In the mood, by the book: The aesthetics of the chanchada genre through music and fashion^a

No tom, como manda o figurino: A estética da chanchada pela música e pela moda

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ABSTRACT

This paper intends to demonstrate how the process of nomadism and mouvance^d of artistic texts can interfere in the forms of sensitivity and, consequently, in aesthetic communication processes. For this purpose, we selected parodies of movies from the 1950s, in order to verify: 1) how parodic appropriation defines a particular semantics, considering the interchange between art and popular entertainment show; 2) how new versions modify the status of the work and, therefore, the enjoyment it brings. For this study, we selected linguistic elements of fashion and music languages. We conclude that besides new forms of sensitivity, such works constitute a cultural memory within the media culture.

Keywords: Brazilian Chanchada, film music, fashion

RESUMO

Este texto pretende demonstrar como o processo de nomadismo e movência dos textos artísticos pode interferir nas formas de sensibilidade e nos processos de comunicação estética. Selecionamos duas versões paródicas de filmes da década de 1950, para verificar como: 1) a apropriação paródica estabelece uma semântica particular, considerando o trânsito entre a arte e o espetáculo de entretenimento popular; 2) as novas versões modificam o estatuto da obra e, portanto, sua fruição. Para este estudo, tomam-se elementos das linguagens da moda e da música. Concluímos que, para além de novas formas de sensibilidade, tais obras constituem memória cultural, no seio da cultura midiática.

Palavras-chave: Chanchada, música de cinema, moda

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^dFrom the French word "mouvance" and the concept formulated by Paul Zumthor in his study of medieval French poetry.



FROM PERFORMING ARTS TO SCREEN ARTS

S THE REMAINING documents of classical era show, once on the stage, a well-structured storyline seems to already have attracted the audience's attention since ancient times. In Western tradition, the evolution of Greek tragedy and comedy gave way to the most varied types of staging. Not only did dramatic, lyrical and cinematographic arts turn themselves into autonomous languages, but they also merged with other languages, such as dance and pantomime.

Until the emergence of the audiovisual technologies, these pieces of music were performed alive, as the artists physically stood before the audience. The emergence of the camera, which allows to see the body in motion, fostered the development of the cinematographic language. In turn, the emergence of devices such as the phonograph and gramophone allowed to perpetuate sound, a tangible element that before could not be preserved. The union of both languages occurred in 1927, in the USA; in Brazil, it began in 1929, with the movie *Acabaram-se os otários* [No More Schmucks], a comedy directed by Luiz de Barros. Once set up in several European countries, the language evolves in the USA. Historian Nicolau Sevcenko (1999) argues that Hollywood cinema

is a complex art, a sum-up of visual communication revolutionary techniques, such as the close-up, the emotional effects of the edition tools, cadence, rhythm, lighting, sound, music, facial and corporal expressions, the charms of youth, the choreographic and athletic movements, the make-up, the hairstyle, the clothes and costumes, the workpieces and figures of speech and the sex-appeal, this overwhelming and mysterious power force, all this magnified on the colossal screen, irradiating its hypnotic silver brightness in the dark of the theatre (Sevcenko, 1999, p. 600)

Object of our study here, the *chanchadas*—which attracted a broad audience in Brazil during the 1950s—do not seem to formally meet such requirements. They are primarily based on a peculiar logic, quite common in the circus and vaudeville languages, and they assimilate Hollywood movies as parodies. Its main concern is the construction of a compelling storyline. "With the *chanchadas*, this history is sustained by a tenuous line, interspersed with musical performances, which are in fact what really matters. As such, this kind of movie ends up being unnatural", asserts Bernadette Lyra (2004, p. 93)

Although a reference biography already exists on the matter², the *chanchadas* justify other approaches. We consider that some important elements are still unexplored, as they are seen as minor by several scholars³. Within this context, our goal is to present some morphological characteristics and situations that

¹The naturalization of the cinematographic language means to turn imperceptible the filming methods, in order to create an effect of reality.

²We invite the reader to consult the studies by Bernadette Lyra (2014), João Luiz Vieira (1987) Sérgio Augusto (1989), Mónica Rugai Bastos (2001), Afrânio Mendes Catani and José Inácio de Melo Souza (1983), Domingos Demasi (2001), and Rosângela de Oliveira Dias (1993). Furthermore, the interest in this subject is expressed in 44 theses, as listed in Mnemocine (http://www. mnemocine.com.br).

³ Most of them prefer elements of filming analysis, narrative studies and other traditional proceedings of filming analysis, or even sociological perspectives.



set forth the *chanchadas* as sources of knowledge for the daily life of their time, through two analytic biases that have been scarcely covered: fashion and clothing; soundscape, incidental music and songs.

