

## VISIONS OF LATIN AMERICA IN GLAUBER ROCHA'S CABEZAS CORTADAS

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### ABSTRACT

Glauber Rocha *Cabezas cortadas*, narrates the experiences of a Latin-American dictator in his Spanish exile (even though the name of the country is never mentioned) and it grounds itself in stylistic terms by means of a surrealist operation on the association of concepts and symbols. This tool, the surrealist operation on the association of concepts and symbols, constitutes the method for the construction of cultural dialogue between Latin America and Spain set by the film. Therefore, this article presents as a goal to analyze the cultural dialogue between *Cabezas cortadas* and the Hispanic America and its idea of Latin-American identity.

### KEYWORDS

Glauber Rocha; *Cabezas cortadas*; Latin America; identity

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## VISÕES DA AMÉRICA LATINA EM CABEZAS CORTADAS, DE GLAUBER ROCHA

### RESUMO

*Cabezas cortadas*, de Glauber Rocha, narra a experiência de um ditador latino-americano em seu exílio espanhol (ainda que o nome do país nunca seja mencionado) e se fundamenta em termos estilísticos por meio de uma operação surrealista de associação de conceitos e símbolos. Essa ferramenta, a operação surrealista na articulação de conceitos e símbolos, constitui o método para a construção do diálogo cultural entre América Latina e Espanha proposto pelo filme. Este artigo apresenta como objetivo, portanto, analisar o diálogo cultural articulado entre *Cabezas cortadas* e a América hispânica e a sua ideia de identidade latino-americana.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Glauber Rocha; *Cabezas cortadas*; América Latina; identidade

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### INTRODUCTION

In 1970, Glauber Rocha (1939-1981) starts making films outside of Brazil, however, before exiling himself he did not fail to have some trouble with the military regime: he had been detained along side seven of his friends in 1965, he witnessed the prohibition of *Terra em transe* in 1967, and in the same year his apartment got invaded by the police (Bentes, 1997). In 1969, after winning a best director award for *O dragão da maldade contra o santo guerreiro* on Cannes Film Festival, he receives two work proposals. The

first one came from Claude-Antoine, the French co-producer of his latest film; a French-Italian project that would be shot on Congo: *Der leone have sept cabeças/ O leão de sete cabeças*. The second proposal was offered by Spanish producer Pere Fages, who invited him to make a film in Spain with total freedom and with a 100 thousand dollar budget (Torres, 1970, p. 68). This film would be called *Cabezas cortadas*. This is the most productive phase in Glauber's career, since he directed two films in less than a year and was inserting himself on the international market of author's cinema. In the course of these two films made in 1970, the filmmaker realizes the impossibility of maintaining his cinema project initiated in the previous decade. He realizes that those were different times. He knew that the aesthetical radicalization of his proposals, which had been brought up by the *Cinema Marginal (Marginal Cinema)* generation by clandestine and subterranean means, was still going on. He knew that the oppression in Brazil was more violent than ever. The Brazilian historical context was different than the rest of the world. The year of 1968 was over, but its ruptures on the thought and artistic process were still present and would maintain themselves through the new decade. All that would make Glauber rethink his cinema and look for a new form of revolutionary art. He would say: "revolutionary art was the word of order on the 60's Third World and will continue to be in this decade. But I think that the change of several political and mental conditions requires a continuous development of the concepts of revolutionary art". (Rocha, 2004, p. 249). This new revolutionary art would have to be necessarily constituted by an aesthetic in which the structures of the dream, the unconscious, the unreason and the "liberational irrationalism" would be emanated. In Glauber's trajectory, such change of position will be marked out by the realization of *Cabezas cortadas* and the writing of the manifesto *A estética do sonho* [The dream aesthetic], presented on the shape of communication in the University of Columbia a few months after the making of the film.

