that in the 80s, a decade which housed authors coming directly from the experience of the military dictatorship, a series of titles arisen, in which “the narrator politicization, sometimes indirect but always inescapable, was a crucial aspect in the text constitution” (Lísias, 2014: 11). He says:

From then on, something curious occurred: even though the issue is not solved in its various aspects (in Brazil, until today we cannot even acknowledge the dictatorship files), the prose just seems to have abandoned the recent past and, without major constraints, turned in a great part of the releases to a species of supposedly realistic reproduction of its own time. We leaped out of the timeline.

Such temporality attached to the present moment, immersed in particular circumstances, raises another type of bond with the past. When the confidence in the *leitmotiv* is lost, when the everyday life is the measure of a now that is compressed to presence in the world, letters, diaries, photographs – traces of the past left by previous generations – are valued as part of an heterogeneous material collection, available for remakes, displacements, recycling: archival procedures, made easier by digital technology. This latter, according to Lev Manovich (2006), widens the space for media objects that tell no stories, that have no beginning or ending, nor any thematic or formal development, or something else which could organize its elements in a sequence. Instead, the virtual environment is populated by collections of individual items, in which each item has the same importance as any other. Then he adds: “after the novel, and subsequently cinema privileged narrative as the key form of cultural expression of the modern age, the computer age introduces its correlate – database” (Ibid.: 283).

For the Russian theorist, with digital technology the archive, traditionally seen as a set of documents classified and stored for a given purpose, and considered as a mere deposit of documents, conquered a new status. Ceasing to be taken as an inert device, a data repository to a fixed past, it starts to be valued by its open and lacking character from which new scriptures would arise.

Given this context, the fiction that is called in Latin American narratives of wonderful realism, for example, which assumed the protagonist role in the proposal of an epistemic disobedience², toward the decolonization of the thought,

² We use the term “epistemic disobedience” in the same sense employed by Walter D. Mignolo (2007:11) when referring to what he considers to be one of the pillars of the decolonizing action, alongside political and civil disobedience, the latter advocated by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

for after becoming a supporting of document-based discourses. Especially from the 90s of the last century, the recognition of the subversive possibilities of fiction is increasingly restricted to the fact of permeating the so-called *truthful* discourses, unsettling the truth regime of documentaries. The bets are not in the transparency of testimonies nor in the free flight of fiction but in the deconstructive effect of contamination of a field for each other, undermining the fixed places – the bets are on what can be seen through these cracks that compromise the apparent continuities. Archival data mediation often serves this purpose: the creative work on the montage cause tensions in the documentary basis. Such picture leads as to inquire which formal solutions adopted by literary and cinematographic fiction are proposed as a place of resistance: resistance to the hegemonic thought, the imperatives of consumer society, the arbitrariness of political and economic power, to the oblivion. Which relationship is established, in the field of fictional narratives, between the everyday life and the history, in the representation of social tensions?

It seems to us that the ties between past, present, and future are reconfigured in a convergent reading of temporality, which might suggest both the impossibility to break free from the weight of the past and the hypertrophy of the present. Seeking to escape the realism conventions of the 19th century but also the high-pitching rhetoric of the official versions and clichés, and of the glorification of the spectacle industry language, this strand of contemporary fiction, at least in Latin America, seeks to circumvent the reporting straightness of the facts, focusing on gaps, afters, silent complicities, in resume, what was relegated to the background. If there is no identification with the heroes of the winner's history, that is also no endorsement to the glorification of the losers when it comes to the recent history of resistance to dictatorship. Attention focuses on what was left on the sideline, such as, for example, the unfolding of totalitarian practices in the universe of the ordinary citizen, the continuity of dictatorship's consequences beyond its official ending, the institutional support it has received.

Thus, a movie such as *O clube* [The club] (2015), of Pablo Larrain, before being a denouncement of pedophilia in the Catholic Church is a movie on covering up things, not only in power spheres but also in the intermediate layers of society; of covering up the most different crimes using the exchange of favors, the mutual pardons that compose an inextricable network since everybody is, in one way or another, guilty of something – a practice ingrained in the very corporate dynamic of institutions. Is the effort in covering up crimes of the past that drives the plot of *The club* (2015). In the isolated house, kept by the Catholic church, initially cohabit four priests and a housekeeper, each one with the secrets of their sins, but protected from the outside world and, especially,

from themselves by the mutual surveillance. This balance is broken when arrives a new priest, whose past is denounced by an outside character, a victim, as a child, of the abuses performed by the priest. The victim, who does not cease to be fascinated by its tormentor, ends, however, silenced by the game of covering things up: despite the unrest generated by the denouncement of pedophilia, nothing changes at the end. Who wins is the silence, the same that supported and still supports the arbitrary outrages of governments in Latin America.

