

## Mariano Klautau Filho

*Nada levarei quando morrer, aqueles que mim deve cobrarei no inferno* (Nothing I will take when I die those who owe me money I will charge in hell), a film by Miguel Rio Branco

Translated by Ana Carolina Azevedo

**Abstract:** *Nada levarei quando morrer, aqueles que mim deve cobrarei no inferno* (Nothing I will take when I die those who owe me money I will charge in hell), produced by Miguel Rio Branco in 1981 and captured in 16mm film in 1979 is a raid on the Community of Maciel, prostitution district in the neighborhood of Pelourinho in Salvador, Bahia. The street, the brothels, the architecture in ruins and, in particular, women and their scars make up a human landscape of social and erotic tension. The film is the document of a lived experience of Brazilian reality and an exercise on the picture, the body and the pose. The moving image converses with still images, noises and music building a space of approximation and confrontation with the place in which the dynamic between photo and cinema is the poetry of the artist and his experience in the Decade of 1980.

**Keywords:** Film. Photography. Miguel Rio Branco. Portrait. Pelourinho.

Between 1978 and 1981, the work of the artist Miguel Rio Branco<sup>1</sup> began in fact to have more visibility. With that, it caught the attention of critics who wrote for the newspapers in which reviews attested at the time the impact that his photos have provoked in viewers. Two significant works synthesize his production in that period and explain his more frequent arrival on the circuit of exhibitions: the 1978's individual *Negativo sujo* (*Dirty negative*) and 1980's *Nada levarei quando morrer aqueles que mim deve cobrarei no inferno* (*Nothing I will take when I die those who owe me money I will charge in hell*), of 1980.

The first exhibit, presented at the Parque Lage in Rio and then at MASP, São Paulo, brought together approximately 300 images arranged in blocks and mounted on several sheets of *carne seca* (dry meat) paper, of the “wrapping paper” kind, which hung from the ceiling.

\* This text is a cut-down version of part of chapter two of *Miguel Rio Branco: imaterialidades do objeto, materialidades da imagem* (*Miguel Rio Branco: imaterialidades, material elements characteristic of the image*) thesis, defended in 2015 in the graduate program in Visual Arts from the School of Communication and Arts of the University of São Paulo – ECA/USP.

1. Miguel Rio Branco was born 1947 in the Canary Islands. Of Brazilian family, he always lived and performed in Brazil. He lived for short periods of his training and professional experience in Europe and USA. He currently lives in the State of Rio de Janeiro.

Expanded precariously in small format, the photos looked more like working copies, and were juxtaposed to form several groups of images. The viewer circulated among the pieces as nothing was on the walls. In the images, mixed scenes, characters and environments of the Brazilian interior, especially in the Northeast: miners, prostitutes, farmers, slaughterhouses, bars, cinema doors. Situations of everyday life permeated by work and leisure.

The second, mounted in the Gallery Fotoptica, São Paulo, and then in Funarte's Gallery of Photography, Rio de Janeiro, showed for the first time in the artist's career a set of images held in Maciel, prostitution district in the neighborhood of Pelourinho in Salvador, in 1979, period in which Rio Branco was frequently there. This is the first time that the artist adheres so emphatically to the intensity of color in his work, which would deeply mark his poetic from that moment on. These pictures show an unusual proximity with the characters of the neighborhood, especially the women, whose scars take the foreground of the image, or mingle with pictures of bodies and buildings in ruins of the secular townhouses. The social experience of the artist breaks the boundary of a factual photography, invades the internal environments of brothels and constructs an intimacy with both the events of the streets and what happens in the prostitutes' bedrooms.

As part of the show, Rio Branco featured an audiovisual with a larger set of images and a soundtrack with romantic songs. Everything was captured in chrome films whose vividness of colors pulled the shades of red, brown and yellow and lent to the bodies and a dramatic and erotic character. In the same period, he also captured on film the daily life of the neighborhood and ended in the 1981 movie in which he inserts in the narrative various images from the photo shoot<sup>2</sup>. Rio Branco's filmic work received, in 1982, the prize of the international critics of the XI Festival of Documentaries and Short Films of Lille in France, in addition to Best Picture at the Festival de Brasília in 1981. From then on the film circulated by many festivals and gradually gained, decades later, the exhibition spaces for visual arts shows, becoming one of the most important works of the artist's career.<sup>3</sup>

2. Rio Branco, Miguel. *Nada levarei quando morrer aqueles que mim deve cobrarei no inferno* (*Nothing I will take when I die those who owe me money I will charge in hell*). Director: Miguel Rio Branco. Rio de Janeiro, 1981. 20 min, son., color, 16 mm.

3. The movie ranked Visual Arts spaces insofar as Rio Branco began to concentrate more consistently to the exhibitions from 1990 onwards. The work appears regularly in the pavilion dedicated to the artist in Inhotim, Minas Gerais, belongs to the collection of the MOMA in New York and participated in the 29th Biennial of São Paulo, in 2010, and of the individual *Ponto cego* in Porto Alegre, in 2012, among others. The film can be accessed on the official website of the artist: [www.miguelriobranco.com.br](http://www.miguelriobranco.com.br), but it is recommended that it is seen in the form of exhibition room or cinema projection. This analysis is guided by the immersive and necessary contact allowed such forms.

The film *Nothing I will take when I die those who owe me money I will charge in hell* is an attentive journey through the streets, alleys, bars and rooms of the Maciel community, where the moving image absorbs, significantly, the still images extracted from the set photographed in chrome. The film amasses the tension previously built in the exhibit and advances in audiovisual experiments. In this sense, it becomes a hybrid, whose tension is manifested in different ways, at least three: the social content, the support plan and the soundscape, body where the songs are.