*Cabezas cortadas* will be the search for the materialization of these new ideas. On his words: "what the unconscious communicates to the conscious in terms of symbols on the individual experience of the dream could be developed by cinema as a collective experience" (Gerber, 1982, p. 15). The author adds: "it's necessary to free the collective unconscious in a integral audiovisual spectacle". (Rocha quoted in Avellar, 1995, p. 97). Cinema is felt like an instrument of transformation by means of using oneiric, revealing images, it's a irrational flow: "you dream and in the dream see pictures, succeeding things. When you write poetry, a short story or make a film, it's not more than the materialization of that dream, this product of the unconscious which is not controlled by reason" (Rocha quoted in Avellar, 1995, p. 97). The shapes and structure of the dream and the delusion make up the defining boundary between this movie and the ones before, are the rupture key. As stated:

this need of entering unknown territories brought me to enter in *Cabezas cortadas*. Because if *O leão de sete cabeças* was a film made about exteriority, trying to explain the story on a materialistic point of view, *Cabezas cortadas*, as the title itself says, cut off that materialistic thesis. It's a film made about

delirium grounds, on the interiority, in the territory of insanity itself (...). It is as it was the filming of a dream. Because *Deus e o diabo*, *Terra em transe* and all of these films are the materialization of cultural dreams, in *Cabezas cortadas* the subject is of the pure unconscious, the cultural phantasmagoria comes in the background, as complement of the internalization flow. (Pierre, 2003, p. 203)

This gesture of cutting the receptacle of reason and installing itself on insanity territory will be the identity mark of Glauber's Spanish film. *Cabezas cortadas* can be understood as a anti-sequel of *Terra em transe* or a zig-zag sequel by sinuous ways that branch out and continues nothing. Or, maybe, a quite unusual conceptual sequel. *Terra em transe* ended with coup d'état perpetrated by the authoritarian leader Porfirio Díaz (Paulo Autran), in which was symbolized by a chaotic and convulsive crown ceremony. *Cabezas cortadas* starts with an ex-exiled dictator, inside of a medieval castle of some european country. The name of the country will never be mentioned, but clearly is about Spain. Moreover, Glauber will declare (Sandroni, 1979) that his protagonist was directly inspired by former Latin American dictators which on that moment were on the course of their Spanish exile, like the cuban Fulgêncio Batista (1901-1973) and the argentine Juan Domingo Perón (1895-1974).

If in the first film we have the failure of populism and the outbreak of latin american military dictatorships, on the second, the narrative invites us to share the daily life of a deposed Latin American dictator. What is common in both? The historical and political context of Latin America. Glauber will carry to his Spanish film certain elements of the Brazilian film. The name of the dictator will be Diaz II (Paco Rabal), which suggests us to be the sucessor of the coup-plotter of *Terra em transe*. The birthplace of the exiled is called Eldorado, the same ficticious country in the 1967 film. The difference is that the Eldorado of *Terra em transe* was the allegory of Latin America based on a portuguese-speaking country named Brazil. The Eldorado of *Cabezas Cortadas* will also be an allegory of the continent, but takes as basis the countries of Hispanic America. The Latin America is understood as one, but that difference in starting point will be crucial for the surrealist and symbolic language adopted by *Cabezas cortadas*. Is by that language that the Brazilian director will implement his audio-visual dialogue with Hispanic American culture. About *Cabezas cortadas*, Glauber declared:

cinema is an instrument that allows materializing the unconscious, and is that materialized unconscious that shows on the screen. *Cabezas cortadas* is a film that should be seen through symbols and signifiers. Is a structuralist film. Reduced the entire story to the signifier. We have Moors, Natives, colonized Latin America, Moorish Spain, meeting of several worlds (...) each time that I see the film I meet new explanations. There is a whole arc of suggestions. I have let the work follow the dream structure. (Rocha, 1979)

## GLAUBER ROCHA'S SURREALISM

It is lawful to indicate that when we say that *Cabezas cortadas* adopts a “surrealist” aesthetic, we are not referring to the surrealist movement captained by André Breton (1896-1966). Glauber will search surrealist sources present in Spanish and Hispanic-American culture. Ilie by talking specifically about a Spanish surrealism stated that the term “surrealist”

initially refers to an artistic modality that received its name on France, but it was present in all Europe in many ways: painting, literature, theater, ballet, music, and cinema. Their roots [surrealism's] were more cultural and artistic than historic and national. In other words, their practices did not arise because certain people issued a proclamation at a given moment on the history of one nation. (Ilie, 1972, p.15)

Therefore, we agree that the term “surrealist” is not exclusive property of the French movement by the fact that it was utilized there for the first time. Before existing as part of vocabulary the surrealism already existed on the culture of the most different countries, and not only in the European countries. Following the idea that the surrealist practice was born of similar irrational tendencies in the aesthetic history of many nations.

