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### Keywords / Palabras clave

Deleuze, Furtado, *O Homen que Copiava*, Dhalia, *O Cheiro do Ralo*

# DISSIDENCES

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## *A Deleuzian Approach to Jorge Furtado's O Homen que Copiava (2003) and Heitor Dhalia's O Cheiro do Ralo (2006)*

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The mid-1990s film revival witnessed in Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico may be attributed to “the establishment of democratic governments, which instituted favorable cultural policies and film incentives, [however, another important factor was] a global situation [that] welcomed multicultural expressions, especially when they combined auteristic impulses with local color and certain doses of conventional genres” (Nagib, *Brazil* xiii-xix). In Brazil, this revival is known as *Cinema da Retomada*. Though critics differ in terms of periodization, Nagib opts for 1994-98 (*O Cinema* 13) and Luiz Zanin Oricchio for 1990-2000, [1] critics tend to agree regarding the main traits of this cycle.

According to Nagib, “the utopian gesture, lost in the past of Cinema Novo, returned with new impetus, particularly . . . in the first years of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso’s neo-liberal reforms, propelled by an euphoria which reflected the return of the belief in Brazil as a viable country” (*Brazil* xix). Yet, as the Brazilian critic adds, “this utopia never attained full development, subjected as it was to another realistic tendency which pointed to the continuation of the country’s historical problems” (Nagib, *Brazil* xix). Similarly, Zanin contends, “Boa parte do cinema produzido no Brasil durante esses anos levou em conta as condições do país. Bem ou mal, debruçou-se sobre temas como o abismo de classes que compõe o perfil da sociedade brasileira, tentou compreender a história do país e examinou os impasses da modernidade na estrutura das grandes cidades” [A great part of the movies produced in Brazil during those years took stock of the country’s conditions. Correctly or not, it focused on topics such as the abyss between the social classes typical of Brazilian society, it attempted to understand the country’s history, and examined modernity’s impasse regarding the structure of metropolitan areas] (32). In sum, *Cinema da Retomada* films focused on traditional and current national dilemmas.

Two recent Brazilian films, Jorge Furtado’s *O Homen que Copiava* and Heitor Dhalia’s *O Cheiro do Ralo* coincide in reinscribing neo-noir conventions as they focus on consumerism.<sup>1</sup> In addition to their shared critique of commodity fetishization, they are alike in deploying voice over to seduce the audience into condoning, or at least understanding, the actions of their respective protagonists. Finally, both movies ascribe to Deleuze’s concept of the action-image insofar as “the whole aim of the film is only the exposition of a reasoning” (*Cinema 1* 200). Let’s begin with a brief plot summary.

*O Homen que Copiava* opens with a paradox. Since André (Lázaro Ramos) doesn’t have enough money to pay for the items she scanned, the cashier calls the supermarket manager. The pity we feel for the self-conscious, awkward boy turns into puzzlement at his insistence on buying matches and into bewilderment when he uses them to burn a stack of Brazilian bank notes (*reais*).

The voice-over naturalizes the plot as an autobiographical account of a low-middle class black high school dropout who feels condemned to abject poverty because his dreams of becoming a famous soccer player came to a halt when he was fired from his position as a supermarket bagger and his current job operating a Xerox copier is no more glamorous. [2] Since his father walked away when he was four, André lives with his mother (Teresa Texeira). After work, she watches soap operas and he draws cartoons. When she retires, he flips through the channels, and at about eleven p.m. he trains his binoculars on his neighbors—another type of zapping that not only suggests André's voyeurism but also underscores the scopophilia of the cinematic apparatus.

André's interest in Sílvia (Leandra Leal) soon develops into a relationship threatened by her father's (Antunes - Carlos Cunha Filho) depravity. André needs money to wed and escape that environment, yet he cannot borrow from his co-worker Marinês (Luana Piovani), or her boyfriend Cardoso (Pedro Cardoso), because they are equally destitute. While he refuses to follow the example of his drug-dealer friend Feitosa (Júlio Andrade), the arrival of a color copier leads him down the path of counterfeiting. Cardoso soon partners in planting bills at lottery ticket venues, and agrees to drive him to safety when André plans a heist at the neighborhood bank. André's literally has to run away with the bags of money because Cardoso didn't have enough change for the meter. In fact, they have to rip a bag of money open to exit by bus. Ironically, after the heist, one of their many lottery tickets wins the first prize, so André brings Marinês into the secret by asking her to collect it. Antunes, the guard shot at the heist demands his share the booty, so André and Sílvia conjure up a plan to dispose of him and return some of the stolen money. The movie ends in a *mise-en-abîme* as Sílvia retraces her mother's steps and meets her biological father at the Corcovado—Rio de Janeiro's emblematic tourist site.

Faithful to the stereotypical Brazilian fixation with *bundas*, *O Cheiro do Ralo* begins with a subjective shot of a woman's buttocks.<sup>2</sup> Then, the camera follows the male protagonist, Lourenço

(Selton Mello), along a series of warehouses painted in bright colors. As an old man attempts to sell an antique watch we learn that Lourenço owns a second-hand store; however, the desperation of his clients who are only interested in selling, turns the place into a kind of pawnshop. Lourenço's obsession, articulated through a muted voice over, "I could spend a week watching that butt" [poderia passar uma semana só olhando para o seu rabo (11)] explains his daily presence at the fast food joint. After canceling his impending wedding based on the argument that only fools believe in happiness, Lourenço's struggle for power and money, which he conceives of as aphrodisiacs, taints his interactions. Ironically, the drug addict recovers her dignity by murdering Lourenço, and thus putting an end to his abusive behavior. From a psychoanalytical perspective the equation between money and feces explains Lourenço's obsession with the backed up drain. [3] While the moral indictment of usury sheds light on the interconnection between the drain and hell, the eye's rich symbolism ranges from the Western connotations of knowledge to a self-reflexive reference to the voyeurism of the cinematic apparatus. Either way, it opens up the paradoxical nature of the limit between the inside and the outside, both in terms of the drain and the body. [4]

However, *O Cheiro do Ralo* is in fact an adaptation, an important factor specifically in terms of the depiction of the protagonist's thought process. Moreover, the movie pays tribute to Lourenço Mutarelli, author of the homonymous novel. By playing the part of the *segurança* [security agent], the *homage* becomes even funnier, since, as mentioned in the paratextual section titled "the making of *O Cheiro do Ralo*," Brazilian security agents tend to be big, black, and sweaty—the complete opposite of the slender deep red polyester clad Mutarelli.[5] Furthermore, while adaptations imply a "systematic process of suppression" (Leitch 99), Mutarelli's inclusion led to developing the action to provide depth to characterization. For instance, the movie adds a sequence at the waiting room where a client sells the security agent a pack of antique cards with illustrations of nude women for a pittance. He convinces the prospective client by assuring him that Lourenço will not be interested, not only

because he is gay, but also because he is stingy. The movie adds shots to suggest his complicity with the secretary and his aversion toward the drug addict. After the mob attacks Lourenço for allegedly raping the drug addict, the security agent also tends to the reception. Not surprisingly, Mutarelli is a story line creator for highly prized comics, such as *Transustanciação* [Transubstantiation] (1991; 2001); *Desgraçados* [The Wretched] (1991); *Eu te amo Lucimar* [I love you, Lucimar] (1994); *A Confluência da forquilha* [The Meeting Point of the Forked Path] (1997); *Seqüelas* [After Effects] (1998); *O dobro de cinco* [Double of Five] (1999); *O rei do ponto* [The King of Points] (2000); *A Soma de tudo parte 1* [Complete Works Part I] (2001). The formal similarity between the storyline of the comics and that of the novel may allow for the easy transition, but that is a topic that merits further treatment elsewhere.