It is not the intention of this study to identify these three aspects as separate instances. However, it could not fail to mention that, to some extent, the social content (as a synonym for documentary photography) was what attracted immediate critical attention, whereas the set formed by exposure, audiovisual and film. Not forgetting the legitimate character of the will and the impulse of the artist himself dedicated to human issues, observed in his work throughout the previous decade.<sup>4</sup>

His adhesion to photography interested in social experience was openly stimulated by the critical reviews of Frederico Morais, Wilson Coutinho, Roberto Pontual, Moracy de Oliveira, among other critics who were attentive to photographic production between 1970 and 1980. Morais was perhaps the most emphatic in that period. When making an assessment on the quality of the exhibitions which occurred in July 1980, in Rio de Janeiro, he is very clear on his opinion about photography: “[...] I'm a radical, what I care about, in it, is the exhibition value, that is, the real value. Against all the formalism of the eye or the lab, I'm interested in the power of social denunciation, as document, as a tool for questioning power”<sup>5</sup>

The circumstance was suitable for the reception of Rio Branco's work that, on the one hand, discussed interference of the support in the documental essay logic and, on the other hand, dived in the social reality of the interior of the country (Northeast in *Dirty negative*) and the daily life of a great Brazilian city (Maciel, Pelourinho, Salvador in *Nothing I will take...*).

4. It is important to note that in the 1970s, the artist has developed several projects on audiovisual and cinema as a director, still photographer and cinematographer, including experimental works in Super 8 film.

5. “In terms of photography I'm a radical, what I care about, in it, is the exhibition value, that is, the real value. Against all the formalism of the eye or the lab, I'm interested in the power of social denunciation, as document, as a tool for questioning power. That is, I'm more interested in the 'design' of the photo, and less in the 'painting'. Therefore, in the shows cited, the formalism of Osmar Villar tends to empty preciousness, which neither the alibi of ecology and being green justifies, while the interest in that panel-complaint about Cidade de Deus, by Hugo Denizart, grows. With a setup similar to that of Miguel Rio Branco, last year at the school of Visual Arts, Denizart brought together multiple photos of the same reality taken as reference for the study of social violence.” (Morais, 1980).

The film images of Rio Branco are impressive, in fact, because of the close relationship, “raw”, almost “natural”, with which the camera invades a social environment on the fringes of economic power and the material quality of life of the more financially privileged classes. The impact on the spectator appears to be stronger, first, by the impression of reality that the moving image can cause. The inhabitants of Maciel, the prostitute, the customers, the children on the street, the dogs on the sidewalks, seen previously on static images in the gallery, are suddenly there, reappear moving as real beings, extracted from an existing daily life.

The music helps us enter smoothly into the atmosphere of the neighborhood on an average day, as well as introduces us to the aesthetic environment of the work. The warm tone of the colors accents the amber of the last hours of the afternoon, and the apparent calm of the first scenes is strongly linked to a certain state of lethargy, bloating in the body of those who are not occupied by the productive and economic order of the work. The blue sky appears behind windows castings of almost abandoned mansions, and install, very briefly, in the introduction to the film, a nostalgic atmosphere accentuated by the instrumental recording of *Rosa*, *Pixinguinha*, and *Nada além*, Custódio Mesquita and Mario Lago.

The figure of an old black man wearing white, with hat and standing on a hillside, which resembles composer Cartola, or even Pixinguinha, actually embodies, in the home stretch of the film, a symbol of the cultural refinement of the Brazilian identity. It is the representation of an era when miscegenation was at the junction of the African musical heritage and a tendency to melancholy embodied in the melodic sophistication of musicians born in the cradles of samba, popular neighborhoods of Brazilian cities between the years 1920 and 1940.

No wonder the instrumental version of *Rosa*, chosen for the opening, is played by Ivanildo Sax de Ouro (Golden Sax), popular musician, who began his career in the music industry the year of 1979. Ivanildo's versions are also an approximation of the sophisticated heritage of songs with a simplicity in the arrangements that made him well-known for radio broadcast; consequently, the popular strata listened to him quite often. Rio Branco said that the songs chosen for the movie came out basically the repertoire that he used to listen to in the environment of Maciel. Such a relationship between music and image, between soundscape and photographed character, was cleverly incorporated into film work, working as a score of the rhythm of the images. The construction of the

identity of those real people captured by the film is linked to the Organization of sounds and music in the body of the work.

Ivanildo's track connects *Rosa* with *Nada além*, another well-known song. Both are bundled together in a track, in the style of a *pout-pourri*, by a popular significant empathy: both became big hits in the voice of Orlando Silva. All this cultural landscape evoked by music (such as sign of the roots of the identity of a people) creates an important frame for the images. And, to the extent that they succeeding – sound, noise, music, and moving and still images –, the film creates a rhythm that confronts heritage, history, decay and social life.

In the first two minutes, we see the meeting between the melodic and nostalgic music and the abandonment of the facades of the mansions and their balconies with clothes laid out to dry. This contrast makes a peaceful synthesis in the image of the "preto velho" ("black old man", popular figure of the Brazilian mythos, who represents the wise old slaves) elegantly dressed in the style of a samba composer. However, this brief introduction is a concealment, ironic in relation to Bahia's picturesque environment; the representation of false exuberance and tranquility of an image painted or photographed soberly, Verger style. It is an illusion, because the nostalgic atmosphere is quickly broken by a cappella voice, which sings the fragment of a sentence: "*Na Bahia, eu me fiz (quis) bem, na Bahia...*" ("In Bahia, I made myself (wanted) well, in Bahia..."), followed by a beat that accompanies the subjective camera, moving through an alley.

We leave the synthesis of a Cartola/Waltz of Pixinguinha, cross the alley and crash in an open street with cars and men playing soccer, when it arises, in the narrative, the figure of a black man sitting in a doorway. It's no longer a black man in elegant garments like the previous one. He seems to be a homeless man, because of his wild aspect; wearing only shorts, with tousled hair and a focused expression, the man is sitting and gently rocking his crossed legs.

The moving camera focuses for a few seconds this man and synchronizes the rhythm of his swinging legs to the cadence of a Bob Marley reggae. While the old man of the waltz resembled Cartola's elegance, this new character captured by Rio Branco in a Jamaican melody seems to have emerged from a photo by Cristiano Jr. As a kind of "runaway" or "freed black slave" from the 19th century, all alone in the world, in the social misery in the late 1970s this black figure takes us to the acute and premonitory reflection, apparently distant, of Joaquim Nabuco:

After the last slaves are taken away from the sinister power that represents to the black people the curse of the color, there will still be a need to chop through a virile and serious education the slow layering of 300 years of captivity, that is, of despotism, superstition and ignorance. The natural process by which slavery fossilized in its molds the exuberant vitality of our people lasted for the entire period of growth, and while the nation is not aware that it is essential to adapt to freedom each of the devices of its system which slavery appropriated, slavery's work will go on, even when there are no more slaves. (Nabuco, 2011, p. 12).