It is clear that just like the French can see in Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) and in Comte de Lautréamont (1846-1870) the antecedents of their surrealism, the same way the English could claim William Blake (1757-1827) and William Hogarth (1697-1764), and even the Spanish could bring the attention to Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645) and Francisco de Goya (1773-1812). (Ilie, 1972, p. 15)

Thus, the eruption of a Spanish surrealist aesthetic will not express itself through a movement, but in individual works of certain artists who present as one of their most important basis the irrational tradition of the baroque and the grotesque. *Cabezas cortadas* goes straight to this plastic and visual base, but also dialogues with it by means of mediation of other artists, including the filmmaker Luis Buñuel [1900-1983].

Glauber's admiration for Buñuel was long-standing. We will not discuss the details of this relationship<sup>1</sup>. Here, for our purposes, we must only indicate that, in his film, Glauber will underline the affiliation with the Spanish master. Will try to rescue a cinematic surrealism considered “genuine” by the absorption of *L'âge d'or/ A idade do ouro* (Luis Buñuel, France, 1930), film in which *Cabezas cortadas* will also connect itself through the same surroundings once it chooses as a location the stones of Cadaqués, place where the first part of Buñuel's mythical film. The Brazilian filmmaker stated that he wished to continue a tradition at the same time initiated and closed by *A idade de ouro* (Sandroni, 1979). Another approach is accomplished by the choice of notoriously Buñuelan actors.

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<sup>1</sup> A more detailed study about the relationship between Glauber and Buñuel can be found on Garcia (2010).

Glauber chooses Paco Rabal<sup>2</sup> (1926-2001) to play Díaz II and Pierre Clémenti<sup>3</sup> to play the mythical and mysterious Shepherd.

Buñuel's surrealism will be praised by Glauber precisely for distancing itself from the lines proposed by the French movement. Glauber's understanding of Buñuelian surrealism shares a running idea, defended by a certain sector of criticism, on which the Spanish filmmaker presents a very unique and characteristic reading of surrealism. Glauber reinstates that Buñuel met Breton after *Un chien andalou/ Um cão andaluz* (France, 1927) and never was a spokesperson for the group's general ideas. The director's independence is emphasized: Buñuel would be a proper surrealist, but a particular surrealist, disengaged from groups or confraternities. The peculiarity of Buñuel's surrealism, as also indicated by Bazin<sup>4</sup>, would lie precisely on the fact that wherever it goes, it will bring along side the culture and filter it through his surrealism Glauber states that:

from *Un chien andalou* to *El ángel exterminador*, Buñuel used the cinema to face his characters in their own unconscious; the naked man and in reverse; precisely because of this Buñuel still remains a surrealist like Dalí (with whom he broke up, accusing him of server to the easy taste of the bourgeoisie), but logical as far as it can be: the *mise-en-scène* of improvisation – always headed towards the mystery, yet connected to the rhythm, the plastic and the Spanish literature: In Mexico of *Nazarín* is reconstituted to Spain, on the marks of colonial architecture and in the text directly influenced by Lorca; the images of water, moon and of sensual angels remain from *Un chien andalou* to *El Ángel exterminador*; even denying the unusual frames, Buñuel works with Goya and Miró. (Rocha, 2006, p. 176)

If Buñuel builds his surrealism from his culture, Glauber relates the surrealist language adopted in *Cabezas Cortadas* directly to the place where the film was made. The filmmaker constructed the visual and sensorial information of his film from elements, sonorities, iconographies and symbols necessarily Hispanic and Hispanic Americans. As we mentioned, *Cabezas cortadas* presents as protagonist Díaz II, former dictator of the fictitious Latin American country Eldorado, at the time of his Spanish exile. In addition, here, the director dialogues with novels that gravitated around dictatorial regimes: *Tirano Banderas* (1924) from Spanish Ramón Del Valle Inclán [1866-1936] *El señor presidente* (1946) from Guatemalan Miguel Ángel Asturias [1899-1974] and *La fiesta del rey Acab* (1959) from Chilean Enrique Laforgade [1927]. Although it was filmed before, *Cabezas cortadas* approach itself more comfortably in stylistic terms of romances of the called *Latin American literary boom* that had dictators as their protagonists: *El recurso del método*

<sup>2</sup> Played a role on *Nazarín* (Mexico, 1958), *Viridiana* (Spain, Mexico, 1961) and *Belle de jour/ A bela da tarde* (France, 1967).