Fluctuating between the indirect style of the simple past and the present of dialogues and the narrator's monologues, the text consists of nine chapters, "Tudo o que mundo tem a lhe oferecer" [All the World has to Offer], "O Portal" [The Portal], "Voltando" [Returning], "Ciclo" [Cycle], "Estive no inferno e me lembrei de você" [I Was in Hell and Remembered You], "O jogo" [The Game] "Ausência" [Absence], "A imensa bunda e o buraco" [The Huge Butt and the Hole] and "O buraco e mais nada" [The Hole and Nothing Else]. However, both the need to condense the storyline, and the need to generate revenue lead to a certain simplification to ensure that the audience will follow the plot (Seger 3; 5; 7). Therefore, only one of the titles of the chapters appears verbatim. Other titles are slightly changed "Tudo o que *a vida* tem a lhe oferecer" [All Life has to Offer] or have been synthesized, such as in "A imensa bunda *e mais nada*" [Just the Huge Butt]. For instance, "Estive no inferno e lembrei de você" includes material from the previous chapter ["Voltando"]. Similarly, secondary plotlines such as the chaste love affair between the protagonist and the married woman are eliminated (48-51; 85-88). The suppression, however, is not unimportant insofar as it establishes a counterpoint between Lourenço's insulting words toward his girlfriend "só

os ingênuos acreditavam em felicidade” [only fools believe in happiness] (12) and the feeling experienced while kissing the married woman, “acho que foi a experiência mais incrível que provei em toda minha vida. A sensação de amor que eu sentia, irradiava muito além de meu corpo” [I think it was the most incredible experience I ever had. The feeling of love I experienced even radiated from my body] (88).

Though the film focuses on the power relation that plays out in the exchanges, the process of adaptation leads to omissions that affect characterization. For instance while having lunch, Lourenço reads James Ellroy (10) and Paul Auster (13). Yet, in the novel intertextuality includes Glauco Matoso’s baroque poems *Geléia de Rococó* (1999) (38), Anatole France’s *Monsieur Bergeret* (1901) (60-61), Mario de Andrade’s *Macunaíma* (1828) (61), Oscar Wilde’s *Dorian Gray* (1890) (110) and Reginaldo Ferreira da Silva, AKA Ferréz’s *Manual Prático do Ódio* (2003) (18; 126), among others. Authors mentioned include Camus and Machado de Assis (122), as well as graphic artists such as Mauro dos Prazeres (78). [6] Moreover, “Rosebud,” the name of the sledge in Orson Well’s *Citizen Kane* becomes a leit motif (17, 28, 117), associated as it is to the quest for the *bunda*. The protagonist’s intellectual life is thus impoverished, a process that is compounded by eliding his desire to “escrever un libro” [write a book] (123), which brings about the loss of a *mise-en-abîme*. Furthermore, the omission of the reference to Sydney Lumet’s film *The Pawnbroker* [*Homem do Prego*] (1961), as well as that of its protagonist Rod Steiger (110), not only contributes to the loss of another intertextual reference but also disallows a comparison between both movies and/or the performance of their male leads. Finally, the omission of Lourenço’s epiphany “o que eu realmente buscava não estava ali . . . O que eu buscava, era só a busca” (134) [what I was really searching for was not there . . . What I was searching for, was the quest itself], which the novel connects with the Borgesian paradox about the eternal nature of promises in general, and the constant metamorphoses of those



that go unfulfilled in particular, which reinforce the structure of a *mise-en-abîme* (135) are lost in the screenplay.[7]

The omission of most of the erotic scenes may be explained in terms of film distribution. While both the novel and the screenplay register Lourenço's fiancée's violent reaction to this calling off of the wedding (13), the novel has Lourenço force his face into her butt, a scene followed by cunnilingus and masturbation (19-20), after which he tells her, "nada tem para me dar" (20) [You have nothing to give me]. Likewise, when the *bunda* becomes "uma coisa" [a thing], the waitress tries to comfort Lourenço by way of fellatio (136). However, the film shows a close up of Lourenço crying while he hugs the *bunda*. [8]

Paradoxically, the novel cancels out the erotic scenes by resorting to parody. Thus, sexuality is diffused by referring to the events through a process of dissociation, "E como no canal pornô da TV acabo. Imitando engranagem" [And, as in the porno channel, I come. Like clockwork] (135). Similarly, the cliché of the married woman's dream is downgraded to the generic conventions of a commercial, "corro em câmera lenta. Nos abraçamos e giramos, giramos, giramos . . . Aí meu pensamento enquadra meus dentes. E num zoom se aproxima . . . Entra uma voz muito grave. A voz diz: KOLINOS" [I run in slow motion. We hug and turn around, and around, and around . . . At that point I think of a shot focusing on my teeth. As the zoom approaches . . . a deep voice says, Kolynos] (90). Regretfully, these scenes were omitted from the screenplay.

In terms of the critique of contemporary mores, Furtado's *O Homen que Copiava* depicts a society in which "individual . . . 'self-construction'—the foundational paradigm of modernity," hinges on consumption (Bauman, *Work* 27). Since André was expelled from school he can only aspire to menial jobs. Yet, rather than accepting his fate, as in "the 'pre-modern'—traditional, ascriptive mechanisms of social placement, [according to which] men and women . . . liv[ed] up to

(but not above) the standards attached to the ‘social category’ into which they were born,” André is desperate to break from the cycle of abject poverty, defined in terms of not being able to enjoy a certain lifestyle rather than of hunger or gross deprivation (Bauman, *Work* 27). [9]

Furthermore, *O Homen que Copiava* appears to critique the internalization of instrumental rationality, since consumer society shifts “the concepts of responsibility and responsible choice, which resided before in the semantic field of ethical duty and moral concern for the Other . . . to the realm of self-fulfillment and the calculation of risks” (Bauman, *Consuming* 92).<sup>3</sup> [10] Furtado proves this point by having Cardoso agree to aid and abet André as long as the heist does not turn violent. Similarly, André who would rather share the money with Antunes, gives in to Sílvia’s decision to murder him after she assures him that he is not her biological father and suggests that he has sexually abused her. Similarly, Marinês joins them on condition that her role is restricted to distract Antunes. In sum, Furtado’s success lies in the vivid portrayal of the characters’s awareness of exclusion, as well as in drawing the audience into accepting the violent acts as inevitable.<sup>4</sup>[11]