These elements help to build the content and meaning of the *chanchadas*. Our interest lies precisely in the analysis of their specificities, at the time when they were set up as (p)art of a storyline, under a descriptive and genealogical perspective. A notorious author in this regard, Gumbrecht (1998, pp. 137-151), serves as one of the theoretical frameworks used in this study: the communicative process in its materiality.

It aims to identify and understand how the historical conditions and materials contained in the relationship between the media and its audience affect and determine to some degree the structure of the message. It thus defines "the possibility of topicalizing the signifier without necessarily associating it to the signified" (Gumbrecht, 1998, p. 145). Or, as the author observes, "it analyzes the characteristics arising from the emergence of meaning structures" rather than identify the meaning in order to rescue it shortly (p. 147).

Zumthor (1997) lies within a similar epistemological field (which prioritizes material and historical elements), and as such should be relevant to this analysis. Taking into account that *chanchadas* often rely on other texts and derives from an oral, reinterpreted, re-appropriated, (re)semantized culture, the concepts of mouvance and nomadism elaborated by Zumthor are likely to be pertinent, since this sort of art production produces different reconfigurations throughout the ages. Aesthetics and expressive elements should thus be worked in this paper in a paratextual manner: i.e., with the use of genealogical variations, articulations and transfigurations with regard to works which anticipated or were related to the *chanchadas*.

In addition to being objects of our specific research subject, we believe that the languages of fashion and music, seen as being derived from an intermediatic nexus, may be used for analysis as uncommon interpretative cues for the forms of sentitivity.

According to Adalberto Müller's definition (2012), intermediality is generally defined "as the relationship that is established between several media and media-related products and which affect one another through processes of adaptation, quotation, hybridization, etc." (p. 70). Taking media theory⁴ as a transdisciplinary field (p. 126), we propose to consider the ways through which languages such as fashion (shown in movies and magazines, or music, which was disseminated by the opera and subsequently allotted) reinforced mediality and contributed to the aesthetic experience stemming from the communication of two *chanchadas*. We consequently transit between

⁴According to Müller (2012), "Media theory necessarily constitutes a transdisciplinary field, involving studies of Literature, Aesthetics, Technology, IT, Communication, Neurology, Philosophy and, possibly, Transportation" (p. 126).

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⁵ For further information, see the German concept of *media turn* (Müller, 2012). media aesthetic and theory⁵, once the text investigates how the languages of fashion and music (movies, magazines, operas), disseminated by the *chanchadas*, affect the audience sensitivity.

However, as we already mentioned, according to Lyra (2004), several *chanchadas* were founded on a peculiar logic, common to circus and vaudeville languages, and as such, common to orality, and assimilated contemporary Hollywood movies in a parodic manner. It is therefore a set of amalgamated logic whose result, i.e. the *chanchada*, also demands a specific methodology of genealogical character, which we will elaborate upon in the two cases we intend to analyse.

The two movies we chose are *Nem Sansão*, *nem Dalila* [*Neither Samson*, *Nor Delilah*] (Tanko & Manga, 1954) and *O Barbeiro que se vira* [*The Resourceful Barber*] (Massaini & Ramos, 1957). Among others, the main analytical criteria were both movies being based on long-lasting storylines—thus having already passed through a long process of nomadism—, being generally well-known by the audience, and being performed by a comedian and a clown.

THE MOUVANCE OF AN OLD STORY

Before going any further, two concepts expressed by the medievalist scholar Paul Zumthor (1997) need to be presented: *nomadism and mouvance*. The first one concerns the mechanism that enables the poetical sign to continuously transfigure itself; the second concerns the intrinsic property that allows the even sign to pass through intersemiosis. An artistic or literary work, or even a storyline arising from biblical texts such as the myth of Samson and Delilah, transforms itself and is translated over time. Studying the process of nomadism and mouvance of artistic texts allows us to analyse the articulations between the different versions of *Samson and Delilah*, since the Old Testament up until the *chanchada* version *Nem Sansão*, *nem Dalila*. If by means of the concept of nomadism it is possible to understand the context and processes through which the biblical myth transfigures itself over time, the concept of mouvance allows to understand how the work internally permits ongoing translational processes.

