

# The magic eye, the shelter and the threat: convulsions – Ruy Guerra films

## Chico Buarque

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**Abstract:** Since the 90's, the «cinema of retaken» has focalized social violence, corruption and institutional crisis in Brazil. There are few dominant codes that stand back from this attitude of transparency in communication and from the settlement to the dominant codes in market, working according to a style tuned with the modern authorial cinema. One of the best examples of this is the movie *Estorvo* (Turbulence, as released in English) (2000), by Ruy Guerra, adaptation of the book by Chico Buarque. The article is going to demonstrate how the movie, as the book it is originated from, chooses a narrative that disconcerts us on presenting in its form the subject's contemporary crisis. The movie also replaces our questioning about the characters – and the familial structure – course in their peculiar involvement with scathing aspects of the social violence in Brazil.

**Keywords:** Brazilian cinema, social violence, authorial cinema, contemporary

Since the 90's, the «cinema of retaken» has focalized social violence, corruption and institutional crisis in Brazil. The film makers have been dealing with the thorniest subjects of the political diary – the social inequality, the exclusion of most of the population of the benefits brought by the modernization, the expansion of the organized crime and his fees where the institutional landmarks of the national State have no validity. In the cinema of fiction, these questions reach the screens in a format that adapts the social experience to codes of industrial established types, as it happens in “action movies” *City of God* (2002), by Fernando Meirelles, and *Elite Squad* (2007), by José Padilha, in the melodrama *Carandiru* (2003), of Hector Babenco, or even in thrillers that incorporate the causes of the *film noir*, as in the movie *The Invader* (2001), by Beto Brant, the most interesting political analysis done by a Brazilian movie inserted in this type of cinema called “of author”.

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There are very few movies that are far from this posture of transparency in communication and of adjustment to the dominant codes in market, working inside a style more tuned to the modern cinema of author that proposes more enigmatic games and another relation between art and entertainment. One of the best examples in this direction is *Turbulence* (2000), by Ruy Guerra, an adaptation of the homonymic book by Chico Buarque. Such as in the text of origin, the movie opts for a narrative that confuses us and replace just at the end our interrogation about the course of characters – and about familiar order - in his special involvement with important aspects of social violence in contemporary Brazil.

In the novel, narration in first person brings to first plan the exhibition of a subjectivity which mismatch with the world progress is, at the same time, a “ reaction to ” and a “expression of ” a valuable crisis, more visible in territories of this social illegality already discussed by criticism. Marking its empathy with the book, *Turbulence* is a political movie that, such as it is own to professional Ruy Guerra’s life, projects the convulsive standard of the experience in focus for the level of the visual form and of narrative structure. There’s a distortion of urbane space that mirrors the protagonist eccentricity, in a game in which our relation with the narrated world is mediated, not in manner conclusive in the movie, for this exiled subjectivity, without a name.

The film maker translates the formal strategy of the writer, bringing to first plan the whole load of ambiguity that encloses narrative process. Like Leon Hirszman, in *São Bernardo* (1972), Ruy Guerra opts for the outstanding presence of the text of origin through the use of the voice “over” of the protagonist who, in the movie, will interact with other channels of image and sound, creating the typical plurality of voices what there goes by the tradition of modern cinema, since Orson Welles.

The proceeding of the voice over has been gaining greatly space in Brazilian contemporary cinema, is disseminated by the varied forms and styles, but nearly always inside a scheme in which it overlaps the image to narrate part of the history and to do comments inside a more pedagogic posture turned to operations of sewing and information, as we see in *City of God* and in movies which realization wraps a connection (aesthetics or

of production) with the experiences of the tele-fiction - let's remember *Redeemer* (2004), by Cláudio Torres, and *The man who copied* (2003), by Jorge Furtado.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast, *Turbulence* (Ruy Guerra, 2000), as also *To the left of the father* (2001), by Luiz Fernando Carvalho, and *Body* (2008), by Rubens Rewald and Rossana Foglia, to set other examples, define a request of image and original sound, which retakes the disjunctions and ambiguities from modern cinema, with a construction more complex of space and time, building dissonances in relation between word and image. *Turbulence* explores the voice over like sharp expression of a type of crisis of the subject in which shows up the difficulty itself of "saying" the world and to be registered in the space of the city.

In this aspect, it can be seen as the third movie of an urbane rhapsody that was radicalizing the idea of crisis and fragmentation of the experience, in a variation that finds his first term in *São Paulo S/A* (1965), by Luiz Sérgio Person, and the second in *The red light bandit* (1968), by Rogério Sganzerla, which work the crisis of the subject in the city in different keys. The movie by Ruy Guerra, like part of this constellation, stimulates the comparison between the image that he offers from relations between the subject and the contemporary city and the different dynamics that the cinema of the 60's produced in the interaction between voice and image.<sup>3</sup>

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In *São Paulo S/A*, the mismatch between the protagonist-narrator and a certain order of things in industrial society expresses in terms of a modern realism that discusses the

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<sup>2</sup> See Ismail Xavier "Corrosão social, pragmatismo e ressentimento: vozes dissonantes no cinema brasileiro de resultados", in *Novos Estudos CEBRAP*, n. 75, jul 2006., pp. 139-156.