Conversely, Dhalia’s *O Cheiro do Ralo* offers a more traditional indictment of the expropriation of labor. Lourenço’s emotional detachment stems from a conscious strategy of self-preservation aimed at not feeling sorry for his clients, since he can only profit from shortchanging them. But Lourenço becomes increasingly abusive. Since he enjoys seeing his clients suffer, he debases them until they grovel and agree to do whatever he pleases. Increasingly violent, Lourenço pounces on an old man to vent his frustration because the *bunda* walked out of his life.<sup>5</sup> [12] There are times, however, when Lourenço engages in *bardache*. Toasting with champagne he gives money and cigars away, ostensibly to celebrate meeting a soldier who saved his father’s life; but in fact, to celebrate his freedom on the day he was to wed. In contrast to *O Homen*, *O Cheiro* offers a critique of consumer society insofar as Lourenço acknowledges that what is really significant cannot be bought,

“of all the things I’ve ever had, those that were worth anything, the ones I miss the most are the things you can’t touch, the things that are out of reach of our hands, the things that don’t belong in the material world.”

Following the traditional Marxian model of “a capitalism where only ‘material production’ is alienated in the exchange of political economy” (Jally 11), André appears to be keenly aware of the expropriation of his labor. However, his fetishization of currency and luxury items allows for an analysis of advanced capitalism centered on the concept of the symbolic code. In other words, since today almost everything (virtue, love, knowledge, consciousness) falls into the sphere of exchange value (the realm of the market), the ‘systematic manipulation of signs’ within the workings of a broader behavioral code influences consumption” (Jally 11).

The fetishization of commodities in *O Homen* appears after having planted the first counterfeit bank note, since André muses, “Imagine all the things you could buy with that money,” “Imagine how you’ll be treated after buying all these things.” Therefore, identity hinges on consumerism. Indeed, a society of consumers not “‘interpellates’ its members primarily, or perhaps even exclusively, as consumers; and [but also] judges them by their consumption-related capacities and conduct” (Bauman, *Liquid* 82).<sup>6</sup> [13] Thus, Cardoso’s and Marinês’s purchases of sport and formal apparel and services are represented through the discourse of advertising, which attests that they subscribe to “‘a society of fashion’ restructured . . . by the technologies of ephemerality, novelty and permanent seduction” (Lipovetsky 36). This is especially evident in their quest for distinction through the consumption of luxury items, such as the leather dress, the Mercedes, and the reservation of the Presidential suite (D’Angelo 134; 138-43).<sup>7</sup> [14]

Dhalia’s *Cheiro do ralo* offers a variation on the theme of consumerism. Lourenço’s obsession with the *bunda* clearly points at objectification, so much so that verisimilitude is stretched when he

asks the waitress to turn around to ascertain that he is not speaking to the one whose *bunda* he obsessed about. Unable to get a job the waitress consents to Lourenço's proposition—to pay to see the *bunda*, because the monetary exchange is complemented by the offer of a secretarial position, as well as the emotional attachment implied by Lourenço's avowed need to have her close-by. Ironically, when she does strip, Lourenço weeps. The *bunda* has been commodified.

Conversely, another object, the prosthetic eye, is endowed with power. While its owner says it has seen it all, Lourenço thinks otherwise because it has not been exposed to the *bunda*. The Brazilian expression *olho de bunda* reinforces the interrelation, by bringing about the idea of viewing as penetration, as well as the interdiction of sodomy, even in terms of heterosexuality, since the practice precludes reproduction. In addition, *olho da bunda* opens up the paradox of limits, of inside and outside, which Jacques Derrida develops in "Tympan." Speaking about the throat and the ear, Derrida notes, "on the one hand, therefore, is the outside; on the other hand, the inside; between them, the cavernous" (xx). Therefore, to the extent that the body is traversed by tubes (veins, arteries, intestines), a similarity can be drawn between the body and the drainage system. In addition, when a client observes that the prosthetic eye is the eye of God, Lourenço promptly denies it, noting that it is the eye of the Other. According to Lourenço, the drain communicates with hell, so the paradoxical limit between the inside and the outside, suggested by *olho da bunda* explains Lourenço's final moments, as he drags himself to the latticed cover of the drain, a movement which reconnects the different layers of the rich symbolism.

The commodification of people, articulated in terms of services, is evident in the scenes involving the addict (Sílvia Lourenço), the married woman (Lorena Lobato), and the waitress (Paula Braun). The addict turns to Lourenço because she needs money. Occasionally, when she has nothing to sell, he asks her to show her buttocks and turn around. The exchange with the married woman is set as a crescendo of monetary exchanges, since she requires payment for each and every step of the

strip tease. While the addict feels abused, the married woman happily engages in a game for which she is generously compensated. While these instances lead to masturbation and fellatio respectively, both show Lourenço's drive for control. Despite his obsession with the *bunda*, Lourenço's exchanges with the waitress are similar. When she suggests they have a beer after her shift, he stalls because he is leery of commitment.

### **Deleuze and the Action Image**

Gilles Deleuze's musings on film spring from Henry Bergson's theses on movement, and mainly, the first one, according to which, if "movement is distinct from the space covered. Space covered is past, movement is present, the act of covering. The space covered is divisible, indeed infinitely divisible, whilst movement is indivisible, or cannot be divided without changing qualitatively each time it is divided" (*Cinema 1* 1). Deleuze argues that the premise rests on two assumptions. First, "the spaces covered all belong to a single, identical, homogeneous space, while the movements are heterogeneous, irreducible among themselves" (*Cinema 1* 1). Second, movement can only be reconstituted via a notion of a "mechanical, homogenous, universal [time], copied from space [and] identical for all movements" (Deleuze 1). Yet, Deleuze shows them to be erroneous: "You can bring two instants or two positions together to infinity; but movement will always occur in the interval between the two" and "however much you divide and subdivide time, movement will always occur in a concrete duration; thus, each movement will have its own qualitative duration" (*Cinema 1* 1). Despite the clarification, Deleuze was taken by the similarity Bergson drew between his thesis and "the cinematographic illusion" (*Cinema 1* 1). The extent of Bergson's influence on Deleuze may be gaged by the French philosopher's choice of the fundamental categories of time, movement and the interval to approach film.

However, the understanding of cinema also changed between the lifetimes of these philosophers. Initially, it required “instantaneous sections . . . called images [and an] impersonal, uniform, abstract, invisible, or imperceptible [movement or a time], which is ‘in’ the apparatus, and ‘with’ which the images are made to pass consecutively” (*Cinema 11*). Yet, it developed via “montage, the mobile camera and the emancipation of the viewpoint [from] projection. [Therefore,] the shot would . . . stop being a spatial category and become a temporal one, and the section would no longer be immobile but mobile” (*Cinema 13*). Likewise, the nature of cinema also changed. Movement-images divide into perception-images, action-images and affection-images, which appear in film through montage. While no film is entirely made up of one type, one always predominates (*Cinema 1* 66; 70).