Before becoming a blockbuster of its time, the storyline of *Samson and Delilah* became a pictorial work. According to ancient art specialist Llewellyn-Jones (2005, p. 24), *Samson and Delilah* by Rubens (1609) was a great influence on Cecil B. deMille's movie (1949). It is interesting to note that, unlike the paintings by Lucas Cranach (1537) or Van Dyck (1620) which showed contemporary clothes, in Rubens' painting, the scenery and clothes have no specific reference,



as they belong to some mythical place of the past. Other elements pointed out by Llewellyn-Jones are its intense colors, the luxurious and bright fabrics and Delilah's pronounced femininity.



Figure 1. Samson and Delilah, by Peter Paul Rubens (1609-10) Source: https://www.wikiart.org/pt/peter-paul-rubens/sansao-e-dalila-1610.

Trajectories and echoes of a millenary fashion: Samson and Delilah, the movie⁶

The movie Samson and Delilah (DeMille, 1949) premiered at the beginning of 1950 in USA, and was a box-office hit at the Paramount Theatre. The movie directly refers to the biblical saga⁷. Much has been invested in special effects (the fight between Samson and the lion), the luxury of the scenes, the embellishment of the places depicted and the most diverse objects—golden goblets, amphorae, fans made of ostrich feathers, blankets of fur with brims made of silk, tents, curtains, veils made of expensive fabrics. The movie shows a commitment to create an eastern ambiance—despite the fact that there are no precise data on the Minoan civilization and, therefore, it is impossible to guarantee cultural accuracy and its cinematographic representation—, specially about the sceneries

⁶We would like to thank Mariana Christina de Faria Tavares Rodrigues, who has a Master's Degree in Fashion, Art and Culture by SENAC/SP, for her consulting in this chapter.

⁷The epic drama starring Victor Mature and Hedy Lamarr as main characters takes place in the Ancient city of Gaza and narrates the saga of Samson, well-known for his colossal strength, and his sister-in-law, Delilah. Feeling rejected in her unrequited passion, Delilah allies herself to Samson's enemies in order to find out the source of his strength in exchange for silver and wealth. Finding out that Samson's strength comes from his hair, she cuts it and left him to the Philistines. The movie follows DeMille's super productions' model Cleopatra, 1934; The Ten Commandments, 1956).



and costumes, notably the women's clothing. What seems right is the setting which refers to a timeless space of an East created by the collective imaginary, conceived by Hollywood studios from stereotyped odalisque figures. As we will soon observe, the *chanchada* is based on the same grounds.

According to Llewellyn-Jones (2005), DeMille gave life to his epos Samson and Delilah taking into account that the biblical story took place at the end of the Bronze Age, during which the Philistines and the Minoans shared the cultural heritage of Crete (p. 17). The studies for the movie production, made from the observation of gods' sculptures and seals, indicate that the Minoan civilization used a clothing style different from other Mediterranean civilizations of the time, as women wore slinky bustiers that let the breast visible and enhanced the slim waist. This aspect was a good reason to create a costume for the seductive Lamarr/Delilah. This strategy was successful, since, as the author mentions, DeMille knew that the audience was not interested in the literal truth of the Ancient World, but in the kitsch and the fantasies of pomp and luxury (p. 18).



Figure 2. Scenery
Source: Samson and Delilah (De Mille, 1949).

Likewise, the musical part—a large orchestra, under the responsibility of Victor Young—is filled with elements associated to Eastern music, with the



use of modal harmony, percussion instruments (rattle and cymbal) and horns which refer to martial music (Samson)⁸. In turn, Delilah is associated with the harp (0'59"), an instrument that typically symbolizes angels.

The past is invented in order to attract a large audience, states Margarita Gleba (2008, p. 85), mentioning that Hollywood studios tend to base their work on the concept that epic dramas work as commercial channels to depict Hollywood's true glamour. This factor is particularly stressed in the personality and style of female main character, in this case, Hedy Lamarr.

For the movie from 1949, the ten different costumes designed by Paramount famous costume designer, Edith Head, enhance the actress' sculptural body with neckline, slit skirts and naked belly, embroidered clothes full of ornaments—which ended up migrating to the fancy-dress balls, above all to the carnival in Brazil. Furthermore, there's a distinct choice for bright colours, such as turquoise, emerald green, magenta, purple. Fabrics similar to chiffon and silk (lightweight, fluttery, which enhance the body), or lamé (silver and gold), have a semantic function in the construction of an oneiric imaginary world—yet overwhelmed by the excess of colours, even on Lamarr's flushed face, with excess of red lipstick.