<sup>3</sup> About interaction between voice and image in *The red light bandit*, see analyses by Jean-Claude Bernardet, *O vôo dos anjos* (São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1991) and by Ismail Xavier, *Alegorias do subdesenvolvimento: Cinema Novo, Tropicalismo e Cinema Marginal* (São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1993).

problems of urbanization and of economic growth, producing the metaphor of the city-machine referred to the process of quick industrial expansion of the country in the end of 50's. Carlos, the protagonist, lives that ailment of whom doesn't delude himself with the discredit implicated in his social role like an executive of an industry of car spares, but it does not join strength to jump and change his life. He seems to be halfway, he doesn't feel himself at home, he would like to be somewhere else, to be another person.

Embittered, he hates the mediocre world in which he is successful. The tensions are aggravated and he puts himself to the drift after a cathartic explosion in which he breaks up with his wife (first scene of the movie) and with the world of industrial work. We know his course through a flashback that has himself as focus, when he recapitulates his life in the city, in a combination of scene and voice over that exposes the crisis of the subject inside coordinates well defined in a public space in which everything crosses like in an assembly line. The repetition of work cycles captures to all in a gear of the alienation that the movie characterizes like stock company.

In *The red light bandit*, the figuration of the crisis wraps already a flagrant discontinuity; narration vanishes in fragments, voice and image open his conflicts wide in the exhibition of the story of Jorginho, delinquent whose trajectory gave him a name and fame, building an identity that shows, however, an imitation produced by the speech of media. Such as in the film noir, the voice over from protagonist exposes the questions of a subject that is alone against all, in quite different terms to that of Carlos from Sao Paulo S/A. A nocturnal regime of the image predominates, and the voice over of the protagonist floats in succession of contradictory enunciations that chorus with other voices over – related with his conflict with images – arrivals from a supposed broadcasting station of radio that punctuates the whole movie with its comments.

The irony and the key burlesque that dissolve the tragic aspect of the hero's experience, treated in the movie like a "foot of slipper", lost in the periphery of the Third World. As his historical coordinates are known and the form as Rogério formalizes it, the crisis of the subject is putted like an allegory of the disillusionments face to the promises of industrial progress, or of the attempts of social revolution as they were in 60's. The feeling of impotence is translated in an auto-depreciation that comes from a narrator that is not reliably, an anti-hero who disqualifies the world and his own condition.

The resentment against the gear of the money, typical of Carlos from Sao Paulo S/A, and the feeling of impotence of the bandit of the red light were shaped in an ailment which *Turbulence* potentiates. Its most opaque structure makes absent the realistic coordinates from dramatic-serious movie by Person, and its shade makes more intense the discomfort caused by fragmentation that brings it near of the movie by Sganzerla, for the form as destabilizes, from the beginning, the narrative, and also for the form as it projects the death of the protagonist in a zone of simulation that becomes now more enigmatic in his final tournament.

We are far from the throws of good humor that reduce the disaster of the bandit, the boy gone out perhaps from the slum, since nothing is known for certain. The protagonist of *Turbulence* is not the efficient “petit bourgeois” in the factory that, at the moment of the purgation, wants to undo his promises, neither compose the identity-imitation of the poor delinquent, abandoned to his luck under the thick layer of media speech. The grotesque of the city and the fact of being alone before the world are aspects that return now in the figure which anonymity does not hide his social anchorage from boy of family, unemployed, who is moved by urbane space like pursued by an imaginary glance that, however, sometimes is crystallized in effective threats that he hardly understands. Eccentric, or he exaggerates in his paranoid reactions to what he supposes being a demand of the Other, or he shows a scandalous apathy before absurdity.

These are aspects of a behavior that, in the novel, are exposed through a broken up perception of the space and a succession of time based in parataxes: the order of the time does not suppose teleology; the succession of facts does not suppose a hierarchy, a subordination. Situations are succeeded, or in a hasty form, to the scrambles, or through ellipses that do not accent motivations and intentions. The narration in voice over, while exposing the aspects of memory and the immediate existence of the protagonist, instead of shaping a world of defined outlines, shows up the arrangement of the narrator to muddle up perceptions and conjectures.

In the cinema, the voice over interacts with the content of scenes, since the field of the visible one is not set up straightly by her, which produces tensions between what the narrator says and the actions what we see in the screen. While incorporating the text by

Chico Buarque, the movie brings the called narrator autodiegetic, in the typology proposed by Gérard Genette<sup>4</sup>, but such a narrator has his statute changed.