<sup>3</sup> Played a role on *Belle de jour/ A bela da tarde* (France, 1967) e *La voie lactée/ Via láctea* (France, 1969).

<sup>4</sup> "Beyond the accidental (and no doubt happy and enriching) influences a whole Spanish tradition is combined, in Buñuel, with surrealism. That fixation with the horrible, this sense of cruelty, this search for the extreme aspects of man, is also an inheritance of Goya, Zurbarán, Ribera, of an entire tragical sense of the human being that those painters manifested precisely on the expression of the most extreme human decay: the war, the disease, the misery and its rotten" (Bazin, 1977, p. 74).

(1974) from Cuban Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980); *Yo el supremo* (1974) from Paraguayan Augusto Roa Bastos (1917-2005) and *El otoño del patriarca* from Colombian Gabriel García Márquez (1927-2014).

Those last three, alongside having dictators as protagonists, approach the absurd, the grotesque, the farce and the memory, such as Glauber's film. In *Cabezas cortadas*, the physical presence of the dictator and, therefore, his memory and imaginary, on old Spain, triggers a complex network of references. The absurdity of Latin American history and reality is present in Díaz II. Glauber affirmed that he would scarcely direct *Cabezas cortadas* in another European country, articulating other cultural references and thus highlighting the originally surrealist character of the Latin American country:

Ricardo Muñoz [Suay] and Pere Fages invited me to make a film in Spain, so I came up with the idea to make *Cabezas cortadas*. Culturally, Spain is very similar to Latin America and Brazil, even though in Spain there are fewer black people. I think that *Cabezas cortadas* is a Spanish film. Probably, in another European country would not have been able to invent the same images and mount these images with the same sounds. The figurative aspect of the film is directly inspired by the popular tradition – that would have been impossible in the developed and industrialized European countries, where the presence of popular peasant art was absorbed by the consumer society. (Sandroni, 1979, p. 2)

Glauber seeks the Spain in Latin America and the Latin America in Spain. To the Bahian director, the reality of the Latin American continent is essentially magic and convulsive. Our historical and everyday life would be located on a supra-reality. That perspective had its origin, not in cinema but in literature. Although existing a less known and cited precursor<sup>5</sup>, that interpretation was broadcast worldwide for its systematization found in the prologue of *El reino de este mundo* (1949) by Alejo Carpentier, in which the Cuban writer and musicologist exposes his theory of “Wonderful American Real” and localizes the “wonderful” as a component of American reality. Carpentier sees America as a cultural entity possessor of singular traits, originated by its ethnical and historical formation. These traits would justify the non-separation between the real and the marvelous. The writer, by redefining the concept of supra-reality, seeks not to confuse it as a product of fantasy but rather to conceive it as a fused sphere of empirical and ordinary reality. The America sought is an America not yet contaminated by reflexivity; it is a cauldron of religiosity and primitive myths, able to concretize the poetic project of the Wonderful Real. Carpentier affirms that “by the virginity of the landscape, the formation, the ontology, by

<sup>5</sup> The attribution of wonderful to the American world had, in the 20th century, at least one previous precursor to Carpentier. It is the Chilean writer Francisco Contreras [1877-1933]. According to Irlemar Chiampi (1983), in the Proem to her *El pueblo maravilloso* (1927), Contreras calls attention for his defense of primitivism, of miscegenation and of American mythologies. Very attentive to the folkloric manifestations of Latin-American folks, and influenced by Freudian theories, Contreras assigned them a mythical mentality, because, according to him, they would have a very lucid intuition of the wonderful, the gift of finding more or less figurative links with the unknown, the mysterious and the infinite. To our author our mythology was an essential and precious element of our collective spirit.

the faustic presence of the Native and the black, the revolution that constituted its recent discovery, the fruitful miscegenation that propitiated, the America is very far from having exhausted its flow of mythologies” (Carpentier, 2004, p. 14).