Although in the 1940s the denudation of the body with low-cut necklines, visible navel and defined pelvis were not usual in the American society, Delilah's two-piece costume does not seem to have been censured. The costume bolsters the shapely generous bust; the slim waistline is shown, as well as the legs. This fatal odalisque is a sensual variation of the fashion *dernier cri*, Dior's New Look, introduced in 1947 and which would survive during the 1950s, characterized by the poodle skirt. In the movie, the skirts are purposely disassociated from Dior's style with the clear purpose of highlighting the hip curves and bare legs in order to emphasize the sensual conformation of the character. Despite the duality of "projection-identification" (Morin, 1972) carried out at the time by the media in order to bring the idol closer to her audience, Hedy Lamarr seems to belong to the *femme fatale* category, unreachable.

Nevertheless, as Morin observes (1972, pp. 11-35), the birth of the stars was the most splendorous event experienced by the movie industry, later endangered by the television. Some of them, mainly those who appeared before the 1950s, are intangible, sublime, extravagant and live far from the universe of the common people. In this context, Hedy Lamarr was more akin to the fatal and unreachable brunettes than to those with whom the Brazilian feminine audience might identify, as we will later see regarding the Brazilian interpreter of the same character.

⁸ Despite such characterization, the writing and grammar used to follow the end of the 19th century German school, imported to Hollywood by German composers, settles in the USA.



In Brazil, DeMille's movie premiered in 1951, and the magazine Cine Repórter from June 1951 registers "the 'force' of a movie" (p. 8), with the caption 'Samson and Delilah broke all-time box office records in São Paulo and Brazil: 2.6 million cruzeiros in a week. And it is still shown in a large number of theatres' (Cine Repórter, 16/06/1951, Cine Repórter, ed 804, p. 8). The Carioca magazine A Scena Muda shows the marketing strategies regarding life in Hollywood and publishes news on Hollywood, French and Italian stars. The magazine presents sections on "Cinema, Radio, Music and Reports", but the main subject is the movie industry. A Scena Muda [The Mute Scene] publishes several articles about the most varying aspects of the cast and movie, such as a profile of the star Victor Mature ("Victor Mature", 1950, p. 59) and seven consecutive editions of a cartoon from 1950 based on the movie, using photograms of the original production ("Sansão e Dalila: história em quadrinhos"; "Sansão e Dalila (cont)"; "Sansão e Dalila (chap. 3)"; "Sansão e Dalila (chap. 5)"; "Sansão e Dalila (chap. 6)"; "Sansão e Dalila (chap. 7)" and "Sansão e Dalila (final)". It is worth mentioning that the magazines of the time were influenced by Hollywood actresses' behaviour and clothing patterns since the 1920s. However, as argued by Meneguello (1992, pp. 193-198), in the 1940s and 1950s, magazines for women invested a lot in a different model of feminine figure. Such publications focused on subjects considered as feminine—home, fashion, beauty prescriptions, cooking, health—, reinforcing the figure of the apolitical housewife, who shyly starts to have access to the labor market. As a result, the Brazilian feminine audience would empathize with stars other than Hollywood ones, sweeter, more lovable and less irreverent (as we will see ahead).

⁹Without developing further on the subject, we would like to stress that, beyond their participation in the movie, these artists frequently appeared in magazines and radio programs.

10 Horácio, the barber, reveals the baldness of his client, Chico Sansão, when he accidently removes his wig. Trying to escape from Chico Sansão's anger, Horácio flees in a jeep full of fireworks. Horácio crashes in Dr. Incognitus time machine. He enters an unknown world and, in exchange for a lighter, receives a magical wig from a man named Sansão. Horácio turns to be the all-mighty of the reign of Gaza [sic], ruled by the siblings Dalila and Miriam.

Nem Sansão, nem Dalila, the chanchada

Parallel to the aforementioned show, the Brazilian population also went to movie theatres to watch different kinds of movies, although with a different intent: unpretentious laughing before funny situations spoken in Portuguese. More than following a new storyline, the audience made contact (mediatized) with its beloved actors and actresses. Thus, they seemed to be closer, almost familiar⁹. *Nem Sansão, nem Dalila* (Tanko & Manga, 1954) was one of these movies.

With actors such as Oscarito, Fada Santoro, Cyll Farney and Eliana Macedo, the movie is a typical *chanchada*¹⁰, with the goal of configuring the ambiance of the story under an Eastern setting. The sceneries and costumes, particularly female ones, similarly to the Hollywood version, refer to an Eastern timeless space, the figure of the woman transformed into a



stereotyped odalisque. Even though, under Manga's direction, the costume does not vary as much, nor is it undressed as much as the Hollywood one, although necklines and slit skirts were used. The main actress, Eliana, has three different outfits and Fada Santoro only two, although she uses a dress from a former scene and modifies the way the veil is tied on the shoulder to create a third costume.