In the book, the narrator-protagonist is not a fully identified figure, a name that presents itself and gives beginning to a report in flashback. The “ epic situation ” is not defined in first aspect, there is no return to “zero point” in the end that would mark a supposed suitable point of anchorage to explain from where this man that say “I” speaks . In the movie, such vaguenesses are complicated, since there is in his body a context of images and sound that exceeds the voice and begins to act even before that this one manifests herself.

In other words, it is the image (bodies, set design, light) that establishes the frame for the voice and it’s not this one that produces enunciations that suggest images to be updated in the act of reading. In the opening, the musical track and the arrangements of the design produce already a certain atmosphere in the sequence of presentation of credits, and it is only after this sequence that the voice presents itself and says “ I am dizzy ”, sentence that overlap the first plan of an eye that opens, like that trying to go out from a state of torpor, to shape a bordering field between sleep and wakefulness that is going to contaminate the whole movement.

Besides these interactions between voice and image, cinema allows another type of ramification that, in this case, gives new tournament to the idea of fragmentation of the subject: the voice over of the narrator-protagonist (that is that from Ruy Guerra itself) is not the voice of the actor who interprets it (the Cuban Jorge Perugorría). With this, the voice without a body, which hovers above the space of the scene, intensifies the spectral effect that astonishes the voices over in the cinema that are accommodated in an extra-field of “almost dead” figures that, at the same time, show a zephyr of power, since they supposedly release from mooring of a body. In *Turbulence*, such a fluctuation, however, finds a rule that imposes limits, withdraw it powers, so, in harmony with the novel, the voice over conjugates the verb in the present time, when there is no hiatus of time to

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<sup>4</sup> See Gérard Genette, *Figures III* (Paris, Seuil, 1972). A teoria do discurso narrativo de Genette incorpora, para a teoria literária, a noção de diegese, termo grego que a crítica de cinema fez circular desde os anos 50, na acepção de « mundo representado ». É diegético tudo o que pertence ao universo ficcional instituído pela narração : os personagens, a ação, o espaço, o tempo. Um narrador auto-diegético não apenas pertence ao mundo que seu relato instaura, mas é também o principal personagem em foco – enfim, ele conta a sua própria história.

separate the experienced life and the narrated one, such as it is realized soon on the first scene.

Narrator almost always exposes his perceptions at the moment itself in which take place practical confrontations with the world, when we see his body in the screen (a body that has another voice, since I observed). There are exceptions to this, like the passages in which he makes references to the past – to his childhood and to his married life already over. They are passages well demarcated in what we recover the usual distance between the experienced in life and the narrated one. What prevails, however, is an “ epic situation ” special that slides together with the report. The dominant tonic is the succession that pushes the character, which suggests a progressive movement that, however, coexists with a play of sentences and recurrent situations that bring an idea of regression and circularity that, for its turn, does not define clear outlines, as we will see.

In this movie, the verbal enunciation that incorporates the text from the book unfolds again once more: we have the resource to vignettes that project in screen small reports or laconic observations that compose one more facet of the narration in first person and interrupt the flow of scenes as in a silent movie. There is, so, when they come supposedly from the same fountain (the protagonist), three verbal flows: the "cold" and concise enunciation of the signs, the voice of the visible body (actor) who speaks and, with another insignia, the voice over from the narrator.

In this ramification, something reminds of us Brecht - interruptions, discontinuities, weird sensations – but the effect of expressionist distortion prevails, in the confusion of the voices, in the distortions of image and in the bewilderment of this figure lacerated in mismatch with a world that he realizes in least details, but does not organize it in a coherent manner.<sup>5</sup> In several passages, the behavior of the camera does a rhyme with the type of glance implicated in the report of the voices, in a way to look for an affinity between the different channels of expression, printing in its own style of the movie the fragmentation and the bewilderment, in way to make the viewer survive them, instead of enjoying them,

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<sup>5</sup>Na análise do livro, Edu Teruki Otsuka, em seu livro *Marcas da catástrofe: experiência urbana e indústria cultura em Rubem Fonseca, João Gilberto Noll e Chico Buarque* (São Paulo, Nankin Editorial, 2001), caracteriza muito bem esta peculiar atenção do narrador a detalhes e a ausência de um movimento de síntese dos dados.

in the comfort of an external glance, the data of the experience in focus like clear and different information.

The drift of the character prevails, it sweats perturbed existence of space-time and his failures to meet with the human figures that intercept him, in a movement that ends up implicating us, since everything is contaminated by the shade of his experience. The indistinct mixture of the subjective and of the objective composes, in the movie, a variant of the indirect free style that is constituted every time a literary text with narrator auto diegetic is registered in the body of a movie and interacts with other channels of enunciation.