We are not going to analyze the famous Carpentier's prologue/manifesto nor go into the details of its rupture with the surrealist movement<sup>6</sup>. For the purposes of this article, is enough to mention the artistic-conceptual proximity of Glauber with the postulates defended by Carpentier and detect its differences. One of them that look fundamental to us lies in the fact that for Glauber the supra-reality of America is not only on our Afro-Native roots and native mythologies but also in the inheritance left by the colonizer. The surrealism of America is not only intrinsic and internal but also external. It is an element present on the Iberian conqueror. The colonizer is as surreal as the colonized. Glauber, from this idea, conceives the aesthetic reference mosaic of *Cabezas cortadas* absorbing both Hispanic and Hispanic American symbols. Like Carpentier, Glauber assimilates History and express it through his creations. Glauber's surrealism is determined by the culture and by the history of the environment of his films. Therefore, the Brazilian filmmaker absorbs the forms, the landscape, the sound and the atmosphere of the environment in which he is working and reconfigure them aesthetically. It is necessary for the director to that there is a cultural and historic approach between him and the place of realization of his films<sup>7</sup>.

For the activation of this approximation, *Cabezas cortadas* will choose the musical element as one of the main access routes to the vast Hispanic-American cultural world. Glauber had stated that “is in popular music where you find the authentic history and sociology of the country where you are filming” (Vila-Matas, 1970, s.p.). The music, defined by many as the “purest”, most “subjective” and “abstract” art form there is, will not coincidentally be one of the keys to the composition of *Cabezas cortadas*. Glauber handles it with two concepts in mind, first one being the awareness of music as an expression of popular sensibility and as an index of the identity of a people. In this sense, music would be the unfolding and the expression of a given historic and concrete socio-cultural context. The second concept, does not exclude the first, but complements and transcends it. The music as a creative and transformative principle of beings and things, the music as a ritual, the music as a sacred-mystical element. In other words, music is at the same time a physical and metaphysical expression, a phenomenon made of matter and not matter, body and spirit. Glauber does not separate these concepts but fuses them and turns them into only one. The mystique is in the History and the History is in the mystique. In that way, the sound of Latin America is captured with no delimitation between one and the other.

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<sup>6</sup> About Carpentier and the surrealist movement, see Monegal (1971).

<sup>7</sup> Maybe that is why when asked on 1969's Cannes Film Festival if he would shoot a film outside of Brazil, Glauber answered “in Europe would never make a film; the only places he would film would be Spain, Portugal or Africa. On the rest of Europe, never; nothing can be done here” (Martínez Torres, 1970, p. 69). In 1975, the director filmed *Claro* in Italy, country where he felt quite comfortable. It is also known that throughout his trajectory he tried to shoot the script of *América Nuestra* in several Latin American countries and that in 1975 tried to carry out the project of what would be his last film, *A idade da Terra*, on Mexico. In 1974, in Portugal, collaborates in the realization of the collective film *As armas e o povo*, about the Carnation Revolution. In 1980, after the failure of *A idade da terra*, parts to a new exile, this time in Sintra, Portugal.

The Latin America is, through music, interpreted as a Unitarian entity. The music is the promoting agent of this unit. Therefore, it is a unit not only cultural, but also spiritual. In *Cabezas cortadas*, the phenomenon denominated Latin America overflows the terrestrial sphere and becomes a way to feel the world or a perceptive way of comprehending the world. Music is the key to this comprehension, since it is through it that we read the world and that we amalgamate with it. When forming itself as the essence of our magic and subjectivity, the music of Latin America is only one, all the sound traditions metamorphoses into one. That way we listen in *Cabezas cortadas* Afro-Cuban rhythms, rumbas, tangos, boleros, rancheras and Catalan coblas, flamencos, Spanish renaissance and medieval songs. All these musicalities are served in the same cauldron until forming a single sonorous broth. Our originality would be in this bubbling broth.