In motion, the camera points out that character in parts: legs crossed, the profile of the body, the face in close-up (Figure 1). He will appear briefly in other situations throughout the film, but here his figure also works as an ellipse between the official and historical slavery and marginal presence its mestizo descendant occupies: the movie chains a sequence of photographs of portraits, some partially known for exhibitions and audiovisuals displayed previously. The presence of a black community living in the townhouses in precarious conditions that were once the modern colonial city of the European elite becomes more evident. The range of Nabuco's vivid words on the huge shadow of slavery extending in time becomes clear, a century later, in the Community of Maciel.<sup>6</sup>

It is through the chaining of still images, interspersed by the free movement of camera, that Rio Branco emphasizes the interest in portraiture in its various possibilities: using different frameworks, he captures individual or group images, such as women with children on his lap, men posing in front of the taverns, ladies displaying their jewelry and painted nails, close-ups of faces and body parts, and details, such as the work permit tucked in a shirt pocket. The cutting and framing choices indicate a physical proximity to the identity of the other. Many are in an honest and erotic relationship with the camera, displaying their looks, their objects, their children, their bodies, their clothes (Figure 2).

Once again the song is present as social sign and accentuates the political aspect of the work. The relationship between the black person of the streets, like a slave, and the subsequent series of portraits gets, with Bob Marley's *Survival*, the idea of a black Brazilian nation in dialogue with the global identity, linked to Africa and Jamaica. The pictures in sequence form a kind of family album of the racial identity of the country, on the sidelines of its economic power. Marley's music belongs to an album that draws attention to the emancipation and the survivability of the black community internationally.

6. The book *O Abolicionismo (The Abolitionism)* by Joaquim Nabuco was released in 1883.

Released in that year of 1979, as well as Ivanildo's recording, *Survival* strengthens, in the explicit in-betweens of Rio Branco's film sequence, Brazil's place in the unification of the African countries and their political independence movements. However, what the images evoke is a set of contradictions observed between black communities as free and independent Nations. In the specific case of the universe of Maciel, we can see a black Brazil still enslaved by the social misery, but stating its survival, highlighted in Marley's song.

How can you be sitting there  
telling me that you care  
That you care  
When everytime I look around  
The people suffer in suffering  
In everywhere, in everywhere

Na-Na-Na-Na  
We're the survivors  
Yes, the black survival

I tell you what  
Some people got everything  
Some people got nothing  
Some people got hopes & dreams  
Some people got on aim it seems

Na-Na-Na-Na  
We're the survivors; yes the black  
Survival<sup>7</sup>

Despite the work to emphasize a social environment on the outskirts of the cities, a precarious material life and the scenery of ruins in which the architecture of the neighborhood is, there is no trace of self-pity in the expression of the characters. What marks much of the film, when people are the center of the frame, are gestures for the camera. Some of seduction, as the open lips of the girl in a V-neck, or the close-up on a man smoking a cigarette. Others, devoid of pose, show honest and to some extent spontaneous smiles. In other images, the pose is expression, as that of the group of three boys who display watches and sunglasses, or the man in the white shirt, hands on hips.

In this respect, the attitude of the body in the images shows a proximity space between the photographed and the photographer. Such space, far from being a reliever, opens the possibility for Rio

Branco to reach, in the poetics of film, the most central components of his portraiture: the skin, drives, sexual energy. The burden of a nation's political survivor and mestizo, highlighted by the speech from the *reggae*, meets in the body a possible translation. The sequence of still photographs is broken by moving images and the replacement of the social discourse of Bob Marley, by unbridled and "alienating" romanticism of a song by Roberto Carlos.

Why do I drag myself at your feet?  
Why do I give myself so much?  
And why don't I ask for something in return?

[...] Why do I keep quiet?  
While you tell me  
Words that hurt me  
For things I never did.

[...] But it turns out that I  
I can't live without you  
Sometimes I rant,  
I despair, why?  
You're more than a problem  
It's something crazy  
But I always end up in your arms  
Whenever you want<sup>8</sup>

The song *Desabafo*, released the same year as that of Marley, takes the viewer to a new sequence of images, in which the everyday street blends with the action in motion of some characters. The scene of a couple who appears dancing in a bar is unique. A little shy, but proud of their romance, they flirt with the camera, showing off curiously discreetly. Apparently, they dance a *reggae* recorded in the direct sound of the film, but the song of Roberto and Erasmo Carlos – inserted on the track – overlaps to the sound environment and dominates the narrative.

The oscillation between sound and added track pervades the whole movie and reveals, in many ways, the tensions that characterize the complexity of work. The *batuque* mentioned earlier, heard in the subjective camera moment through the alley, is attracting direct sound that merges with the sound of the street: voices, cars, laughter, conversations. It is this rapid soundscape that presents itself to the mixture to Marley's *reggae*. *Reggae* arises at this point as a political flag of black emancipation to then be swallowed/engulfed by the feeling of unconditional passion of Brazilian romantic music.

7. Marley, Bob; The Wailers. We are survival. In: *Survival*. [S.l.]: Tuff Gong; Island Records, 1979. 1 sound disc (ca. 45 min), 33 1/3 rpm, stereo, 12 in.

8. Carlos, Roberto; Carlos; Erasmo. Desabafo. (Rant.) In: Carlos, Roberto. *Roberto Carlos*. [S.l.]: CBS, 1979. 1 sound disc (ca. 39 min), 33 1/3 rpm, stereo, 12 in.