### **Projections and simetrias: the play of permutations.**

From the first sequence, a central motive is present: the protagonist incompetence in separating his projections and data that he gathers of the outside world. The first scene puts in focus a moment in which he, plunged into the apathy, responds with difficulty to an appeal of the exterior world. After credits, we have the image of an eye covering the whole screen, blinking while we hear a voice saying: I am dizzy. There is followed by a sound of a bell that irritates us while we pass to the image of a man laid in the bed. Everything produces, from the beginning, the reciprocal contamination of dream and wakefulness, in a populated world of imaginary strength.

His reaction is late and the sensation of weirdness is showed immediately in the form created by the angular, in other words, the images that deform the body and the set design that the movement of the actor exposes (the totally empty room of the apartment). Guessing, he goes to the “ magic eye ” in the front door to check who demands his presence. The voice over brings the commentary, step by step, of his not very clear perceptions and of his vague memory of which he would have seen, some time before, the stranger of another side of the door, evoked by a typical gesture who remains in his memory. Though nothing is of solid in his conjectures, his reaction is of the one who receives the call of the world as a threat and it must take precautions.

On the scene of the magic-eye, the assembly in shot/reverse shot allows us to see the face of the protagonist and the figure of the stranger in the corridor; there is a jump in



our point of view when the voice over supposes that he can be seen for the stranger outside, like if this one also could look through the magic-eye. This effect is decisive for the imaginary that dominates the scene, since the device of protection loses the asymmetry that it was guaranteeing its function, from which a sense of irremediable vulnerability results. The music, the light and the vision of the body of protagonist put out by the lens contribute to the atmosphere that produces the hypotheses not confirmed by the chain of actions.

He decides for the escape, the music creates suspense, but the disjunctive assembly and the lack of space coherence suggest that the pursuit is imaginary (his projection) been composed by images cliché of the police movie, here without connections, something that we should have distrusted like narration of a fact. He leaves the building; the other one, supposedly, would have entered in his apartment. The sequence is closed by him entering in a tunnel, first emblem of the world of the city, while his voice comments that, in spite of the inexplicable one, he is sure that the other will continue to chase him.<sup>6</sup>

Let's return to the magic-eye. The symmetry built there- what makes the interior and the outside equally visibles - contradicts the common experience, and is done a metaphor optics of the state of the narrator along the movie. He will always be muddling interior and outside up, creating a space of uncertainties and imagining threats, at a certain moment even supposing his salvation, before enigmatic or grotesque figures that cross his way. In his solitude made from mismatches, he exceeds, have no function, disturb, or the world is the one who exceeds, which hinders him creating undesirable demands that attack his prostration and contribute to his form idiosyncrasy of resisting a critical state of things in the society.<sup>7</sup>

Given that his report and his comment, like a rule, are still close-cropped to the facts, he cannot put the scenes in perspective, not being when, taken by associations, it makes references to the most remote past. All the time, the oral comment expresses the uncertainties of perception, and several channels – the image, the music, the dialog, the mise-en-scène – they are not put in conjunction to explain the world, but in disjunction to

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<sup>6</sup> O tema da caça é recorrente no cinema de Ruy Guerra, desde *Os Fuzis*; em *Estorvo*, ele segue inspiração vinda da trama urdida por Chico Buarque, mas torna tal motivo mais forte, tal como já fica indicado nesta frase da voz *over* que dá o tom ao que virá, uma frase que não ocorre nesta passagem do romance.

<sup>7</sup> O romance de Chico Buarque encontrou uma densa recepção crítica, na qual me apoio em muitas passagens do meu texto, com especial referência às leituras de Roberto Schwarz, em “Um romance de Chico Buarque”, in *Seqüências brasileiras; ensaios* (São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, de Edu Otsuka, já citada, e de Augusto Massi em resenha publicada na revista *Novos Estudos Cebrap* n.31, outubro 1999).

express a state of mind. The body and the voice of the actor, though locked, they are energetic in reactive behavior before extreme situations, survive the situations in a dramatic key that finds in the music his points of resonance. In counter position, the tiredness of everything and the numbness are expressed in the grain of the voice over from the narrator who punctuates the scenes and transitions.

After the false pursuit of the opening, he goes to his sister's house, in a luxurious building protected by cameras of vigilance and aggressive caretakers who end up letting him in when the authorization comes from the intercom neutralizes the worst appearance of the visitor. He finds his sister at the swimming pool, and the conversation between them informs us about the subjects of the family: his died father, his mother alone in her apartment, the rich brother-in-law who condemns his indifference for the interests of the family, specially the administration of the inherited farm, now in total desertion. His glance and the comments in voice over leave his affection clear for her. More still: the beautiful sister attracts and she knows it. At the moment, the essential thing is that he wants money. She signs the cheque like part of a familiar routine; then, he says goodbye.