That means that Glauber, like Carpentier, underlines Latin American idiosyncrasy front of European rational standarts. However, the view of the European in front of America is not totally rejected once that both filmmaker and the writer admit that the external gaze on America contributes to the formation of our own gaze. In *Cabezas cortadas* there is a scene that translates this mythical idea of America, founded by the first chroniclers of the New World, and perpetuated in largely by Latin American art. In a tabern where musicians are playing Afro-Cuban rhythms, a man stares at the camera and says “in those distant and foreign lands of America, there are birds of different colors and fabulous mythical animals like the carcará and the boto, the dragon of St. Jorge, the serpent of seven heads. And the land was discovered by Francisco de Orellana, who called it Amazon and lives there beautiful women warriors”. This wonderment before the nature and American miscegenation is shared by us, natives of the continent, and at the same time integrates our necessity on emphasize that we are different.

## HISTORY AND DREAM

If in *Cabezas cortadas* this difference lies in the very “birth” of America, it is interesting to see how the director interpreted the History in his film. In *Cabezas cortadas* the History express itself primarily through symbols and these symbols are omnipresent in the deliriums of Díaz. The vision of History of Eldorado is often confused with the subjectivity of the dictator himself. The segment where we see the representation of the Conquest of America, for example, was interpreted by several critics as “the dreams of Díaz”. Actually, not only this particular sequence, but practically all the scenes in *Cabezas cortadas* were interpreted as the dreams of the dictator by most movie analysts. Claudio Vallentinetti, for example, defined the two scenes of the character’s phone call as the only “real” scenes of the film (Vallentinetti, 2002, p. 139). The author briefly mentions a possible relationship between this procedure in *Cabezas cortadas* and the flashback in *Terra em transe*. In fact, it is possible to affirm that between the first and last scenes of *Terra em transe* exists a long flashback, which is the delirium of the poet Paulo Martins agonizing in the moment of his death. But in *Cabezas cortadas* a different structure occurs. If the delirium structure is omnipresent in the film, not all delusions come from the mind of



Díaz. Unlike *Terra em transe*, *Cabezas cortadas* is not a long flashback of its protagonist. Although, as indicated by Cardoso (2007, p. 102), the absence of clear narrative data and the unlikelyhood of situations that are imposed can, in the beginning, lead us to an adhesion to the dictator's point of view. Watching the movie we can have the feeling that we are watching the delusions of an exiled dictator. In reality, the almost omnipresence of Díaz in *Cabezas cortadas* (he appears in the majority of the scenes) and the analogy between his madness and the apparent lack of logic of the film can lead to the interpretation that the film is the expression of his mind. Besides that, the reading that the diegesis is about an nightmare or an hallucination of the protagonist would rationally explain the temporal ellipses (such as the ellipse of the History of Eldorado scene), the sequence autonomy, the lack of chronological and spatial continuity, the unlikelyhood of the situations and the abundance of symbols. If the whole film is a dream of Díaz, everything would be very well explained and justified.

We believe that the film is not a dream or a hallucination of Díaz II. We don't think that, as suggested by Valentinetti, the movie works with the division between the real plane and the dream plane. This well defined separation between the real world sphere (the two phone calls inside the medieval castle) and the dream world sphere (the other scenes) looks very anti-surrealist to us. We do not interpret the two phone call scenes as belonging to "reality"<sup>8</sup>. These scenes are as illogical and irrational as the other ones. We agree with Cardoso (2007, p. 102) when he states that the film does not occur inside the protagonist's mind despite formalizing certain mental processes present in the dream. Mental processes such as the condensation of objects and symbols, the compensatory aspects not found in reality (the revived conquest of Eldorado) and the dissolution between the time stamps (between past, present and future) appear throughout the film. There is no doubt that the fact of reproducing oneiric mental processes does not necessarily mean that the representation is defined as originating from a dream state. The situation of *Cabezas cortadas* is not oneiric, but its structure and logic is.

*Cabezas cortadas*, in its way, puts into practice a concept already articulated by the surrealist cinema of the 1920s: the total convergence between oneiric material and cinematographic material. The nature of the cinematographical image is understood as ontologically oneiric. The structure of a film must be similar to the structure of a dream. Cinema should not imitate the ordinary reality, should not mimic it because it would be against its essence and its own authentic reality: the reality of dreams. Buñuel, at his conference *O cinema: instrumento de poesia* pick up an idea spread by the first André Breton stating that "the most admirable on the fantastic is that the fantastic does not exist, everything is real" (Buñuel, 2000, p. 68) That is, there is no dividing line between madness and reason, between dream and reality, between the conscious and the unconscious. These two realities merge inaugurating an *other* reality, a supra-reality. It is about taking advantage of the illogical aspect, arising from the subconscious, the dream, the fortuitous and the unforeseen associations which, also being a reality, merge with the concrete reality, ruled by reason and logic, searching of the conciliatory harmony of opposites.