Deleuze bases the concept of the action image on Peirce’s “mental” image, or thirdness, which appears “in signification, law or relation.” In other words:

Thirdness gives birth not to actions but to “acts” which necessarily contain the symbolic element of a law (giving, exchanging); not to perceptions, but to interpretations which refer to the element of sense; not to affections, but to intellectual feelings of relations, such as the feelings which accompany the use of the logical conjunctions “because,” “although,” “so that,” “therefore,” “now,” etc. (*Cinema 1* 197)

For instance, in Hitchcock’s films, “what matters is not who did the action . . . *the whodunit* [nor] the action itself: [but] the set of actions in which the action and the one who did it are caught.”

Therefore, in *Dial M for Murder*, “the whole aim of the film is only the exposition of a reasoning” (*Cinema 1* 200).

In cinematic terms the voice-over is a framing device that serves “as an effective means of characterization, mediation of the backstory and exposition” (Sommer 398). By means of the voice over, Furtado draws the audience in as André reflects on his predicament. The script varies between

monologs, dialogs, prayers, such as “Guardian angel, meek and mild, look on me, your little child. Bless me now, the day is done. Amen,” and the recurrent intertextual references to a Shakespeare sonnet, which foreshadow the denouement. The voice over also allows for analyzing events, for instance, André recalls the intonation of *Silvia*’s reply, “obrigado você,” in order to ascertain whether or not she is interested in him. Similarly, difference and repetition appears in André’s rehearsal to propose. While the verisimilitude of the scene is promptly undercut as a figment of his imagination, the “real” scene follows. Therefore, the slippage between “imagined” and “real” events remind us of the Derridean notion of iterability. [15]

More importantly, perhaps, in keeping with Deleuze’s description of the action-image, the voice over allows for representing the protagonist’s thought process. However, Furtado resorts to intermediality to complement this representation by contextualizing the condition of contemporary youth. [16] While pastiche plays an integral part in André’s cartoons, which subsequently become animations, it is introduced by way of a collage that covers the walls of his bedroom. Indeed, as per Guy Debord’s dictum, “Images detached from every aspect of life merge into a common stream” (12), the collage includes images of dancing cabaret girls, soccer players, cartoons of prehistoric people, hand-drawn legs and skirts, and pictures of bottles of liquor. While the collage suggests Fredric Jameson’s colonization of the unconscious, it also emphasizes objectification for an eye and a set of huge lips are juxtaposed against a row of cabaret girls’ legs.<sup>8</sup> [17]

André’s creativity is manifested through the drawing of cartoons, which underscores the crime of the talent lost in a dead-end job. Though his cartoons appear to dwell on daily life events they include traumatic ones such the blind rage that led him to hit his classmate Mairoldi (Furtado’s voice) for laughing at the possibility that André’s father would return after a seven-year absence. The screen fills with red, an ambulance appears, and we learn that Mairoldi has lost an eye. Metonymically, after that incident the character that represents André becomes a (one-eyed)

Cyclops. While the teachers and the principal are monsters, a mug shot of Eleanor Roosevelt, with a coat and legs stands for the mother figure.<sup>9</sup> [18] Similarly, Santa Cecilia, the name of building where Sílvia lives, elicits an animated pastiche that depicts the Saint's travails while underscoring her physical resemblance to the female lead.

Intermediality is particularly appropriate because the cartoons are reminiscent of the storyboard of a movie as well as the concept of cognitive frames, which may be described as “culturally formed metaconcepts [that] enable us to interpret . . . reality. . . ; basic orientational aids that help us navigate through our experiential universe, inform our cognitive activities and generally function as preconditions of interpretation” (Wolf 5). For instance, the meaning of the drawing of the parallel lines that resemble a triangle is evident in retrospect, when we learn that André has stuck sharp poles in the patch of sand where Feitosa usually lands when he jumps off the bridge. André deals with Feitosa's threat to kill his mother and girlfriend unless he hands over the stolen money by way of a set of parallel lines. The screen becomes soaked in red. Immediately after, the camera focuses on a sketch of an impaled boy. The fleeting image of Feitosa lying on the sand reinforces the foreshadowing and shows how cartoons propel the action.<sup>10</sup> [19] Moreover, André's submersion in popular culture is underscored by representing his feelings through clichés. For instance, failure is suggested by someone who flattens a cream pie against his face. Similarly, the danger involved in the heist is suggested by a TV image of a man about to jump off a bridge.

Towards the end of the movie Sílvia's voice over, presented as a letter written to her biological father, debunks André's narrative. Sílvia claims to have set André up upon realizing that he was spying on her. At this point, the audience confronts the ambiguity of exclusive disjunction, in other words, since both of these options cannot be true, the viewer feels the tension that results from having to choose from two mutually exclusive interpretations (Dixon 6-8).<sup>11</sup> [20] Moreover, Sílvia's admission of her manipulative behavior, as well as her insistence on murdering Antunes,



conjure up the generic conventions of noir.<sup>12</sup> [21] However, moral turpidity appears in all characters. André sets up the scene of impalement and all of the main characters take part in and witness the explosion set up to eliminate Antunes. Therefore, these scenes conjure up the typically noir's "stylized crime realism" (Holt 25).<sup>13</sup> [22]

But *O Homen*, can also be considered a neonoir film, for the term refers to "texts that refer back to visual or narrative aspects of the noir of the forties and fifties but that are set in the present" (Wager 124). Along these lines, it is important to remember that "neonoir revamps the femme fatale. She is no less an object of obsession and desire, no less dangerous, than she was in the classic period, only this time around she gets away with it. Where the classic femme fatale suffers for her crimes, her revamped counterpart prospers" (Holt 27).<sup>14</sup> [23] The plot reversal subverts the audience's expectations, since sexy Marinês is set up as a foil against homely and wholesome Sílvia.<sup>15</sup> [24]

While the novel *O Cheiro do Ralo* closely follows Lourenço's stream of consciousness, the film sparingly relies on voice over. The omission of interior monologue may be explained in terms of performativity, since showing is more effective than telling (Zeitlin). More importantly, the omissions may have taken place to avoid ambiguity (Seeger 7). Nonetheless, both versions of *O Cheiro do Ralo* focus on the protagonist's thinking process. In each and every one of the exchanges, Lourenço attempts to discover his opponent's weakness. Moreover, he prefers to make his clients suffer than to profit from them. This is particularly apparent in the exchanges regarding the attempted sale of a gold fountain pen, since its elderly owner grovels to the extent of offering to do whatever Lourenço asks. Yet, according to the paratextual material of the film (*The Making of O Cheiro*), some of the most offensive scenes were discarded. For instance, an elderly man with a bad case of Parkinson's disease, whose head bobs up and down, sells a golden cage with two porcelain

birds (the novel mentions an embalmed canary). Lourenço pays him a pittance while his head bobs up and down. Other omitted scenes include a young man who cannot play the flute he intends to sell and a youth who mouths a Roberto Carlos melody as he tries to sell vinyl records of Carlos Gardel. These rather pathetic scenes were included in *The Making of O Cheiro* as an acknowledgement of performances that didn't make the final cut despite the hard work of the respective actors. In these cases, the value of the items should be separated from the dexterity of their owners. Lourenço knows that, but prefers to make their owners bite the dust.