He goes to the bank, withdraw the money and goes to bus station, place of new faces, new doubles, looks supposedly threatening, like those he sees in an individual to whom he concerns as the guy of "checkered shirt". He takes a bus for the farm of his family, in a movement that he is going to repeat along the movie, alternating city and field, revolving around his past, doing everything with an apparent lack of interest, like an automaton. Such as the house of his sister, the farm will be the magnetic place that is going to dominate the journey.

The cause of the blotted frontiers marks the whole trip. For example, when he enters for the gate of family's farm, the voice over says that he is "going out" from an enclave – the world - that would be enclosed by the farm, a biggest territory. Passages and frontiers have reversible faces, in a world in which the opposition between the interior and outside is subjected to any kind of permutations created by the curious inversions between activity and passivity, between the victim's condition and that of potential aggressor. In several opportunities, on the contrary of what it happens on the stage of opening, it is him who will be trying to enter on the outside and being repelled, or almost.

It will not manage to enter in the apartment of the dead mother, locked by the confusion in the building, not even in the building where he imagines be living an old friend whom he does not know if he is alive or dead. In this case, the voice remembers the singular character of the figure, eccentric in the interests and in the watchwords, pole of allusions to a homosexual attraction not confirmed what comes to echo in the associations of the narrator when he witnesses a *fait divers* in front of such a building. It is exemplary the chain of motives and of images brought for the popular melodrama and for the report of TV that multiply conjectures about the author and on the victim of the crime (an homosexual?), thing reflected at other moments from the narrative, when observations on this victim slide for a detail or other referred to the body of the friend.

This episode, and what projects in his memory is inserted in a play of permutations that wraps characters, places, attitudes, everything mediated by the relation of the protagonist with the most different stimulus, composing a play of mirrors reiterated, like in the scene of the stranger behind the magic-eye and of the man with the checkered shirt. This creates a sense of equivalence, reversibility, wrapping bodies, objects, spaces and situations, which sometimes turns out to be in a disorderly intimacy that it equates the spaces of the life according to the standard and the spaces of the transgression, in a quick process of debauchery of outlines that mirrors a crisis of institutions and territories from traditional bourgeois society.<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, the movie shows like urbane scenery an imaginary city – *Turbulence* was filmed in Rio de Janeiro, Lisbon and Havana – in which is spoken a mixture of Portuguese and Spanish, a space transnational composed by juxtaposition of fragments – empty streets, ruins, marbles of poverty in contrast with the temples of the society of consumption to reaffirm the beginning of quick exchange order, of the space-time compression, of the nets of communication.<sup>9</sup>

The mosaic brings a space in ruins and a protagonist in escape to live places in the obliquity of his singular, immediate perception, of this world that is shown devastated by

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<sup>8</sup> Roberto Schwarz, em seu artigo supra citado, analisa este movimento de trespasse de fronteiras e promiscuidade, colocando-o em relação com um diagnóstico da conjuntura referido à desmontagem dos pressupostos de tal ordenamento social.

<sup>9</sup> Nesta direção, Luiz Zanin Oricchio, em *Cinemadenovo: um balanço crítico da retomada* (São Paulo, Estação Liberdade, 2003), descreve os traços do que chama de “geografia urbana indetectável” como expressão do aspecto radical do filme na dissolução das categorias que permitiam distinguir nacional e estrangeiro, centro e periferia. Ver pp. 74-78.

mechanical action of a gallery of expressionist masks, that contrasts with a residue of familiar nucleus still able to preserve the appearances and even a mimicry of common sense, aspects that, however, do not make him immune to the barbarism and neither exempt him of promise with it, face the easy lapse from a field to another.

There are many circuits to go in this troubled set of *Turbulence*, which dreams up different readings to privilege a dimension or another from the social anomie and of character's wander that, although foreign from the rush that surrounds him, does not come off from it.<sup>10</sup>

In my reading, I'm interested in explore meaning of *leit-motif* of escape, auto exile, here condensed in a protagonist who is not just someone in town, ideal type, sort of *Everyman* from post-industrial urbanity. He has a particular life history and a class origin that it is decisive in the configuration of a printed standard in which it seems to be random in the allegorical space created by the movie.

In his drift, there is the cross of frontiers, the confusion of places, but *he insists in operating in the edges of a familiar identity*, trying to conjugate the memory - that puts back an imaginary from his childhood and an intensity of affections of which he does not forget, neither he leaves them – and the repression of his heir's condition of his father's legacy and of the living standards of his class.