To the extent that the songs of passion advance by filmic narrative, the expression of the body and the sex becomes more explicit as metaphor for identity and personal history. The passing from Bob Marley to Roberto Carlos is a collection of portraits of African nationality for romantic and carnal instincts, aspects that may be related to the behavior of the Brazilian culture. However, if there is the remnant of an identity (national, African or black), it seems to dissolve in the erotic subject, when the film dives into a layer below: women undress, showing their breasts, fix their eyes on camera, jerk off, have sex and moan for the *voyeur/camera/artist* who, at the time of the event, comes very close to the body and skin. The look and the way one of them moves to the camera, with her breasts on display, are quite provocative. The track that leads this moment is even more popular and passionate: *O grande amor da minha vida* (*The great love of my life*), by Bartô Galeno from Paraíba, one of the exponents of romantic Brazilian songwriting:

Love, you don't know how much I am suffering  
 Love, in your absence, loneliness scares me  
 Love, I couldn't like anyone else  
 Because you're the love of my life  
 If I could be with you right now, my love.  
 At this time I would not be a sufferer  
 I would be the happiest man in the world<sup>9</sup>

The lyrics of songs function as narrative threads of life of those women. It should be noted that both songs, by Roberto Carlos and by Galeno, narrate how men are dependant on love. These are the men who have been abandoned by women or who are subjugated to them. These micro-stories suggested by the songs in the film give power to the figure of women and undermine possible conclusive readings about the job. Such female empowerment is in the voice and the lyrics from the male universe: "Why do I drag myself at your feet?", "[...] I always end up in your arms whenever you want," says Roberto's song. And Bartô Galeno speaks more explicitly, as subject of the lyrics is male: "Love, you don't know how much I am suffering [...]", "[...] in your absence, loneliness scares me", "[...] If I could be with you right now [...] I wouldn't be a sufferer/I would be the happiest man in the world".

The subjugation of man to woman, clearly registered in the songs that make up the soundtrack of the film, takes the work away from the easily acceptable commonplace of unilateral relationship

of power of man over woman, or of the camera over the pictured. Certainly we think that every relationship between camera and object, photographer and pictured is a question of power. However, more than that, photographer and photographed – taking into account the vast semiotic field of the picture – establish a double play, which oscillates between the identification and identity, as tells us Fabris (2004). And even triple, we could say: between the representation of the subject depicted, the self-representation of the photographer and the multiple identities that can build such relationship.

We understand that Rio Branco's camera, addressed to the inhabitants of Maciel, chose, in particular, women and their bodies, in an attitude of male desire. However, this relationship of desire, domain, approximation, pervaded by an erotic power, thwarts the male subject of his place of honor. The urge installed in the work is related to all the involvement that the artist had with the place. The skins and scars are at all times being associated/potiated with images of historic ruins of a decaying architecture, a symbol of white civilization that didn't work, represented in that space for the buildings built by the settlers.

The edified scenario of Maciel, registered that year of 1979, if we look in a macro perspective, is a type of scar in the urban fabric of the city's social history, the presence of a class without material resources and marked by the activity of prostitution. There was, above all, a desire to know the other, to enter territory that wasn't his, to walk though the interiors of the neighborhood.

Being with the prostitutes on the balcony of a house and seeing the street from above, from other perspectives and views (photographs and moving sequences attest to this) is the conquest of privileged territories that did not belong to him. The search for these contacts and conquests was born of a sensuous instinct with character steeped in the whole of his work, and that, in Pelourinho, marks the period that installed a poetic discovery. The sensual behavior with the concrete reality carries all the contradictions based on the tension of the lived world, by the experience of the phenomenon. The contradictions that built the Pelourinho work are underlined by the political and erotic tensions, conflicting at times; in other moments, complementary.

It was in 1979 that I talked to the women of the Pelourinho, in Salvador, Bahia, the most. At this time, Pelourinho was not a place of heavy prostitution as we find now in several places: it was the low-light district mixed with that fallen landmark. It were their scars with the opened scars of the place. It was hard for them, who suffered a lot, they were massacred and marked. Nevertheless,

9. Galeno, Bartô. *O grande amor da minha vida*. (*The great love of my life*). In: *No toca-fita do meu carro*. [S.l.]: Tapeçar, 1978. 1 sound disc (ca. 45 min), 33 1/3 rpm, stereo, 12 in.

those women treated people with kindness. The prostitute was that woman who had a positive reaction on the terrible situation of her surroundings. (Rio Branco. In: Bousso, 2012).

The photographic and cinematographic images of Maciel have this strongly ambiguous dimension, sometimes of tenderness, like the couple who dances at the bar, and of sexual "affront", as in the masturbation scene. Or, yet, the laughter and jokes on camera, which contrasts with the profusion of bodies marked by cuts, including bodies of children. The ease with which everybody gives themselves up to the camera, with its tragedies and delights, puts the spectator in an uncomfortable environment, that could not have been built without the physical and real field in which the artist was inserted. The work of film and photography is an indicial experience by excellence, leading private experiences and determining, in many cases, a poetic built by an umbilical relationship with reality.

The perception of Angela Magalhães (2014)<sup>10</sup> on the work of Pelourinho, in the early 1980s, is representative of the impact the images caused in the spectator. Even following the assembly of the show as a researcher and Funarte technique, her testimony reveals at the same time the sensorial and realistic dimension with which the job came to the public: "[...] it really was what impacted me because I realized that was a long time project in which the photographer has to dive and get a life pulse from that, and that I had not seen anything with that dimension so far."<sup>11</sup>

Angela points out the difference of the work in relation to what is seen in Brazil. In the early 1980's, in which it played in the projects of the Foundation in the entire Brazil, photographic production of documentary character was much linked with the event where "things were too much on the surface, in the fact". These aspects

10. Magalhães, Angela; Peregrino, Nadja. Mariano Klautau Filho interview Rio de Janeiro, May 26th, 2014. 1 digital sound file (1h30min29seg). Recorded by Mariano Klautau Filho

11. "What fascinated me was thinking, 'how could he draw that level of intimacy?!' There was an approximation; the faces were very close, the scar was almost in your nose... I wondered then how would he have constructed that path. How was his relationship with those characters, how do you establish that connection in a universe of crime. I imagined the level of obsession; it's almost like you're taken by that. Does the fellow person start living in there, how does it work? He rents a room, how does he get there? By the time they hit the hammer, well, let's start now, you start to interpret, or I'm here kind of being a *voyeur*, half-forgotten?! ...the story is happening right there..., and as I'm photographing it, how is it established? Is it a performance to me, or is it really happening? or is it this and that at the same time? So, these speculations, I in fact had at that time; it was really what impacted me because I realized that was a long time project in which the photographer has to dive and bring a life pulse from that, and until that moment I had not seen anything to that dimension. I didn't know if there were other photographers doing it... for example, Larry Clark with that work on drug addicts; it's an intense work, maybe one of the icons of the works with this intimate dimension, maybe a pre-Nan Goldin. I was just aware of that after seeing the exhibition of Miguel, I didn't have access to those images before that."

reported by Magellan can be a parameter in order to consider the place that Rio Branco began to occupy in the Brazilian scenario, which in a way, was dominated by the documentary style. The artist wasn't out of this context. The work has a social resonance that mattered to documentary photography.