Although resorting to airy and fluttering fabrics, with sequins on the head jewellery, the costume of the actresses is more stern in the nakedness of the body, avoiding bare belly, such as the Delilah of Hollywood showed, except in the wedding scene where Delilah wears a two-piece outfit, although more sober (i.e. without enhancing the silhouette and skin texture. A protrusive bust moulded by a push-up corset in shaped blouses is clearly representative of Christian Dior's 1947 fashion style—, which can easily be identified in the movie, specially through the strapless dresses used by the actresses and the thin waistline of the models thanks to girdles. While *Samson and Delilah* made use of costumes that could not be openly worn in the 1950s, being restricted to the glamour of Hollywood, the outfits of *Nem Sansão*, *nem Dalila* could easily be formally used in events in Brazil at the time.

The make-up of the actresses also takes into account the production space and time, i.e., the 1950s, following the fashion of that time. Eliana does not need a concealer and makes moderate use of greasepaint and rice powder. The eyebrows are dark and well outlined, just as the lips—as the cover of the magazines showed at the time—, which are very different from those of Lamarr's Delilah, rendering a more prudish and common appearance to the Brazilian actress, in contrast to the sensual and provocative Delilah of Hollywood.

As shown by Luciana Dulci's research (2004),

A different kind of actress asserted itself in Hollywood: the well-behaved ingénue . . ., where the American actress Grace Kelly reigned as the myth of the fancy blonde and, in a more common and less glamourized version, June Allyson and Debbie Reynolds. (p. 92)

The author adds that the movie critics pointed out a great influence in Eliana's style composition, as "there is great physical similarity, among other common features: freshness, naturalness, ingenuity" (Dulci, 2004, p. 92).

The Brazilian Delilah follows the pattern of the *chanchadas* ingénue: she works hard as civil servant, counterwoman, teacher, but also as singer, actress or dancer. Yet, as Rosângela Dias (1993, p. 91) argues, in terms of moral and behavioural patterns, this woman is trapped in the stereotypes of the prudish,

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11 A clear example of this is the scene where Sansão appears dressed as a merchant and starts fighting against soldiers who want to arrest him: the long and large sleeves of his coat hinder him from punching the men. He constantly struggles with the coat, pulling up the sleeves to free his arms.

¹²In short, it is an appropriation of the Aristotelian rhetoric, applied to music studies in the 18th century and nowadays adopted by recent musicology, in which the musical elements that compound a specific semantics are studied. young, happy, ingenuous, naïve, helpful and loving housewife. These are the necessary requirements of every *chanchada* young lady of the 1950s.

It is also worth noting the clothing and its function. If Paramount's Delilah uses jewels made of pearls, gemstones and metal, Atlântida film producer's Dalila uses jewellery, which is more akin to carnival ornaments. The aigrettes and feathers on Dalila and Miriam's heads remember the composition of *destaques* [centerpieces] of samba schools. However, in some situations, the costume has to constitute the humoristic scene¹¹. In the case of the protagonist Horácio (the comedian Oscarito), we know that the clothing, make-up and adornments are part of the character's composition (we shall go back to this issue later on).

Another aspect, not usually paid attention to, is the relationship between the sound and musical landscapes. In several scenes, the music has a diegetic quality (the dances and the wedding happen in the fictional storyline of the movie). The opening theme has a duration of two minutes and, just as the costume, presents the motif that later will be resumed, with some variations. The *leitmotiv* arises when the dancer appears (24'30"; 26'30"), the melody starts with the oboe, followed by ornaments on the flute, which create the topics¹² of the snake charmer; the chords enter with the double theme; percussion, rattles and bells. Variations appear in the next scenes: the dungeon (25'45"), the party (58'00) and the wedding (77'00), lead by a big fanfare.

Even if its budget production was quite low, it clearly was not the same for the musical part. The incidental music is well elaborated by Lírio Panicalli, who embraces the topics with high competence. In terms of formal elaboration, it was comparable to Paramount's blockbuster.

FROM SEVILLE TO JABULÂNDIA. . . THE BARBER OF SEVILLE, FROM THE OPERA TO THE CHANCHADA

Ultimate drama and musical genre, the opera constitutes a language that meets a wide spectre of receptors, from its invention, in the Renaissance. Although grounded in the musical language, it emerged as a hybrid genre, adding the professions of composer, poet, musician to an extensive list of artists, craftsmen and technicians.

Before analysing the relationship between Rossini's opera and the Cinedistri *chanchada*, we should note that the author of the original play, Beaumarchais (Pierre Augustin Caron, 1732-1799), had success because the plot is filled with great adventures, with several different highs and lows, including episodes of the author's personal life (Newman, 1960, p. 82). From the storyline structure point of view, it refers to the *commedia del arte*.