I already noticed that, taken by associations, the protagonist comments past events. Once in a while, memory is illustrated by quick plans that translate his glance and his emotions before the evoked passage. And there are two flashbacks well defined; one bringing a scene of childhood's fondness in which his sister is the central figure; another one more dramatic bringing the decisive scene of his conjugal disaster. The over voice complements data from the past and speaks about the quoted old friend, emphasizing that

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<sup>10</sup> Quem melhor avançou na análise da desterritorialização como “desposseção de si mesmo” no filme de Ruy Guerra, foi Andréa França, em seu livro *Terras e fronteiras: cinema político contemporâneo* (Rio de Janeiro, 7 Letras, 2003). Ela trabalha o filme como instância da “narrativa dissensual” (disposta em séries, múltiplos devires, dinamismo feito de desacordos) que questiona regimes de verdade totalizantes e opera no não lugar que sela o estranhamento mútuo mundo-protagonista. O movimento da sua análise é o de adensar o perfil da experiência radical de abandono vivido por “esta espécie de estrangeiro dele mesmo” diante da corrosão e dos excessos de um mundo sem contornos. A opção de Andréa é por uma leitura que privilegia a pura errância dentro de um paradigma (“encontrar uma saída onde este mundo não soube encontrar”) que não requer a atenção maior a um espaço de memória que permita explorar um campo particular de conflitos associado ao padrão dos movimentos do protagonista, embora este padrão se manifeste. Ver pp.44-48 e 203-214.

they stopped seeing each other since he assumed his marriage. The comments about the four years of life with his woman, from whom he has separated at a moment suggested as not as distant of the situation that marks the opening of the movie when we see him alone in the empty apartment, are not scarce.

## **Family ties**

There is a standard of repetitions that turn clear the role of familiar romance in experience's resignation. The wander, punctuated of accidents, makes protagonist always return to his sister's house, to mother's apartment, to the mall where his ex-wife works, to the apartment where they lived together and an important place: the family's farm, now occupied by drug dealers and their culture of marijuana. With the invaders, he starts again a weird negotiation that turns out in an exchange of his sister's jewels - that he had stolen in a gesture just for appearance - for a suitcase full of marijuana, without intention of consuming it.

There's a back and forth movement connected to his circle of affections (people and places): first, it invades the prohibited zone - the *closet* of his sister's room – from where he steals the jewels; then, he will the exchange in his farm-sanctuary, place of his insistence, since moved by own impulse. When in possession of the drug, he tries to take the product to his mother's apartment, thinking about a wardrobe in which she keeps his father's relics (this act of depositing the drug in his dead father territory is not properly a practical alternative; there is a clear symbolic circulation). Anyway, he is not successful, since he does not manage to enter in his mother's apartment, who has just died. The suitcase gets lost in the building, with so uncertain destiny as it is his own destiny, as to confirm his own sentence " the destiny of man is the destiny of the suitcase that he carries ".<sup>11</sup>

His insertion in the gear of exchange – that begins with the violation of his sister's closet and ends in the attempt of devolution of the suitcase to the wardrobe of the father - connects to his investments of wish and rejection in familiar net, a system that spins around the attraction for his sister, something that his narration sets out in several forms: in his

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<sup>11</sup> Temos aqui a reposição do motivo da mala como repositório de identidade e destino, lugar de uma coleção arbitrária que se propõe como imagem desse "eu" *sui generis*, um motivo que se explicita em *O bandido da luz vermelha*, quando se consuma a deriva e o dilaceramento de Jorginho como "discurso dos outros".

first, soon after the escape of the opening of the movie, in the flashback with images from childhood, in the visits to the condominium, and in the memory of adolescence and of the nocturnal wakefulness waiting for his sister on the stone of the farm.

This incestuous womb is still reiterated in other forms, in a more clear tonic of apathy and refusal of the world. At a certain moment, his search of support takes him to his ex-wife apartment to catch an ancient suitcase with his things; after an outbreak of urinary incontinence (when he relieves himself in the basin of the kitchen), he takes a shower and sleeps in the bath while the voice over sets his wish out of remaining in this wet covering forever. His daydream floods the apartment. When married, he didn't used to work, he spend his time alone at home laid in the sofa watching TV, so numbed in his conjugal shelter as he was in the beginning of the movie, just feeling his wife's arrival as an invasion (that has repercussions on the discomfort before threatening strangers from the other side of the magic-eye). Corroborating the bitterness, his air of devious one when she told him the news of pregnancy, that induced her having an abortion, the reason why their relation collapsed.

At the end of the movie, when pressured by the brother-in-law and by a police chief to accompany an operation that they planned to expel the dealers from the farm, he is going to refuse his owner's condition, substitute of the father. This one, though absentee, dominates a past that has a clear incidence in current role of the protagonist who doesn't stop talking about his father in two or three opportunities. In of them, the employed old man of the farm, still there living in spite of the dealers, speech on the figure of the ancient boss, on his discretionary power and on the loyalty of the employees, composing the traditional profile of the patriarch owner. The old man treats the protagonist like the "boy" of the house, forms of the affection which alarm on his current condition of impotence and delinquency, exactly when the paradise of his leisure of childhood is occupied by the drug dealers.