In the case of Rio Branco, the entire subversion he operates in the document results in various actions: the decomposing images, intensification of its plastic looks, removing the original meaning of the subject, printing a symbolic value of another order to the scene, fragmenting and isolating the object and reassembling a logic of images, and not the facts, among others. All these operations, paradoxically, do not constitute a movement away from reality. The idea of registration remains as phenomenological index of something that should be returned to the spectator in enjoyment. On his cinematic experience with the community of Maciel, this factual experimentation is evident, annoying. The space created between the artist and his camera and the body of the depicted is a place of conflict, seduction and mutual provocation. It may seem, in a sense, that the film is held motivated by an invasive behavior, exotic, scrutinizing the other's way of life.

I will not disregard these meanings as part of layers of apprehension of the work, because they echo the instability, or result from an impulse to the conflict, to nuisance. However, what seems to be more important in the vibration of the work is the construction of a friction zone, a field of difference and attraction, whose rapture with the other is part of and happens by the identity of the body. And the film or photography camera is the interface of this recognition work. The camera acts as a return to the physical world, as experiencing reality in the photographic perception of the world.

Some of these aspects, discussed in theory of film, had Siegfried Kracauer as one of the major thinkers in the debate over the assembly aesthetic and conception of filmic work. Fan of realistic theories, Kracauer believed that the artistic experience (and not only film) would be related to a return to the concrete world. It was in his phenomenological dimension that could extract the world a film whose mount can react to the world erected under a whole orderly, idealized by the formalists theories.

For Ismail Xavier (1984, p. 55), the vision of Kracauer was born of an "empiricist film" committed to "producing experiences apt to provide the return to the concrete world, causing the restart of direct and vivid perception of the events".

To formalist wholeness, Kracauer reacted and opposed to awareness of the artifice as language and fragmentation recognition

of the subject, aware of the decadence of modernity's values and ideals. Kracauer argued for the "return to the physical world" as an answer and the absorption of this new world into pieces, and notes that the man born in this disintegration would be fit (because of its fragmented condition) to ally itself to the physical world in its particular realities, to "return" to small universes, participate in daily life, without the weight of the great ideologies. He believed that film (and previously photography as its ontological aspect) would allow this direct communication with the reality of things:

Literally, we redeem this world of his inertia, of its virtual non-existence, when we experience it through the camera. And we're free to try it out because we are fragmented. Film can be defined as a mean particularly equipped to promote the redemption of physical reality. Its images allow us, for the first time, to appropriate the objects and events that comprise the flow of material life. (Kracauer apud Xavier, 1984, p. 56).

It is the idea of experience as central element and matter of which one can extract the "human dimension of this material world to be searched by the camera": "Within the stream of life, in its indeterminate horizons, the apprehensible is the experience of the singular moment and of 'small facts', the direct observation of the elementary actions that define the man in their relationship with the environment" (Xavier, 1984, p. 57).

The film of Miguel Rio Branco is a loose dog in the city, if we think of it as a primordial experience before the filmic work was completed. The camera seems to scrutinize each and everything around it with the instinct of those who seek food and shelter. The experience of the camera frames conceptually the assembly work. Therefore, the assembly holds a profusion of small facts, passages that bring a freshness of the flow of life and that, in a way, destabilize the codes of documentary film – if we think about it as a register of a specific place and time, in the history of a Brazilian city.

This same assembly knows how to select from the flow of life his chaotic and discontinuous spirit (another element valued by the theory of Kracauer), and, with that, shuffles the many functions culturally performed by the portrait. As for the relationship between depicted and photographer, Rio Branco's film bets in this zone of instability, which is in both: at the time lived and in filmic record. In it, the unstable aspect is accentuated by the inconstancy between still image and moving image, as gestated artifice, possibly in the same inconstancy lived in the act of register. Whereas, in that case, the encounter between the photographic portrait of the artist and the photographic portrait of the photographed, exist in both a perceptive

consciousness and a symbolic dimension on the picture as cultural code. Between the instinct to capture, record, and the willingness to be captured, there is a mismatch between the ideal of identity fixing intended by the tradition of photographic portrait and "performing" action of the portrayed for the film camera, acting unpredictably as characters and work conductors.

If every photographic portrait is an act that enmeshes irreversibly, two or more elements in the representation and the represented game, Annateresa Fabris will emphasize that, in addition to the historical and pictorial traditions of "honorific bourgeois representation of the self", the photographic portrait will affirm the individual participant as "the setting of his identity as social identity".

Every portrait is both a social act and an act of sociability: in the various moments of its history, it follows certain rules of representation that govern the modalities of model figuration, the pageantry that he makes of himself and the multiple symbolic perceptions raised in social exchange. (Fabris, 2004, p. 38).

It is important to emphasize that Fabris provides the binding between the picture and the experience of sociability, since such a field would be, by excellence, a field of differences, conflicts, confrontations and passions. The scenes that are revealed in Rio Branco's movie welcome a diversity of characters and situations, which reflect a huge field of differences, in which the photographic portrait is continuously tested.

Would it be possible to think of a reverse to the tradition of the honorific portrait in some flagrant poses in pictures of Maciel's prostitutes? Can we consider that in this entanglement between photographer and photographed there were attitudes of "pageantry that the model makes of itself"? Flaunt what, if what's around is just social misery? Is it really misery the only thing that surrounds the characters (and the inside of the artist's work)? The transfer of the scars, to an isolated framework, to the first foreground of work, would have to do, in some measure, with the sense of pageantry? Whose choice is it to display: photographer or photographed? The answers are very variable, because the consciousness involved in the photocinematographic plot of the film are multiple, contradictory and disobedient on the idea of a honorific self representation in the construction of a portrait.