The Barber of Seville (Le barbier de Séville, 1775)¹³ is among the most popular operas ever. As an *opera buffa*¹⁴, the plot elicits the laugh, provoked by unexpected situations. At the time of its opening night, the *opera buffa* had already conquered the crowds and been transformed into an entertainment for all kinds of audiences, without distinction between socioeconomic classes. In *The Barber of Seville*, the derision does not spare professionals, institutions and functions traditionally seen as stable and immutable, on the eve of a time where those were ready to collapse, similarly to the authority of judges, doctors and writing authorities. The character of Figaro trustily represents the hierarchic structure of the aristocratic regime, yet in times of changes.

The chanchada O barbeiro que se vira [The Resourceful Barber] (Massaini & Ramos, 1957), directed by Eurides Ramos¹⁵, is a rather close parodic adaptation of Rossini's opera. Fígaro is represented by the clown Arrelia (Waldemar Seyssel, 1905-2005). The plot takes place in the fictional Jabulândia¹⁶, a provincial town in a Brazilian region difficult to identify—if we refer to the songs with which the scenes are punctuated.

Similar to Rossini's work, the plot tells the saga of a young couple not allowed to get married, as the young (the victim) lives confined by her tutor, the old villain who aims to acquire her family heirloom. Colonel Clementino is "a man without any feeling, capable of utter cruelty against anyone who crosses his path": tyrant, all-mighty, eager for money, he granted the custody of the pupil Rosinha to a rogue, D. Basílio (fraud), piano teacher who makes money with cons.

The Rossinian Rosinha is not a villager, but lives without knowing the fury of the city. Rosinha is actually a country girl, even if she is acquainted with etiquette and good manners. Leonardo may be the character who contrasts the most with Count Almaviva: a poor plebeian with noble heart. Somehow, he resembles Lindoro, the count disguised as an average student. Arrelia becomes friends of the couple. Other supporting characters give rhythm and playfulness to the storyline¹⁷. Just as Beaumarchais' work, the nomad versions carry the tradition of the *commedia dell'arte*—at least when taking into account the main characters' functions and characteristics.

It will not be in vain that Arrelia dresses up as the much popular character: Arrelia/Figaro is the handyman, as he lives in a small city where there is always someone *making ends meet* to solve the inhabitants' issues. Like the opera plot, the fact of quickly doing everything, all at once, leads to several confusions and accidents. It gives rise to comedy and humor that more accurately belong to the profession of a clown.

¹³The opera premiered in 1816, with a libretto by Cesare Sterbini.

¹⁴Opera buffa is how the Italian opéras comiques of the first half of the 18th century are named. Successor of the commedia del arte, the opera buffa came from the opera seria, as an intermezzi, before becoming an autonomous gender. Among its characteristics, we find the fraudulent servant, the petty old man and the noble who falls in love for the poor maiden. The subject refers to the common citizen's daily life, narrated through a simple production and with a small orchestra, if compared to the opera seria. Some specific types emerged, such as the buffo bass. Soon the arias require dexterity and technique - Largo al factotum and Una vocce pocco fa (Figaro and Rosina, respectively) are full examples

¹⁵Produced by Cinelândia Brasil Produções and distributed by Cinedistri.

¹⁶ As we verified, there is a city with the same name in Somalia. But there is likely no relationship between the name chosen for the movie and the real city.

¹⁷The intendant, the gunman, the dressmaker and the costumer Tonico, the merchant Salim, the gossipmonger and the maid of the colonel (Margarida, Figaro's lover).

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At this point, we should return to the concepts of nomadism and mouvance. While elaborating them, Paul Zumthor was prospecting the malleability, the capacity and mutation of medieval poetry. Nomadism is the process through which oral poetic work is subjected to in order to be transformed and translated over time, so it can remain alive as a sign and memory. Mouvance, in turn, is the ability of the work to transmute into several translation processes. With the necessary adjustments done, these concepts may be applied to works of other nature, insofar as they are related to orality. Here, the barber and clown activities fit together: Arrelia/Fígaro appears in the second scene, at 5'18" of the movie, when a nameplate shows: barber-dentist-pharmacist-veterinary. The camera turns to Arrelia, who enters the scene declaiming rhythmic verses—a direct reference to Figaro's aria, on Sterbini's libreto:

Eu sou bamba de Jabulândia! Corto cabelo, faço barba e bigode ... dá receita até pra bode! Sou veterinário ... e dentista formado Eu sou o maioral Das mulheres o papai aqui é o maior! Todas me adoram e me amam sem rancor [sic] Conheco todas! Todas... Salteado e de cor: Loiras, morenas e de cor18.