The farm, before a family territory, is run now by a flow of exchanges that dissolves frontiers, tie the field to the city and completes the confused geography of protagonist auto exile who does not transfer the affection for the sanctuary of the childhood to a sense of

property in the current situation. To the end, just as he witnesses the invasion of the police officer, he notices worried, however inert for some time, the violence of repression, up to which uproar he "arrives" while observing the sinister figure of the chief police repeating the gesture already seen through the magic-eye there in the opening of the movie. He recognizes the gesture, and nothing marks what had recognized the face, although it is the same actor, with a different appearance. It brings back in the figure of the policeman the convocation, the same that held tight the bell in that morning and that now wants to oblige him assuming a role that he doesn't accept.

His reaction is to go out in escape, repeating the standard of the opening as he was the intruder who should not be there. Moving away from the police chief, he plunges in a dark zone of the farm, and the voice over starts to evoke the childhood and the love for his sister, praising the night (essential in the experience of waiting his sister in that stone) what privileges the immobility, which offers the shelter in the vagueness of the things, an indifferent covering that provides with the personal travel where he feels at home. His voice explains us that the dark night it is the active beginning: once its cycle is completed, the night leaves the valley to let in the light of the day (another example of inversion that transforms the active strength to a passive one, and vice versa).

Out of the farm, he keeps on crossing the rainy night, he walks to the drift, but his instinct, or the chance, takes him to the known bus-stop, a symbolic place where he, in another opportunity, glimpsed the stranger with the checkered shirt, the same that had appeared in the movie, for the first time, in the bus station of the city. He approaches to the stop and recognizes, again, the figure. In truth, he sees the shirt, not the man, and his perception produces a feeling of gentleness and relief before an image that seems familiar to him. He runs for the embrace that becomes a moment of aggression – surprised in the night, the man stabs him. We have there the final version of the standard of inversions between passivity and activity, aggression and affection.

### **The end is the beginning: the circle of repetitions**

The checkered shirt condenses this movement of reducing the world to a surface – the most radical movement in the book, tendency in the movie, since it remains in his

visible field the difference between the protagonist's glance and the glance of the camera, even if they are very tuned. In a case or in another, the focus is taken off the individual mark of the bodies and is composed the collage that disposes fragments of different forms, nearly always in the tonic of the shock. Human meetings seem to be reduced while crossing or being crossed, except when the alienation or the distance is assumed. For the protagonist, the only gentle experience of intimacy and affection, positive touch, is associated to the figure of his sister, fountain of nostalgic evocation of the night, this superior entity.

In more, there is that reduction of the world to a surface (like the checkered shirt), which delimits a field of perception that expels the faces, suggesting a crisis of representation and of identity. The world becomes a "reticule", a field flattened of perception as in modern painting, unstable plan of sockets and undocking made by discreet elements. The cohesion of bodies vanishes and surfaces a cast of distorted figures, such as the face of the protagonist in his last image.

Hurt, he enters in the unbalanced bus, contracted by pain and stained of blood, looking for a support that he thinks finding in the window where he presses his face that is flattened and mutilated, in way to compose the emblem of the whole process: at this moment, his body, in anguish, gathers the wounds of the whole journey. In the long final close-up, while we look at the grotesque image, the narrator does his last conjectures about immediate future. His word is made by the combination of three fountains: the dramatic voice of the actor plunged into affliction, the voice over of the narrator (Ruy Guerra), slow and neuter and the text projected in the screen, without life, out of the movement.

Instead of producing a sense of unity, the combination of three articulated channels reiterates again the effect of split and strangeness. In the speech, the first evoked figure is his mother to whom he intends to look for when bus arrives in city; then, he mentions the fact of his sister being travelling and supposes a possible help: when returning, she will be able to lend him money to rent an apartment. Such a travel might be that one for Europe that took place before all that we saw, travel commented by her in the scene on the edge of swimming pool when she showed him photos taken away during the travel, the first ones out of focus, others becoming more and more clear, a fact that he took like sign of gradual improvement of the sister who was rehabilitating from a trauma.



In the net of repetitions, the causes of the robbery to the condominium are reiterated and that of the violation of the sister that would have taken place – in terms of the actions that we followed - just before the final sequence in which the protagonist accompanies the chief police to the farm while, supposedly, his sister does her travel.

This set of crossed references given, we can take the words of protagonist in the bus like a suggestion of a circular time, since the hypothetical future in which he would find shelter in familiar spaces and would rent an apartment with his sister money can be also the situation immediately previous at the moment in which, in the empty apartment, we find him in the beginning. To accent this repetition of motives, the movie adds at the end a non-existent sentence in the novel. Before an abrupt obscurity that surprises him in the conjectures done in the bus, he says: " or it is the tunnel ”.