The mimetic act is rather a concealment than a simulation, according to Graig Owens (Ribalta, 2004, p. 194), which will take it as a point of inflection in relation to the pose in the entanglement between portrayer and portrayed, in the performance of sexual forces: "The mimetic appropriates the official discourse – the other's

discourse – but in such a way that the authority, the ability of the latter to work as a model, are called into question”.<sup>12</sup> Mentioning Barbara Kruger, it is agreed that imitation has become a “valuable strategy” to feminist issues and points, both in the literature as in film, authors who share the idea of a disguised appropriation of the other as a tactic of confrontation,” a frequent obsession by pose as position”,<sup>13</sup> when it comes to the thought of Mary Ann Doane on feminist cinematography.

That attitude would be characterized by assumption of the pose, using a mirroring in the act of posing, in which the depicted, in Owens' analysis, in particular the female figure, positions herself critically in front of the person who is taking the picture, apparently simulating a speech about representation; but, in fact, she is putting on with the the intention of catching him in official codes. Still mentioning Ann Doanes, it is a work of decoding and deconstructing official images of the sexual body.

Every subject who appears on camera in *Nothing I will take...* incorporates, in the complications of the documental process of the work, a persona willing to play a game so multifaceted with the notion of posing, it becomes impossible to sustain a unifying reading for the film. The subject in this narrative is the intercurrent element. He is in the moving image, in static photography, in the built track, in ambient sound, the *off* sounds and the romantic songs. All these languages collaborate to disorientation in the game of social masks and extend the idea of pageantry embedded in the origins and tradition of portrait.

The slow dancing couple looks shy and has a discrete posture. They know they are being filmed – the capture appears to be at a certain distance – and look at the camera with pride and discretion because they know that they move gently, romantically (Figure 3). This is the value displayed: certain aplomb and dignity. In another moment, very brief, but not less important, a girl poses in front of a door, on the sidewalk, with a childish way. She seems to pose for a camera, for a static image because her pose is “fixed”; However, right after that, she puts a breast out of the shirt. At the same time, she plays posing as a kid, but realizes that it is a sequence, of a photograph that can be in series, or even a video camera, capturing the situation moving.

For Owens, the work of deconstruction of sexuality through the pose, in contemporary art, goes beyond a position or posture. The concealment seems to contain the irony which many times simulation hasn't. For him, it is more about “imposición, impostura” and, in the process, there is no field, male or female, who may be defensible.

*Imposition*: sexuality doesn't come from inside, but outside, imposed on the child from the world of adults. *Sham*: sexuality is a function that imitates another function which is, intrinsically, not sexual. (Ribalta, 2004, p. 194).<sup>14</sup>

The girl in front of the lens makes and breaks the pose, or rather, builds a pose that unfolds on the duration and plays between the posture and imposture (Figure 4). A subject that is between the child's play and the sexualized body. The ambiguity brought about by the movie camera in apprehending some of the people pictured – who do not seem to know, at first, whether it is fixed or moving image – enables the game between photographer and photographed to become more diverse and unstable.

In his analysis, Owens believes that the pose has been studied recently by two separate axes: a social and a psychosexual one. Referring to Homi Bhaba reflections on surveillance, it is pointed out it is a “process by which the surveillance look returns as look that moves the disciplined, in which the observer becomes the observed” (Owens, 2004, p. 196).<sup>15</sup>

There is a scene especially curious that reflects the variable behavior of the portrayed in this state between the fixed and the mobile image. This is the moment when there is a close-up of the face of a kid who scratches insistently the eye and appears to be oblivious to the presence of the camera. The scene is preceded by a sequence in which sounds of berimbau, images of smoke on the street, and officers addressing a citizen merge. The presence of a group of police officers gathered in a corner, cut to the boy.

The camera in close-up highlights the face marked by scars above the nose, around the lips. When he realizes the camera device, the boy forces a smile, funny, but goes back to being distracted by the itching. When you try to pose with a fake smile and focus on the itch, the sound of the berimbau ceases and, in a few seconds there remains a silence punctuated by a hiss of vinyl record. It creates some tension focused in the boy's face,

12. In the original: *Lo mimético se apropria del discurso oficial – el discurso del outro –, pero de tal manera que la autoridad, la capacidad de este último para funcionar como modelo, quedan puestas en entredicho.*

13. In the original: *una obsesión frecuente por la pose como posición.*

14. In the original: *Imposición: la sexualidad no viene de dentro, sino de fuera, impuesta al niño desde el mundo de los adultos. Impostura: la sexualidad es una función que imita otra función que es, intrínsecamente, no sexual...*

15. In the original: *proceso mediante el cual la mirada de la vigilancia regresa como la mirada que desplaza lo disciplinado, en que el observador deviene lo observado.*



accentuating his scars, showing the relation with the police on the street. Sound interference of broken record highlights the moment: between the attempt to smile and the insistence of the still (but moving) camera, a confusing portrait of a Brazilian child in a situation of violence (police men, the cuts on his face), but which capture the spontaneity of childhood also oblivious to the danger, is created.

The sounds artificially constructed for the scene pull out certain atmosphere of commiseration or complacency with the social situation and leave a sinister taste between the innocence and vulnerability of the subject. Sinister and disturbing also because such vulnerability lends itself to who is working on the camera. The camera-artist seems to be paralyzed, magnetized by the boy's expression. The real time kept at that moment seems to reflect the feeling of perplexity before the cuts in the face of the boy. The insertion of silence built by the absence of music or ambient, marked by the hiss of vinyl, the portraitist (the cameraman), the object of representation: the model pictured, the disciplined under suspicion, the artist under the confrontation. Then the film takes another rhythm, sound both as visual. In fact, the wheeze works as the change of a song to another, following a long-play.