 $^{18} \rm Leporello's$ aria, in DonGiovanni (Mozart/Da Ponte). [free translation: "I am the bully boy of Jabulandia, I do haircuts, shaving and moustache... I give recipes even for heartache! I am a veterinarian... and a graduated dentist, I am the big boss! For the women, daddy here is the best. Everyone adores me and loves me without any grudge [sic]. I know every one of them! Each one... each part and by heart: blondes, brunettes and coloured ones"].

In the three verses, there is a direct reference to the aria *Largo al factotum*, with an allusion to Madamina, il cattalogo è questo. The stage art is transported to the movie with as much communicability as the live show where the actors dialogue with the audience. In Arrelia's case, such aspects are clearly visible: "- How do you do, Arrelia? / - How do you do, How do you do, How do you do? Very well, very well, well, well". The catchphrase, characteristic of a clown, would then be transformed into a march in a later scene. The plot progresses rhythmically by sketches and gags, involving stereotyped characters, Arrelia's clients. Then comes up Zé Raimundo—groaning "ah!" of toothache—and Salim, the owner of the haberdashery and gossiper, who brings news of Rosinha's engagement with professor Basílio. In a series



of gestures and pantomimes, Arrelia pulls out the tooth of the client who suffers from rheumatism, letting him healed. How was this possible? With academic tone, he diagnoses: – "It's easy to explain: victim of intermittent intermediary granuloma with subterranean passage that infiltrated into the auricular vertebrae. . .". One can see that Arrelia uses a vocabulary elaborated as to seem as being a technical-scientific speech, something inherited from the ancient and oral tradition of theatre.

The plot is based on the Rossinian opera main excerpts, with musical performances so varied that they do not allow space-time identification. There will be an intercalation of diegetic musical excerpts, forming a long sequence (in the wedding scene), on the pretext of presenting plot scenes: when Lili the blackmailer appears, mistress of Basílio, followed by the robbery of 30,000 cruzeiros, the Brazilian currency of the time. Leonardo will be charged with the robbery and be arrested; Arrelia, the *factotum*, helps him to run away.

There are comic situations, overall when Leonardo and Arrelia are dressed as the dressmaker Maricota and her assistant. Despite the physical characterization, the actors' gesture is deliberately masculine (mainly Goulart), provoking laughs. There are incidental music insertions in almost all the action scenes, without oral speech.

Music, (p)art of the narrative

Music¹⁹ will have an important role in the work as a whole, even if it is not always seen as relevant semantic elements. We should make some comments on them for the reading. But, first, we need to go over the function of music in the composition storyline.

In 1988, the maestro and composer Júlio Medaglia, in charge of the soundtrack of several TV soap operas, published an essay in which he comprehensively broached the theme. From a series of examples, he highlights the importance of music in the narrative semantic construction. By listening to *O barbeiro que se vira*, we find clear examples of a relationship very well bound between music and storyline.

First of all, the music presented is mostly diegetic: from the first scene, when Leonardo hires the serenaders to declare his love to Rosinha, we can hear the tune *Moça bonita* [*Pretty Girl*], interpreted by Trio Nagô:

¹⁹ Moça bonita (Gilvan Chaves; Alcyr P. Vermelho): Trio Nagô; Acorrege a prenúncia (Vicente Amar): Trio Nagô; Magia (Lirio Panicalli; R. Lopes); Jorge Goulart; Muito bem (Arrelia; M. Ferreira; Mojica): Arrelia and Berta Loran; Dançavam maxixe no salão (G. Macedo; L. Faissal): Eliana; Quadrilha; Polca; Rancheira (Radamés Gnattali): instrumental band.





Figure 3. Moça bonita (Trio Nagô) Source: Cinemateca.

In the wedding scene, an instrumental *Quadrilha* leads the guests from the party to the dance; it is followed by the samba *Acorrege a prenúncia* [*Correct the Pronunciation*] performed by the Trio Nagô²⁰. Margarida enters the picture, inviting Arrelia to sing the march *Muito bem* [*Very Well*]. Once the musical performance is done, Arrelia invites Rosinha to sing. In turn, she interprets *Dançavam maxixe no salão* [*They Were Dancing Maxixe in the Ballroom*]. The song still plays as background music while Leonardo talks with Rosinha and Basílio steals the Colonel.