The interpolated stories of *O Cheiro do Ralo* show a pattern of repetition with variation. Lourenço always tries to shortchange his clients.<sup>16</sup> [25] Gambling, which defines Lourenço's obsessive behavior, usually works because his clients are desperate. The few exceptions confirm the rule, since interest in the prosthetic eye, which acquires symbolic value, drives up the price. Whether it stands for the Panopticon, the Father, or himself, Lourenço enjoys flashing it because it is so disturbing. Yet, while most clients take the abuse, others score moral victories. For instance, the owner of the Stradivarius (Morelli) proves to Lourenço that he is the one who smells, since he is the only one to use the bathroom. Following this line of thought, repetition with variation includes the multiple aspects of Lourenço's obsession. Most exchanges include a reference to the stench from the backed up drain. Even the quest for the *bunda* becomes intertwined with the stench as Lourenço acknowledges that it is the only reason for him to eat at a place where the food doesn't agree with him. Finally, once Lourenço acquires the prosthetic eye he flashes it out to test the interlocutor's reaction. Thus, Lourenço wonders whether the waitress is offended by the eye, or his offer. At any rate, Lourenço's compulsive behavior suggests the endless repetition of trauma. Yet, the approaches to trauma differ. According to Freud the traumatized individual repeats the repressed material as a contemporary experience. However, according to Georges Bataille, not only does violent trauma constitute the self, it also integrates individuals and society through erotic or sacrificial violence

(Boulter 154).<sup>17</sup> [26] Considering the sacrificial nature of the ending, and the syncopated rhythm resulting from “narratives of repetition, seriality, and stasis rather than progress” (Boulter 154), *O Cheiro do Ralo* appears to subscribe to Bataille’s thesis.

Deleuze mentions that the notion of the action-image was shaken up after the war. The French philosopher attributes the crisis to a number of factors, such as: “the unsteadiness of the ‘American Dream,’ the new consciousness of minorities, the rise and inflation of images both in the external world and in people’s minds, the influence of the cinema on the news modes of narrative, [and] the crisis of Hollywood and its old genres” (*Cinema 1* 206). The Postmodernist end of metanarratives appears to be at the heart of the paradigm shift, “we hardly believe any longer that a global situation can give rise to an action which is capable of modifying it—no more than we believe that an action can force a situation to disclose itself, even partially” (*Cinema 1* 206). Nonetheless, the five apparent characteristics of the post-war new image, “the dispersive situation, the deliberately weak links, the voyage form, the consciousness of clichés [and] the condemnation of the plot” were forged by Italian neo-realism (*Cinema 1* 210; 212), which would exert a lasting impact on the New Latin American Cinema.

Unlike *O Homen*, *O Cheiro* also partakes of the five characteristics that Deleuze identified in the post-war new image (210-12). Both the novel and the film follow a voyage form, since despite the routine, Lourenço seems to be embarked on a path of moral degradation. Similarly, despite the structure of repetition with variation resulting from the daily exchanges with his clients, their sheer variety allows for dispersive situation, which is all the more evident in the novel given that the strong intertextual component reminds us of the Barthesian death of the author. The paratactical articulation is particularly evident in the anaphoric constructions of the novel, such as “A vida

procura viver./A arte imita a vida./ A vida imita a vida./A arte imita a arte” [ Life tries to live/ Art imitates life/ Life imitates life/ Art imitates art] (18), as well as in the thirteen variations of “esses livros” [those books] at the doctor’s office scene (72-73), and in the summary, “Ele entra ele rasga dinheiro/ Ele entra e sai carregando uma coisa pesada . . . É relógio, alfinete, é faca . . . É o azar, é a sorte/ É a porta que bate” [He comes in and tears up the Money/ He comes in and leaves carrying a heavy item . . . It’s a watch, a pin, it’s a knife . . . It’s luck, it’s fate,/ It’s the slamming door] (138-39). Thus, the paratactical construction of the novel is both experimental and postmodern. By omitting secondary plotlines to construct a linear plot, the movie regresses into the logic of cause-effect of realism. However, both the movie and the novel faithfully depict the protagonist’s progressive moral deterioration.

In addition, the links are weak. As proven by the security agent, the married woman, and the *bunda*/waitress-secretary, the commercial nature of the transactions render the characters dispensable. Furthermore, awareness of clichés appears not only in attitudes to life such as the fatalistic acceptance of events, as proven by “a vida é dura” [life is hard], but more importantly, each and every character becomes a cliché. From the married woman to the helpless retiree, the drug addict to the youth who invokes class attitudes to sell the rake, the characters are set up as archetypes. The plotline, if there is one, hinges on the weak structure of the repeated transactions. Ambivalence regarding the meaning of the drain only weakens the narrative structure.

Though *O Cheiro do Ralo* may be considered a dark comedy, the atmosphere is influenced by the allusions to Raymond Chandler and James Ellroy, who are known for the morally ambiguous characters of their dark crime novels.<sup>18</sup> [27] Indeed, moral turbidity taints most of the characters. Nostalgia recurs in the noir tones of the protagonist’s betrayal and the dangerous fury of his jilted girlfriend (Fabiana Guglielmetti), who re-appears at the warehouse, brandishing a kitchen knife. Other instances, such as a message stuck to the front door with a knife, and a box with a toad and a

message in its sewn up mouth stating, “I was in hell and remembered you,” remind us of the girlfriend’s blind rage.

Yet, the girlfriend’s fury is superseded by the unpredictable behavior of the addict. At first, she is very impressed with the purported eye of Lourenço’s father, who is said to have died in World War II. Though she becomes increasingly emaciated, ragged, and shaky, she usually fights back. For instance, she calls Lourenço on the lie about his father. Later, she accuses Lourenço of forcing her to sell all of her belongings, but he is adamant in setting the record straight, since he has her say that she chose to sell them. Her behavior ranges from telling Lourenço he looks like the guy in an ad to startling him by saying that he has a hole for a face. She also has the habit of entering unannounced. Her unexpected shooting of Lourenço re-establishes her connection with hell, which is sealed as Lourenço dies by the drain.

The nostalgia tone is reinforced by the costumes, since the action could take place anytime from the 1950s on, and perhaps even prior were it not for the iconic references to TV sets.<sup>19</sup> [28] Precisely, the lack of descriptions in the novel, regarding both characters and mise-en-scène, makes the adaptation all the more interesting. The palette ranges from mustard yellow to a sickly green, which connotes fear and the lack of upright moral qualities. By wearing shades of brown Lourenço’s clothes underscore the connotation of the drain. While it’s hard to know how the choices were made to suggest a seedy mise-en-scène the paratextual material (*Making of O Cheiro do Ralo*) mentions a lack of investors.