A nervous Piazzolla tango leads to new sequence, which's prologue is the image of the male belly holding two fighting roosters, followed by another with two men who seem to argue with each other, associated, next, to a new photo, with two fighting roosters in a position of confrontation. The alternation of images between the fighting and dancing highlights the mixture of staging and chance in the narrative – in the background, mixed with tango, in *off*, an argument between prostitutes can be heard. One of them is the same voice that narrates in an earlier moment a fight with broken bottles. The tension is increased by the chaotic fusion of sound images (ambient sound and instrumental tango) with photographic images of physical confrontation.

Once again, the assembly of the narrative oscillates between individuals (isolated portraits) and the collective (portraits of set), in an evident parallel with the structure of the houses, the degradation of the architecture, the social history of the place and the personal drama observed in the body of the characters. All pictures (fixed and moving) that make such dramatic tango-driven sequence create, in the film, these relationships: the woman with the snake; the skins and brands; the body of a boy; the ruins of colonial mansions; dogs and beggars. Here, the idea of animalism is strengthened in the work of the artist.

From the imposing tango, that punctuated the body game images in earlier moments, the film switches to an organ sound, augmenting the dramatic tone of the narrative, sometimes focusing on the interior of a house precariously supported by wooden beams, sometimes returning the camera to the flamboyant performance of a couple that simulates, in the light of day, a sex scene. Naked, in a mixture of embarrassment and mocking tone, they display to a small crowd of neighbors (including children), who are amused by the "performance". The true protagonist of the scene is the camera, which stimulates the game of representation, the embarrassment, the fun, the sexual play. Positioned near a staircase on the second floor of a loft, the camera, in a fast-moving blunt, captures from the scene of the couple in the upper floor and the ladder in perspective, to the curb where children play. All are attentive to the camera, ready to display their sexuality, parading the codes of sexual culture propagated by the image: adults, teenagers and children. And the camera, evil, sneaky, invasive, arbitrary, is there just to fulfill that role.

In quick seconds, we see from the top of the stairs, a girl (woman or teenager?) parading in a dark hallway, imitating gestures of catwalk model. Soon, already in the street, a girl who seems to be around five years old play on the sidewalk. When she realizes the camera watching her from inside the house, she mimics some samba steps, emulating the sexualized behavior – already naturalized at such a young age – of a sexy black girl in a samba school parade. Everything happens in quick seconds; however, the scene acquires an atmosphere of widespread embarrassment, from which no one escapes: characters, viewers, camera, artist. The organ sound increases, extending the "apotheosis".

In this excerpt, the discomfort between camera and subject is sharp, both instances are deliberately representing not very defined roles, diluted between the desire for intimate expression and shaped conduct by the official speeches of the technical image. The one behind the lens, experiences his instinct in picking up the flow of life pulsating in the community, from contact with their residents, and, in the midst of this action, sometimes falls into the traps of a naturalism, something encoded by the devices on the machine.

Who's on camera mixes their legitimate wishes of erotic expression with the pageantry of a sexuality that takes advantage of a cultural behavior invented by machines. This would be the moment in which adopting a pose with erotic connotations would be a kind of affront and, at the same time, it is a kind of sociability that would put at risk the the comfort of both photographer and

photographed. More a concealment than a simulation, as underscored Graig Owens, and therefore a confrontation.

Maciel's women pose in different ways for the camera of Rio Branco and, in many cases, in attitudes of imposture, less subdued and more menacing before who's looking. Adopting a pose may represent a threat, says Owens, as an antidote against the vigilante, a defense mechanism to one that is being looked at, filmed, following the perspective of social analysis about the pose.<sup>16</sup> The threat is in changing the position of the portraitist, put him in a situation of discomfort, and this indeed happens in many passages of the movie by dragging the spectator to this entanglement between camera, subject represented and fellow photographer.

The performance of the camera along with its codes of representation by themselves separates from the self-restraint control of who operates it. There is an artist's eye and a camera eye in that clash with the physical and visible reality. There are things that the eye of the device will see, and not necessarily the artist's eye, that might be appropriate for the speech of the film. In this sense, the artificial nature of the photography is present with its dual identity: to make it look like a natural object that brings the reality and artificialize the object extracted from its realism.

This phenomenological dimension of the camera, Kracauer (2013, p. 49) haven't forgotten as he proposes his theory of film: "The nature of photography endures in film".<sup>17</sup> He believed it was the spontaneous dash of photography, or better, the portion of flash photography that would remain alive in the language of film, able to produce a cinematic dimension. Letting the camera operate on the free flow of life, without the exhaustive author's interference, was giving the film a distinctive artistic nature invoice of the traditional arts.

Kracauer (2013) believed there was a "reality of the camera" in which the artist needed to be aware of the "obligation to register". Such "reality of the camera" would be the more fluent link with the material and physical flow of reality, to produce a kind of film where spectators could achieve a degree of experience close to the feeling of reality. Taking ownership of this "obligation of the camera record" founded, in general, a belief in a film quality (and photography) that didn't fit into the field of the fine arts. It was less about naive belief in the naturalness of the camera than on the capacity of the cinematic apparatus to capture the continuum of life, without letting himself be

seized by formalist excess. The cinematic character could be found in the films that did incorporate "certain aspects of physical reality so that we, spectators, experiment them" (Kracauer, 2013, p. 65).<sup>18</sup>

The author was taking as examples the documentary films as representatives of an artistry typical of cinema, as they collect the material phenomena in themselves. To Kracauer, the art of film (the issue of the cinematic) was to extract the physical reality/"natural" dimension of life, from camera devices, to create a game experience with the spectator. To define film as art distinctly from traditional arts, Kracauer (2013, p. 65) claimed the ambiguous relationship with (the experience of) nature.

[...] should always be borne in mind that even the most creative of directors is far less independent of elemental nature than the painter or the poet; and that creativity manifests itself by letting nature penetrate in his work, penetrating her himself in turn.<sup>19</sup>

The feeling of annoyance that Rio Branco's film causes is not due to factual data – or solely by the classist attitude – that there's a camera watching "another one poor and distant from me", integral to the "socially miserable and wild" life of a community on the fringes of a material satisfaction. This is the easiest access to come to some sort of understanding about the film and ensure your perception on the social dignity and political awareness. In fact, this was, overall, the key found which permeated the critical reading of Rio Branco's work on the Pelourinho. Despite the quality of the reflection of the analyses mentioned, none of them detected that such works, at various times, and especially the film, dealt with confrontation and paradoxes. The film sometimes slips in highly ambiguous situations, transiting your camera continuously between the authoritative and generous presence, between disgust and affection, between the simulation and the spontaneous act, the invasion and the host.