Next, we have a last vignette with the sign “ or I died ”. This introduces a paradoxical point of limit for the process of enunciation that suggests, then, two temporalities to register the way that leads from the magic eye to the glass of the bus: there's the enumeration of the days in vignettes that were suggesting a just and measured linearity, and there is the circle of repetitions that is completed in this speech that brings back the conjectures and ends with the evocation of the tunnel, motive already present in the opening.<sup>12</sup>

The points of ignition and of interruption of the journey, offered by unusual meetings, are stations of a drift that exposes the movements of narrator and his confrontation with a general state of belligerence in society. Something advances in actions, though not much connected, but the reiteration of motives and the primacy of the repetition that marks the movement of the narrator check a special inflection to the route, a regressive standard of refusal of the world that unfolds in discards of the protocols of the father's place. The affirmation of this otherness goes through the opposition between his

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<sup>12</sup> O filme trabalha de forma lúdica este jogo de avanços, recuos e ambigüidades: o delegado no final é encarnado pelo mesmo ator que vemos, no início, como o estranho do outro lado do olho mágico; o texto de Chico Buarque faz a conexão pela repetição do gesto; o filme incorpora este dado, mas acresce a pergunta: como poderia estar com cabelo tão comprido alguns dias depois da cena inicial onde seu cabelo estava tão curto? A enumeração dos dias em vinhetas nos lembra a ironia dos letreiros de Buñuel que indicam intervalos de tempo em *Um cão andaluz*, lá claramente incompatíveis com o espaço-tempo construído no filme.

unshakable refusal of such a place and the ancient "natural" exercise of the power in old times of paternal figure. It does not surprise his alienation before the news about the son, aborted, and his deny of the relations of power due to the world of work, his immersion in apathy which utopian point is the delight of the scene of the shower and its sweats steamy lethargy.

In his weirdness of the world and of himself, narrator does not complain; that's a tired voice in a body handed to the total absence of projects. In political plan, a sketch of "social conscience", in terms remembered by the eccentric friend of youth, that is now dissolved in torpor. At the present, his tacit opposition to the current state of things does not exclude his insertion in the meshes of this delinquent order, like an agent of spurious exchanges that is lost in a net of conflicts and in an unstable land that always takes him back to familiar sceneries. The assembly creates a dialectics of progression and repetition in that all the spheres seem dominated by the only logic, already suggesting a contamination without limits.

The general beginning of equivalence that characterizes the flows of exchange juts out in the sphere of the faces, marking the proliferation of mirror relations and repetitions along the movie. In constant expansion, it runs over frontiers and it dissolves unities, as in the power of the subject, of familiar structure or of State. In this dynamic, a patriarchal order determined since colonial times is dissolved, and the scenery of crisis brings to first plan this figure of impasse, the narrator dissident who says "enough", but that wanders in circles, like a lively-dead between the nostalgia of familiar shelter, the wish to his sister and the implacable machine of the world. Though confused in his perceptions, he is very tough in his refusal of values of class and of everything that, in this way, means to assume the legacy of the father, may be the work, the reproduction of the family or the defense of the property.

This is a constellation of reasons what the narrator without name from *Turbulence* shares with André, the protagonist-narrator of *In the name of the father*, book by Raduan Nassar, movie by Luiz Fernando Carvalho: the refusal of the world in connection with the incest, the absence of project, the bitterness in the relation with the work, the regressive profile, the almost-death. In *Árido Movie* (2005), by Lírío Ferreira, the question of refusal

returns, however Jonas, the protagonist, has another profile, in harmony with the style of the movie in the toil with the crosses and with the compression of the space-time. He is a figure joined in a big city, in tune with the social gear. He was released from familiar net by migration, but he sees his world of success threatened when his nucleus of origin calls him back to the arid *sertão* for the mission of vengeance for the death of the murdered father, task of which he gets rid in a burlesque woof, since *Árido Movie* is an irony Pop, not a tragedy.

In different keys, the Brazilian cinema has been reiterating the toil with the cause of the escape and the figure of the impasse, with endings “in opened” as it became typical in the cinema of the last decades. However, nearly always it has been doing it in narratives more conventional than that of Hindrance, which notable figuration of the irreconcilable one assumes dimensions of anguish and discomfort that single it out in the current context.

The decisive aspect of this peculiarity is of aesthetic character, and is related to the way as the figure of the impasse gets lacerated and juts out in the composition of images and in structure that ties, with rigidity, the limit points of the movie. The device of the depth of field, in the opening, sets up the ironic symmetry of the magic eye that expresses the sense of vulnerability of the character – an illusory clarity of space. In the ending, when there is the tune between the camera and his body in the race for the embrace in the rain, it is the same binomial of depth (now in the physical movement) and of myopia (in the perception that he has of the Other) what presides over the inversion of the signs of shelter and of the threat. The misunderstandings of the great angular move off the first one and the last race, but the final plan comes to seal the contraction of visible space: flatten the image, it borders the face that presses the glass wall like a fish in an aquarium. Exhausted, he exposes the fractures, in the body and in the voice.

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