Considering that the process of adaptation is similar to translation, Charles Fillmore’s system of scenes and frames may be productive, since “in learning a language [people] come to associate certain scenes with certain linguistic frames” (63). Fillmore’s definition of scene includes, “not only visual scenes but familiar kinds of interpersonal transactions, standard scenarios, familiar layouts, institutional structures, enactive experiences, body image; and in general, any kind of coherent

segment, large or small, of human beliefs, actions, experiences, or imaginings” (63). Conversely, by frame Fillmore refers to “any system of linguistic choices—the easiest being a collection of words, but also including choices of grammatical rules or grammatical categories—that can get associated with prototypical instances of scenes” (Fillmore 63). This system works for those who have learned the associations between scenes and frames, which then “*activate* each other” (63). Furthermore, “frames are associated in memory with other frames by virtue of shared linguistic material, and . . . scenes are associated with other scenes by virtue of sameness or similarity” (Fillmore 63).

Following Fillmore, as contemporary Brazilians, both Maturelli, and those in charge of mise-en-scène, share certain social, linguistic, and semantic codes. Therefore, despite Maturelli’s conscious lack of descriptions, they could aim for verisimilitude regarding setting and characters. However, the choice of props may have been subject to chance, since, for instance, the connotations of an antique watch are many. Besides, the film fails to mention that the lid of the watch was broken. In fact, the music it produced in the novel was transferred to a jewelry box in the film.

Furthermore, since the movie is set in Brazil we could expect to see items of African or indigenous nature.<sup>20</sup> [29] Yet, perhaps because it is set in the south, these are absent both from the novel and the movie. Moreover, the movie condenses references to witchcraft and ghosts by way of the frog, which is associated with the destructive forces of African *Ndoké*, aimed at destroying their victims by consuming their psyche and internal life force. Their function is to collect a debt, in this case, the shame of being jilted (McElroy 350-51).<sup>21</sup> [30] Similarly, the novel refers to a kind of voodoo practice whereby a doll stands for the victim, in this case, represented by Lourenço’s picture, “um boneco de madeira . . . todo marcado. Por pontas que alguém lhe enfiou” [a wooden doll . . . marked. By pins that someone stuck (104)]. Though the scene was filmed because the wooden object appears in the paratextual material (Making of *O Cheiro do Ralo*), it was not included in the final cut.

Similarly, the movie avoids the topic of the ghost (“vulto”), that Lourenço appears to have felt at the time he learned his fiancée attempted to commit suicide (21). The novel associates the ghost with hell, “O cheiro que aspiro vem do inferno./ O vulto é o cheiro também. Porra eu estou assustado” [the smell I inhale comes from hell/ The ghost and the smell. Hell, I’m scared] (29). Belief in the ghost is shored up by the maid, who claims to have seen, “o vulto sentado aí no sofá” [the ghost sitting on the sofa] (51). Despite its recurrence” (74), and its association with his fiancée’s long blonde hair (52; 100; 110), Lourenço tries to deal with his fear by resorting to a psychoanalytic argument, “Eu sei o que Freud falou sobre o medo. Sei o que falou dos fantasmas. Os fantasmas são a culpa. Mas eu desconheço esse sentimento” [I know what Freud said about fear. I know what he said about ghosts. Ghosts are our guilt. But I don’t know that feeling] (29). Therefore, the items in Lourenço’s pawnshop inscribe him in a Euro-American ethos, suggested by mannequins, ancient deep diving gear, TV sets, bicycles, paintings, music systems, and Hollywood movie billboards, such as Steve McQueen’s *Twenty Four Hours of Le Mans*.

To conclude, While Furtado resorts to a voice over and to intermediality, the focus on consumerism occludes the film’s generic fluctuation, since the teenager’s personal narrative soon leads to counterfeiting and a bank robbery, both of which trigger neo noir generic conventions. Similarly, Dhália structures the movie in terms of a paratactical juxtaposition of exchanges that follow a pattern of repetition with variation highlighting the protagonist’s train of thought as he devises different strategies to bilk his clients. Thus, we could not but agree with Furtado’s description of the baroque nature of the movie, since it incorporates collage, cartoons, animation, TV scenes, the discourse of advertisement, intertextuality, and an equally rich sound track. While animation enhances characterization, the voice over interpellates the audience into viewing the violent actions as a means to arrive at the road to happiness promised by consumerism. On the

other hand, Dhalia's dark comedy critiques the nihilistic acceptance of instrumental rationality. Lourenço's tragic death reads like a chronicle of a death foretold. As he severs emotional ties, interpersonal exchanges become increasingly commodified and violent. In sum, by offering scathing critiques of contemporary Brazilian mores both *O Homen que Copiava* and *O Cheiro do Ralo* are faithful to the principles of *O Cinema da Retomada*.

## Notes

[1] On the effect of public policy and legislation on audiovisual investment on Brazilian cinema (1990-2003), see Cacilda M. Rêgo.

[2] For information on *O Homen*, see <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0367859/> Also de Oliveira. On *O Cheiro* see <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0489458>. My appreciation to Isis Costa McElroy for lending me the movie.

[3] André is fired for a lapse of attention and not being solicitous enough when the client complains. Baudrillard notes that "without this total ideology of personal service, consumption would not be what it is. It is the warmth of *gratification*, of personal allegiance, which gives it its whole meaning – not *satisfaction* pure and simple. It is in the sun of this solicitude that the modern consumers bask" (*Consumer Society* 159).

[4] *Bunda, bum-bum*, buttocks, from "*mbunda*," in Kikongo & Kimbundo. My appreciation to Isis McElroy for the etymology and sources. For a summary on the Brazilian fixation with *bundas*, see Kulic (70-71). On the impact of judgments about female attractiveness resulting from body mass and ratio, see Devendra Singh. On the relationship between the body, sexuality and gender, see Mirian Goldenberg (62; 68). Finally, on beauty and race in Brazil, see Alexander Edmonds.

[5] For a psychoanalytical approach to the relationship between money and feces, see Ernest Bornemann.

[6] For a historical approach to the condemnation of usury see Arthur Vermeersch. The reference to the eye includes George Bataille's *Story of an Eye*.

[7] See "The Making of *O Cheiro do Ralo*" in the Extras section of the DVD.

[8] Mauro dos Prazeres was an engineer that became a prized graphic artist (78).

[9] For a comparison between *O Cheiro do Ralo* and Sidney Lumet's *The Pawnbroker* (1965), and specifically Rod Steiger's acting vis-à-vis la de Selton Mello's see Luiz Carlos Mortem's blog



<[http://blog.estadao.com.br/blog/merten/?title=lembrancas\\_de\\_rod\\_steiger](http://blog.estadao.com.br/blog/merten/?title=lembrancas_de_rod_steiger) accessed on July 20, 2009.>

[10] Even though Lourenço is diegetically dead, the movie ends with a shot of the *bunda* from his point of view, after which the credits roll. Regarding Lourenço's abuse of the drug addict, the movie elides his most humiliating order, "pega um pouco de papel no banheiro. E vem me limpar" [get some toilet paper from the bathroom and come clean me] (67).