Examples for the development of the issue that we are addressing are also the novel *Counterevidence* (2003), of Fernando Bonassi, and the film resulting from it, entitled *Today* (2013), directed by Tata Amaral. The starting point of both works is the Law 9.140 (BRAZIL), sanctioned in 1995, which recognizes as dead the people missing due to the participation in political activities from 1961 to 1979, predicting the compensation of the relatives. In other words, the fight against the dictatorship will be themed from the late recognition, by the State, of its own responsibility in the crimes, and from the changes occurred in the lives of the families after receiving the compensation. That historical period is not revisited by staging the heroic acts of the militants in such context of repression, but resorting to a more prosaic situation: the fate of the money after the relatives received the money from the government. In the case of the character, the purchase of her own house. It is the dream of the revolution revised in tension with the dream of home ownership.

Book and film, however, as the titles already let see, take distinct directions regarding the treatment given to memory: more precisely, to the traumatic memories of violence of the military dictatorship established in Brazil in 1964. *Counterevidence* (Bonassi, 2003) starts from the mentioned law, which serves as an epigraph to the work, to question this *death by decree*, to point the inadequacy of this official closure in the biography of political militants, whose remains were never found, whose arresting circumstances were never cleared, which fate was given to their bodies was never discovered; hence, there is always hope, even against all evidence, that someone could be alive, at large. The memory work deconstructs the artificial closure of the histories of life of the militants: the book revolves around a void that cannot be filled by institutional mandates, which stops the *burying* of the past, the moving on.

The new life with home ownership, then, is not complete. The woman just moved into the apartment purchased with the compensation money paid by the government after the officialization of her companion's death. She is removing the objects out of the moving boxes when the doorbell rings, she opens the door and encounters the companion: hence the title *Counterevidence*. What will follow will leave the reader in the same indefiniteness and uncertainty

shared by the character as to what would have occurred in the past, also maintaining the doubt about the nature of this man's return, fueled with the repetition of the sentence: "If all this is happening..." Pure emanation of memory or not, the presence of the companion is unavoidable. It is clear that, for the woman, he will be always absent and always coming back. The dialogue among them is weaved of mere assumptions as to the facts that would have generated the disappearance of the man, the gaps are not filled, the plot is not cleared up. It is a bitter dialogue permeated by frustration, mistrust, and never remedied guilts. She says; "First they steal me your life, then you steal me your death" (Ibid.: 46).

In the novel, the calls of the everyday are confronted with the power of the past. All the recovery of the Brazilian political context of the dictatorship will be by evocations of past occurred just at the moment in which is intended, with the payment of compensation, to terminate the State's debt to the missing people, although without investigation and punishment of the authors of the crimes. Also, a moment in which the dream that lead the characters to fight became obsolete, giving space to other types of dreams, more modest, not as grand as the ones of revolution: the contiguity of the two documents, the death certificate and the deed of the apartment, points to this ideological turn.

Counterevidence (Bonassi, 2003) does not make the protagonists heroes, does not prioritize scenes of physical violence against the militants, it focuses on the prolonged pain of loss: losing in personal and collective meanings. The past remains alive in the woman's everyday life, that is why the dominant tense in the narrative is the present, even when the characters relate to what was experienced during the dictatorship, as in the following speech of the man: "Someone writes on a file. This is the last time my real name will be written beside those I invented. Nobody cares about origin, nor with the preparation of this body of mine. I'm buried in unmarked graves. I disappear" (Ibid.: 30).

In fact, the theme of time stoppage from the establishment of totalitarian governments will be resumed in another work of Bonassi: "O incrível menino preso na fotografia" [The incredible boy stuck in the photography], published in *Histórias extraordinárias* [Extraordinary stories] (2005). The play revolves around a typical photography, of those taken in schools until a few decades ago, in which it could be seen the student sitting by a table, a world map in the background, alongside the flag of Brazil, and on the table a plaque recording the school series and number of the student in the class; In the case, it reads: "6.A-13". In the book, the text pages alternate with illustrations made by the plastic and comic artist Caeto – images that contrast variations in the boy's appearance (white, black, mummy, baby, old etc.) with the immobility of the pose

and the framing in the molding. Through the monologue of the public school student that, in the 70s, ended up forever stuck in the school photo, is focused the temporal experience in the eyes of 12-year-old boy who had the childhood marked by the military dictatorship. From this situation, attention is drawn to the fact that stopping the transformation projects of the country matches the two worlds inside and outside the photography: everybody is, somehow, stuck, watching the time pass, unable to act, paralyzed. Such immobility, however, does not hold the chronological time. The boy knows he is aging, he already has been for 40 years: the chronological time does not stop, the maps in the back of the picture become obsolete. What is immortalized is just the moment of the photo, which means framing in a molding:

The photographer wanted to control everything by controlling our ephemeral appearance. In addition to composing this official scenario, he felt bad with the quality of the sun that didn't come, did not entered the enclosure, not filling the darkness reigning over all, not having the desired effect. (Bonassi, 2005: 24)

In the passage above, the photographer attitude is a metaphor for the dictatorial power conduct, which tries to stop changes, stop time, postpone the future: then, everything ages in immobility. The character from an urban periphery school asks – “why leave the album, for what?” – and affirms: “the impasse is the best synthesis of my movement” (Ibid.: 62). *The incredible boy stuck in the photography* stages, then, the stagnation, the interrupted or unfinished history from the viewpoint of a life and country project. It takes advantage of the time paradox of photography, which marks the moment when present becomes memory but retains the appearance of a presence. The contemplation time, of looking a picture album, is not the same of image capture: the image makes the past present, while aging, instituting another inscription on its duration. In the boy's picture the past lasts, aging. He says: “It's been awhile I'm new, in fact” (Ibid.: 52).

In *Counterevidence* (Bonassi, 2003), also, the chronological successive time does not stop – the day slips away, walking into the night – intertwined by the couple's common past and by the possible pasts lived by the man after disappearance. *Counterevidence* is a novel about the impossibility of compensating for lives and ideals mown down by the dictatorship, about a past that was not buried, that will always return as an insistent ghost. The last sentence of the book reiterates the impossibility of forgetting, of starting a new life:

The man stands and picks up the pack of cigarettes. Turns it. Is empty. Kneads it, puts it in front of the woman. Then takes the gun, shattered in pieces.

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Assembles them. Fits them. Puts it in his pocket. Takes the cell phone, the briefcase, and leaves.

Te woman becomes restless again (Ibid.: 97).

In the novel of Bonassi (2003), the memory, by keeping the companion alive, is the counterevidence, that is, it opposes the law that attests his death. As for the movie *Today* (2013), we have an overcoming narrative: the anachronisms are there to be overcome. Starting from another point of view, driven by question of her own biography, Tata Amaral reworks the plot of the novel to print in the path of the female character a different sense than the one given by the book. The movie defends the character right of living the present. The freedom is not in the revolutionary dreams of the past but in the conquest of small pleasures in the present: the champagne to celebrate the own apartment, the walk in the park with her friend and the dog. Conquests that will make possible the acknowledgment of guilts and the victory over old fears, allowing the final abjurement of ghosts of the past. While the book ends reiterating the permanent concern of the woman since her companion will be always, at the same time, present and absent, the narrative of Tata Amaral closes with the confluence between the time in the interior of the woman and the time of official history: both consider the militant dead. That is what we see in the iconic scene at the end of the film, in which the companion asks: “When did you conclude I was dead?” And the woman answers: “Today” (Today, 2013).

As we have seen, the works of Bonassi and Tata Amaral follow one of the most pinched paths in contemporary times fiction when it proposes to redeem history, i.e. the option for the little, for the traces left in the banal everyday. But the comparison between them, running from the old discussion on fidelity in adapting literary works to cinema, also allows us to point out that the primacy of everyday life serves to different treatments of temporality. By emphasizing the struggle of the character to live in the present, the viewpoint launched by the movie tunes with an era marked by the decline of revolutionary hope, in which grand social utopias yield space for the so-called everyday micro-utopias. The novel of Bonassi, on the other hand, by chronicling the dictatorship violence on the counterlight³, remits to other issue, a central one to fiction in these after-utopia times, that is, how to rework the historical dimension, how to exploit the realism power of imagination to play a political role of resistance to oblivion.

Issue that is formulated in other bias by Erik Rocha in an interview about his last documentary, titled *Cinema Novo* (2016). Choosing by the format of

³ On this matter, see the reflection developed by Márcio Serelle about the poetic of counterlight in the 21st-century Argentinian cinema, on the article “Cinema and counterlight: repression thresholds in the Argentinian media culture” (2014).

archive movie, montage movie, the director exposes to our eyes a collection of images that succeed one another without a narrative thread, with the goal, as he states, of drawing attention to the courage and the high degree of invention characterizing those movies. Erik Rocha launches in the present Cinema Novo images with the purpose not so much of rescuing the story of the movement but of rescuing the utopian atmosphere that is inseparable of that aesthetics which was closely connected to politics, to revolutionary ideals. The beauty and strength of the cut scenes that urge us to try and recompose the stories of each movie, to sew fragments, leave in the air the question that would have moved him to create the documentary, i.e. “how can the artists, today, engage in the everyday political processes of their people?” How can he testify, as says the filmmakers, “the so very strange historical time we inhabit, time in ruins?” (Rocha, 2016). ■

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