In this sense, the movie changes tone constantly and is able to get out of a perverse record – like the half-naked couple and the child dancing samba – and chain another series of portraits of women under the sign of a romantic song that, now in acapella, gets a confessional and feminist tone. The song *A Desconhecida* (*The Stranger*), by Fernando Mendes, in the voice of one of Maciel's women, enters the movie as a micro-story of independence of all of them.

16. Owens (In: *Limelight*, 2004, p. 196) refers to the analysis of Dick Hebdige in *Posing. Threats, Striking... Poses: youth surveillance, and Display*.

17. In the original: *La naturaleza de la fotografía pervive en la del cine*.

18. In the original: *[...] determinados aspectos de la realidad física para que nosotros, los espectadores, las experimentemos*.

19. In the original: *[...] siempre debe tenerse en cuenta que aun el más creativo de los directores es mucho menos independiente de la naturaleza elemental que el pintor o el poeta; y que su creatividad se manifiesta dejando que la naturaleza penetre en su obra, penetrándola él mismo a su vez*.

In such a beautiful sunny afternoon  
 She appeared to me.  
 With a smile so sad,  
 The look so deep, has suffered.

Her hands so tiny and cold,  
 Her voice also faltered.  
 Told me about her childhood of tears,  
 Never had someone.

Never had love,  
 Didn't feel the warmth of someone.  
 Never even heard the word care,  
 Her nest succumbed.

Sincerely,  
 I cried of sadness as I heard  
 So much life offers  
 And we suffer, naively

After all I heard,  
 I can't forget,  
 She said goodbye and went away  
 I don't even know her name

Where did she come from?  
 Where is she going?  
 I can't tell <sup>20</sup>

The song is one of the greatest popular successes of the 70's. Therefore, it is clear his identification with the feminine universe. In the voice of a man, as in the other songs used in the film, *A desconhecida* narrates the incantation for a woman with no origins and no destination that, despite having suffered enough, is free to follow alone. Even with the attention received by the enunciator male, she prefers not to settle anywhere and follows its course as a walker figure, without identity, adventurous and mysterious.

Considering its release in 1973, the song had already consolidated in the imaginary of a generation in that year of 1979, when Rio Branco attends the Pelourinho. Sung there – via direct sound – for one of the women of Maciel, the music takes on an affective dimension and biographical of a class of women; reveals, through its enunciating subject, in the song recorded, the male posture of nurture, sensitivity and respect for such feminine and outsider history. Before their freedom to come and go, the man can't do anything but to hear your story. On the other hand, within the sound

atmosphere of the film, the song sounds prosaic and, as if we were listening to it in the kitchen.

The film manages to reach such a level of intimacy of the listener, and not only invades. It is in this limit of contradictions that arise differences in the tone, the sudden changes of position and movement of the camera in the face of those real characters. The new series of images, conducted by the sentimental song of Fernando Mendes, is the antithesis of the previous sequence, mocker and invasive. *A desconhecida* marks the series of fixed photographs of women, in a more lyrical tone.

The final moments of Rio Branco's film keep the paradox as speech and confront the sacred and the profane as two streams that overlap. In one of them, the scene of a sexual act almost explicit in the penumbra of a room. In another, the clash between gold and misery: the enormous wealth shown inside the churches of Pelourinho in contrast with the material life of Maciel's community. The film tensions these two axes and mixes the erotic ecstasy to images of rich temples and houses destroyed, sumptuous environments and ruins, details of religious statuary and parts of the bodies of the inhabitants, in a grandiloquent and almost moralist spiral, highlighting the religious magnificence of the catholic colonizing power on the cultural history of the country.

However, Rio Branco's film operates on its instability: the experimentation with contradictory forces. The cinematic discourse (social-political) is built in the montage from the oppositions church-ruins, statues of saints-bodies of the villagers, in a supposed entirety of real life. This was one of the criticisms of realism theorists to the cinema concepts of formalist rigor. On counter-current and within the same movie, sequences and scenes coexist that, when the action filled with the flow of life is distended, it gives space for life to present itself with their own instabilities and fragments, highlighted by the camera.

The apothotic tone is made of confrontations and synthesizes, in his character of documentary work, two policies that are entangled. One linked to critical discourse on the colonizing economy, generally represented by a formal assembly of more obvious plastic effect. And the other related to the lived body, erotic, instincts, a pleasure releaser that appears in scenes (when moving) more distended, stretched (affiliated to the phenomenology of the flow of life) and, when put in fixed sequence, hold in body fragments, place of the marks, or catch physiognomies that react to the frontality of the camera.

Let us not forget also the soundtrack, whose components are of great syntactic importance in the film structure: the street noises,

20. Mendes, Fernando. *A desconhecida*. In: \_\_\_\_\_. *Fernando Mendes*. [S.l.]: EMI Music Brazil, 1973. 1 sound disc (c. 45 min), 33 1/3 rpm, stereo, 12 in.

the stories told only by audio, the romantic songs. The popular songs, and especially its lyrics sung by loving, sentimental and dependent men, speak not only of the existential condition of the place and its inhabitants, but also about traces of the culture of a country. The dramatic sound of the church ends the film, associated with its title phrase. Written on the inner wall of a ruin, with misspellings and obvious grudge, the sentence injects strength to the work, an energy with no direction filled with resilience, revenge and irony: *Nada levarei quando morrer aqueles que mim deve cobrarei no inferno*.

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## ILLUSTRATIONS CAPTIONS

The images in this article can be viewed in its original version in Portuguese.

Figures 1, 3 and 4. *Nothing will take when die those me should charge in hell*. Source: Miguel Rio Branco, official site of the artist. Playback: Mariano K. Filho.

Figura 2. Frames of the photographs used in the film "*Nada levarei quando morrer aqueles que mim deve cobrarei no inferno*", 1981, official site of the artist. Playback: Mariano K. Filho.

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