[11] The modern construction of identity, which depended on a career path with "clearly defined stages [determined by] working skills [and] the site of employment" is disappearing not only because jobs for life are confined to "a few old industries [and] professions [which] are rapidly shrinking in number" but more importantly because "the catchword 'flexibility' [conceals the fact that] new vacancies tend to be fixed term, until further notice and part time" (Bauman, *Work* 27). Bauman stresses that poverty is also defined as "a social and psychological condition, [which generates feelings of] distress, agony and self-mortification, [that may turn into] resentment and aggravation, [as well as into] violent acts [due to the] inability to abide . . . by the standards of . . . life practiced by any given society" (*Work* 37).

[12] Joseph Raz deconstructs the notion of instrumental rationality, which "consists in the proper functioning of some of the mental processes leading to formation of beliefs and intentions" (24). Raz argues: "there is no *distinctive* form of rationality or of normativity that merits the name instrumental rationality or normativity. In particular there is no specific form of rationality or of normativity that concerns the relations between means and ends. Philosophers fostered a myth of instrumental rationality, sometimes taking it to be the only, sometimes the simplest and clearest type of practical rationality or of normativity" (24).

[13] "Indeed, the society of consumers is perhaps the only society in human history to promise happiness in *earthly life*, and happiness *here and now* and in every successive 'now'; in short, an *instant* and *perpetual* happiness" (Bauman, *Consuming Life* 44).

[14] Lourenço vents his anger at an old man attempting to sell a pen. He beats him mercilessly, and keeps kicking him even on the floor. Then, he plants a gun and tells the security officer that the victim attempted to rob him. Though the guard feels sorry for the old man Lourenço walks away.

[15] As Baudrillard notes, "advertising plays a leading role" insofar as "monopoly capitalism has shifted the locus of control away from production into consumption, with control over demand and socialization by the code" (1975, 127-28 in Jhally 12).

[16] André, on the other hand, only purchases drawing paper and a powerful telescope.

[17] "Every sign, linguistic or nonlinguistic, spoken or written (in the usual sense of this opposition), as a small or large unity, can be *cited*, put between quotation marks; thereby it can break with every given context, and engender infinitely new contexts in an absolutely nonsaturable fashion" (Derrida, *Margins* 320).

[18] According to Postman, "new technologies alter our interests, symbols and nature of community" (20, in Semali and Pailliotet 115).

[19] Jameson argues that, “the disappearance of the individual subject, along with its formal consequence, the increasing unavailability of the personal *style*, engenders the well-nigh universal practice today of what may be called pastiche” (64). Jameson continues, “pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody’s ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse [ . . . ] Pastiche is thus blank parody” (65). Regarding the colonization of the unconscious, Jameson argues, “distance in general (including ‘critical distance’ in particular) has been very precisely abolished in the new space of postmodernism. We are submerged in its henceforth filled and suffused volumes to the point where our now postmodern bodies are bereft of spatial coordinates and practically (let alone theoretically) incapable of distantiation; meanwhile, it has already been observed how the prodigious new expansion of multinational capital ends up penetrating and colonizing those very pre-capitalist enclaves (Nature and the unconscious) which offered extraterritorial and Archimedean footholds for critical effectivity” (87; Also in Jameson’s *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* 48-49).

[20] Collage also appears in the representation of dollar bills graced with pictures of Mao Tse-Tung and Marilyn Monroe. On the origin of simulacra, Baudrillard argues:

the age of simulation thus begins with a liquidation of all referentials--worse: by their artificial resurrection in systems of signs, a more ductile material than meaning, in that it lends itself to all systems of equivalence, all binary oppositions and all combinatory algebra. It is no longer a question of imitation, nor of reduplication, nor even of parody. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself, that is, an operation to deter every real process by its operational double, a metastable, programmatic, perfect descriptive machine which provides all the signs of the real and short circuits all of its vicissitudes. (*Simulations* 4)

[21] Finally, even experimental takes such as the parallel takes of Sílvia’s bedroom, which are naturalized as hinging on the angles of the wardrobe mirrors facing the window of Sílvia’s room, may be read as intertextual allusions to the final mirror scene in Orson Welles’s *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947).

[22] Dixon illustrates “the impulse to choose and the arrest of that impulse by the realization of the equitenability of mutual exclusives” by referring to Jorge Luis Borges’ “El sur,” since the text allows for two readings that cancel each other out (6-8).

[23] According to Jason Holt, “noir is often characterized in terms of its bleakly existential tone, cynically pessimistic mood, stylistic elements inherited from German expressionism (low-key lighting, deep focus, subjective camera shots, canted angles, and so on), and stories and narrative patterns adapted from American hard-boiled fiction” (24).

[24] James Naremore states that “the European auteurs of the 1960s and 1970s [Godard, Fassbinder, Truffaut, Wenders], who helped create the idea of film noir, . . . grounded their work in allusion and hypertextuality rather than in a straightforward attempt to keep a formula alive. Thus, neo-noir emerged during a “renaissance of the European art film,” influenced by the French and German New Waves as well as the Italian tradition of philosophical noir (202-03). Conversely, Tom Conley attributes the 1970s rebirth of noir to economics, “money, a new network of distribution, competition, the exponential growth of the recording apparatus in everyday life, and increased pace of production are the unstated but ubiquitous influences that account for its revival” (203).

[25] For a current film noir, in which the femme fatale is faithful to her role and succeeds in being evil, see Ricardo Darín's *La señal*, based on Eduardo Mignona's homonymous novel. The success of the neo noir femme fatale has been attributed to the audience. Indeed, Jans Wager notes, "the shock of surprise, the survival of a type of woman the cinemagoer has seen destroyed in countless narratives, might be especially pleasurable for a female spectator and might even be designed with her in mind" (133).

[26] Although race relations are not addressed, André states that Marînes is out of his ken.

[27] On the gambler's behavior, see Hallowell and Grace.

[28] See Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Quoted by Buolter.

[29] In cinematic terms the voice-over is a framing device that serves "as an effective means of characterization, mediation of the backstory and exposition" (Sommer 398).

[30] Indeed, in the Extras section of the DVD there is a reference to the ageless aura of Lourenço's classic clothes, which do not refer back to a specific period, but rather to the second half of the Twentieth Century.

[31] There are very few black characters in the film. One of them sells the silver cutlery, and the other one offers the musical box.

[32] Costa McElroy notes that the *Jagas* used frogs and snakes as protection against spirits transformed into animals that came to eat them. A witch can take animal shapes (birds, snakes, bats) to perform a "*trabalho de esquerda*," [sinister magic"]. In Brazil there is also the expression *cobra-mandada*, "sent snake." Anthropologist Karl von den Steinen mentions the case of a "sent-frog" which took place in 1887. The frog leaped from one community to the other, taking poison, or "magic" in a small white pouch to kill someone. In other words, a *Ndoki* either used a frog or became one to perform magic (350-51).