<sup>8</sup> The definition of these scenes as the only "real" scenes in *Cabezas cortadas* also appears in Gardies (1977) and in Bamonte (2002).

Therefore, we see in the structure of *Cabezas cortadas* an attempt to reproduce the structure of the mind in the oneiric state. *Cabezas cortadas* follows the shapes of the dream but does not elaborate on the diegetic representation of a dream. A possible exception could precisely be the scene of the conquest of *Eldorado*, however there are not enough elements to define it categorically as such. The possibility that this scene is the representation of a dream is only suggested and this gives it an ambiguous character. We don't totally reject the hypothesis that the segment belongs in the dreams of the main character, but we suggest new interpretative paths. We understand that beyond being a delirium or a dream of Díaz II, this segment represents History and this is not the product of the mind of a single man. The images of the conquest of *Eldorado* can be the representation of a dream of Díaz, but it's not just an individual dream. More than being solely the oneiric interpretation of the dictator about History (a History in which he and his ancestors are characters), what we see is a comment of enunciative instance. It's the discourse presented in the film that presents to us its interpretation of American History. And this discourse is uttered through a highly allegorical way. Therefore, the allegorical interpretation of History could not belong to the same plane of previous sequences. The History is past, but it is also timeless in the sense that is also myth. American History and American myth here are confused. Being narrated in a allegorical way, the History is not a "thing of the past" but rather a collective delusion. The narrative of *Cabezas cortadas*, therefore, opens a parenthesis for the exposure of its vision of History. Let's get to it.

In this set of scenes that we understand as the representation of the Conquest of America / *Eldorado*, we witness the allegorical framework in which the spectacle of domination is destroyed. In it, the domination is represented by a single man/archetype: the colonizer. Said colonizer is Díaz, a typical *criollo*. A ruler born in America that perpetuates the oppressive rites of their ancestors. Another characteristic of this spectacle of oppression is the structural divide of domination in different phases and in each one of them, we see the inclusion of one more character in the game of History.

On the first scene of this segment, two medieval knights ride on horseback and for a moment interrupt the ride and stop in front of the camera. Díaz enters the frame, takes the horse between the knights, mounts in it and rides. The two knights follow behind, they are his followers, are at the service of power. This action, being framed in a static medium shot and with a medieval sacred music in the soundtrack, offer us the sense of the allegory: what we see is a ceremony, a solemn act. On the next scene, a Native walks, the camera follows his movement sideways, when he stops the camera also stops. The three knights (Díaz and his servants) appear, going down a hill. The Native stands in front of the knights and on his back to the camera. Begins a choreography between the characters, a dance consisting of resistance and attack. The Native distances himself from his oppressors and positions himself in the center of the frame. At that moment, he takes an object out of his pocket and keeps in his hands. It is a box. Díaz II gets closer and takes his box. The Native runs to recover the object and the choreography resumes. The oppressed gets down on his knees and falls to the ground. The oppressors ride on horseback around his body. On the next scene the Native is already converted

to a servant, however, it is a lower servant compared with the others. He walks on foot, escorting his superiors. Walking alone, the Native meets a Moorish hitting a rock with a hammer. Tries to imprison him. They fight; the dictator enters the picture and circulates around the two men. The Native takes the hammer away from the Moorish and gives it to Díaz. The dictator holds it up like a spear and as the sign of yet another victory. Then the two knights enter the picture, followed by the Native and the Moorish, already integrated to the group. We realize that more than individualities the characters represent historical actors. They are symbol characters; the Native is not just a Native, but also *all* the Natives. The same can be said about the Moorish and the two faceless knights. They represent an entity, a collectivity<sup>9</sup>. The colonizer co-opted them, convinced them, by force, to serve him. On the next shot appears the opposite side, the elements that oppose to that power. They are armed peasants. The camera describe them in detail following the movement of the truck that they found themselves. Here we clearly state the existence of two extremes: the people who submitted and the rebellious people. We see how America shaped itself and how it can be transformed.

#### FINAL REMARKS

There is still, in the film, a second exposition of the History of America/*Eldorado*. Is the same History, just counted differently. Now, the narrator is the director himself. The grotesque, pathetic and comical aspects of the dictator expands in the sequence. The character is in the mud playing with several objects as we listen to Glauber's voice-over narration that tell us the History of *Eldorado* and the dictator's biography. On top of the narration, we listen a song with comical tones. The fact that Glauber is the narrator is curious not only because he is the author of the film, but also by the explicit indication of his origin. The film is the vision of a Latin American of Lusitanian origin about the America of Spanish origin, therefore the operation effected by Glauber in assuming the narration in Spanish evidencing his Brazilian accent seems to be strategic. This procedure highlights the specialty of his gaze and singular interpretation of America present in *Cabezas cortadas*. Besides emphasizing that, despite the idiomatic difference, Brazil is as Latin American as the Spanish-speaking countries. Independent of the language, Latin America is one and that seems evident in the History of Eldorado. Glauber builds it mixing several elements of the History of Brazil with those of Hispanic America. We will transcribe part of the narration:

On the pages of History, *Eldorado* was discovered in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Spanish navigators and developed itself thanks to cultivation of sugarcane. Some years later, the black slaves from Africa arrived and the then viceroy built roads, a new port and conquered the territory of rosemary by completely exterminating the local indigenous civilization. The colonizers began to raise

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<sup>9</sup> For this reason, the author uses capital letters in the Indian and Moorish label. In the script of the film, published in the book *Roteiros do terceiro mundo* (Rocha, 1985), the director uses the same labels.

cattle and to plant coffee and it was from this economic situation that the first nationalist symptoms arose. The rebellions against the Spanish Crown were violently repressed and all their leaders were hanged and quartered in public square. Centuries later the first liberators appeared. Emmanuel Díaz, a very intelligent lawyer, influenced by the French Revolution and by the ideas of the new American republic, organized the Secret Society for the Liberation of Eldorado. The idea set afire the plantations and, ten years later, *El dorado* was proclaimed independent monarchy. Emmanuel Díaz put the crown on his own head and since then all his descendants continued the succession of the power. When the 1910 republican revolution occurred, the entire Díaz dynasty was passed by arms and our hero escaped thanks to the help of an old black servant. Did not take the revenge of the people as lesson. Exiled in Europe, studied law and philosophy until returning to his country as leader of a coup organized by the International Export Company, the EXPRIN. Was welcomed by his friend and protector William Bradley, a Californian millionaire. Since then, Díaz rose to the power several times and several times was deposed and several times return and will return again.

Glauber starts the voice-over with “on the pages of History” underlining the existence of an official History, a History written by someone who certainly belonged alongside the “winners”. The description of the History of Eldorado, in fact, sounds quite scholarly, as if it had been extracted from a textbook. This basic description is quite ironic, despite the narrator’s formal tone, and tell us facts that can be found in the History of most countries of the continent. The initiation of an agrarian economy directed to exportation to the Metropolis, the extermination of the Natives, the use of African slave labor, the economic development as the engine of the desire for separation by the local elite, the illustration of the American Liberators held in Europe, the influence of illuminist rational thought on the independence wars. Facts that can simplify the History of all Latin American countries in one story. This, in addition to proving our common historical past, proves the state of our present and of what is likely our future. The infinite coming and going of Díaz to the power metaphorizes a certain historical immobility. The power is always in the hands of the same rulers, the wheel of Latin American History, so far, seems always to be returning to the same place. Díaz II wallow in the mud.

We had as proposal, in this brief essay, to analyze some aspects of *Cabezas cortadas* referring to its dialogue with Hispanic-American culture and its idea of Latin-American identity. It is perceived that the search for understanding that identity it is no longer through the path of reason or by the understanding of identity articulated by 1960s Latin American political cinema. There is in this film by Glauber a renovated idea of revolutionary art and distinct propositions regarding the binomial art/politics consonants with what was fertilized from 1968. Glauber, here, ventures and exposes his response to the changing political and mental conditions that the world has experienced since then.

Translation: Pablo Fernando Cândido

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