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<sup>1</sup> For information on *O Homen*, see <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0367859/> Also de Oliveira. On *O Cheiro* see <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0489458>. My appreciation to Isis Costa McElroy for lending me the movie.

<sup>2</sup> *Bunda, bum-bum*, buttocks, from “*mbunda*,” in Kikongo & Kimbundo. My appreciation to Isis McElroy for the etymology and sources. For a summary on the Brazilian fixation with *bundas*, see Kulic (70-71). On the impact of judgments about female attractiveness resulting from body mass and ratio, see Devendra Singh. On the relationship between the body, sexuality and gender, see Mirian Goldenberg (62; 68). Finally, on beauty and race in Brazil, see Alexander Edmonds.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Raz deconstructs the notion of instrumental rationality, which “consists in the proper functioning of some of the mental processes leading to formation of beliefs and intentions” (24). Raz argues: “there is no *distinctive* form of rationality or of normativity that merits the name instrumental rationality or normativity. In particular there is no specific form of rationality or of normativity that concerns the relations between means and ends. Philosophers fostered a myth of instrumental rationality, sometimes taking it to be the only, sometimes the simplest and clearest type of practical rationality or of normativity” (24).

<sup>4</sup> “Indeed, the society of consumers is perhaps the only society in human history to promise happiness in *earthly life*, and happiness *here and now* and in every successive ‘now’; in short, an *instant* and *perpetual* happiness” (Bauman, *Consuming Life* 44).

<sup>5</sup> Lourenço vents his anger at an old man attempting to sell a pen. He beats him mercilessly, and keeps kicking him even on the floor. Then, he plants a gun and tells the security officer that the victim attempted to rob him. Though the guard feels sorry for the old man Lourenço walks away.

<sup>6</sup> As Baudrillard notes, “advertising plays a leading role” insofar as “monopoly capitalism has shifted the locus of control away from production into consumption, with control over demand and socialization by the code” (1975, 127-28 in Jhally 12).

<sup>7</sup> André, on the other hand, only purchases drawing paper and a powerful telescope.

<sup>8</sup> Jameson argues that, “the disappearance of the individual subject, along with its formal consequence, the increasing unavailability of the personal *style*, engenders the well-nigh universal practice today of what may be called pastiche” (64). Jameson continues, “pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody’s ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse [. . .] Pastiche is thus blank parody” (65). Regarding the colonization of the unconscious, Jameson argues, “distance in general (including ‘critical distance’ in particular) has been very precisely abolished in the new space of postmodernism. We are submerged in its henceforth filled and suffused volumes to the point where our now postmodern bodies are bereft of spatial coordinates and practically (let alone theoretically) incapable of distantiating; meanwhile, it has already been observed how the prodigious new expansion of multinational capital ends up penetrating and colonizing those very pre-capitalist enclaves (Nature and the unconscious) which offered extraterritorial and Archimedean footholds for critical effectivity” (87; Also in Jameson’s *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* 48-49).

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<sup>9</sup> Collage also appears in the representation of dollar bills graced with pictures of Mao Tse-Tung and Marilyn Monroe. On the origin of simulacra, Baudrillard argues:

the age of simulation thus begins with a liquidation of all referentials--worse: by their artificial resurrection in systems of signs, a more ductile material than meaning, in that it lends itself to all systems of equivalence, all binary oppositions and all combinatory algebra. It is no longer a question of imitation, nor of reduplication, nor even of parody. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself, that is, an operation to deter every real process by its operational double, a metastable, programmatic, perfect descriptive machine which provides all the signs of the real and short circuits all of its vicissitudes. (*Simulations* 4)

<sup>10</sup> Finally, even experimental takes such as the parallel takes of *Silvia's* bedroom, which are naturalized as hinging on the angles of the wardrobe mirrors facing the window of *Silvia's* room, may be read as intertextual allusions to the final mirror scene in Orson Welles's *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947).

<sup>11</sup> Dixon illustrates "the impulse to choose and the arrest of that impulse by the realization of the equitenability of mutual exclusives" by referring to Jorge Luis Borges' "El sur," since the text allows for two readings that cancel each other out (6-8).

<sup>12</sup> According to Jason Holt, "noir is often characterized in terms of its bleakly existential tone, cynically pessimistic mood, stylistic elements inherited from German expressionism (low-key lighting, deep focus, subjective camera shots, canted angles, and so on), and stories and narrative patterns adapted from American hard-boiled fiction" (24).

<sup>13</sup> James Naremore states that "the European auteurs of the 1960s and 1970s [Godard, Fassbinder, Truffaut, Wenders], who helped create the idea of film noir, . . . grounded their work in allusion and hypertextuality rather than in a straightforward attempt to keep a formula alive. Thus, neo-noir emerged during a "renaissance of the European art film," influenced by the French and German New Waves as well as the Italian tradition of philosophical noir (202-03). Conversely, Tom Conley attributes the 1970s rebirth of noir to economics, "money, a new network of distribution, competition, the exponential growth of the recording apparatus in everyday life, and increased pace of production are the unstated but ubiquitous influences that account for its revival" (203).

<sup>14</sup> For a current film noir, in which the femme fatale is faithful to her role and succeeds in being evil, see Ricardo Darín's *La señal*, based on Eduardo Mignona's homonymous novel. The success of the neonoir femme fatale has been attributed to the audience. Indeed, Jans Wager notes, "the shock of surprise, the survival of a type of woman the cinemagoer has seen destroyed in countless narratives, might be especially pleasurable for a female spectator and might even be designed with her in mind" (133).

<sup>15</sup> Although race relations are not addressed, André states that *Marínes* is out of his ken.

<sup>16</sup> On the gambler's behavior, see Hollowell and Grace.



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<sup>17</sup> See Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Quoted by Buolter.

<sup>18</sup> In cinematic terms the voice-over is a framing device that serves "as an effective means of characterization, mediation of the backstory and exposition" (Sommer 398).

<sup>19</sup> Indeed, in the Extras section of the DVD there is a reference to the ageless aura of Lourenço's classic clothes, which do not refer back to a specific period, but rather to the second half of the Twentieth Century.

<sup>20</sup> There are very few black characters in the film. One of them sells the silver cutlery, and the other one offers the musical box.

<sup>21</sup> Costa McElroy notes that the *Jagas* used frogs and snakes as protection against spirits transformed into animals that came to eat them. A witch can take animal shapes (birds, snakes, bats) to perform a "*trabalho de esquerda*," [sinister magic"]. In Brazil there is also the expression *cobra-mandada*, "sent snake." Anthropologist Karl von den Steinen mentions the case of a "sent-frog" which took place in 1887. The frog leaped from one community to the other, taking poison, or "magic" in a small white pouch to kill someone. In other words, a *Ndoki* either used a frog or became one to perform magic (350-51).