²⁰Trio Nagô was a vocal and instrumental band lined-up by Evaldo Gouveia, Mário Alves and Epaminondas de Souza and formed in Fortaleza, Brazil, in 1950. In 1954, the trio signed with Continental and, at the same year, recorded Moça bonita (Alcyr Pires Vermelho and Gilvan Chaves). Acorrege a prenúncia (Vicente Amar) was recorded for RCA Victor in 1956. These songs were included in the soundtrack of the movie after being released on records. For further details, see the Dicionário Cravo Albim (<http:// dicionariompb.com.br/>).



Figure 4. clockwise: Quadrilha; Acorrege a prenúncia; Muito bem;

Dançando maxixe no salão

Source: Cinemateca.



At the end of the movie, Leonardo, now a fugitive, hears the languid waltz *Magia* [*Magic*], sang by Jorge Goulart, the serenader, who stays in the bar, downstairs. The waltz turns into a *xote* (traditional music from North-East of Brazil), creating a sound frame for Lili's (the blackmailer) speech, who drinks to *drown her sorrow*.



Figure 5. Magia, by Jorge Goulart Source: Cinemateca.

The movie's last scenes are from the wedding and show, in a long shot, the arrival of donkeys bringing gifts. Once again the *Quadrilha* is played by the band hired for the party. Arrelia slips into the band, passing himself off as a tuba player.



Figure 6. Polca, by Gnattali Source: Cinemateca.

Other non-diegetic instrumental excerpts to be highlighted are from the couple's rendezvous at the waterfall and the moment Leonardo runs away; in the first one, by the use of a string section, in the second one, by the polka – a genre that musically defines Arrelia.

In the mood, by the book



²¹Without dwelling on this subject, we refer here to musical fragments with a preestablished meaning. As for the selected genres, the choices appropriately iconize the situations and characters' states of mind. The selected topics²¹ clearly refer to the sound landscape of the provincial rural world – although contrasting, for instance, with Rosinha's outfit and instruction level.

Moça bonita is a *rasqueado*. The name of this musical genre comes from the performative act of playing *rasgueado*, with the nails scratching the strings. This technique, which comes from flamenco, very present in Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul and Paraguay (in the *chamamé* and *guarânia*). The forms of vocal emission include falsetto, interjections and ornaments typical of Amerindian and Mexican *ranchera* music.

Gnattali's picaresque *Polca* appears as incidental music at 19'45", when Arrelia runs to deliver the message. The polka is an instrumental dance coming from Bohemia. Under the Brazilian influence, it merged with other dances such as *dobrado*, *galope*, *tango*, in addition to originating military and the carnival polkas. The same can be said about the *Quadrilha*, played during the ball.

The choice of the march *Muito bem?* signals Arrelia's [the protagonist] presence, as the song is his trademark, a kind of catchphrase; yet, *Acorrege a prenúncia* is samba, a popular music genre that was broadcast in the whole country. Therefore, it could be said that the samba fits with the success of the Trio Nagô at the time, and that the musical choices were made to attract the audience.

Dançavam maxixe no salão, sang by Eliana Macedo, is a maxixe, a popular music genre from the early 20th century. The lyrics refers to an old and obsolete time with some nostalgia mood. However, the maxixe is also mischievous. The choice of the maxixe for the female protagonist characterizes the intelligent young girl, living, against her will, in an anachronistic world. The xote we hear during the scene in the bar where Lili reports Basílio is played by the violin, accordion and acoustic guitar—once again, a characteristic and popular musical line-up with rural features.

Magia seems to be the exception to the set of works: As a waltz, originally instrumental and to which words were added later, its melodic and harmonic shape refers to Vienna. We should highlight the expressive power of chromaticism—a characteristic of the German aesthetic of Romanticism, and its rhetorical power to symbolize various emotions.

Other considerations should be made on *Acorrege a prenúncia*, *Magia* and *Moça bonita*: all these songs were recorded before the movie was released; therefore, we might suppose that: 1) Just as in other *chanchadas*, the movie edition was easier once the synchronicity had already been made (in fact, the



movie recording was a playback); 2) the fame of the broadcast artists would be a further motivation to bring the audience to the theatres, since the radio does not "physically" stage the artists; 3) the presence of broadcast artists in movies brings profit to the music industry.

Opera: identity and ostentation of status quo

We came to a point where it is fair to ask: considering that this work derives from a piece of music generally considered as *erudite*, why would the movie have such high reception from such a wide audience, including both lettered people and those with lower instruction?

As phrased earlier, we believe that the choice of an opera as storyline for a *chanchada* is not fortuitous. The fact is that the opera is typically associated with Italian culture and, almost always, in a stereotyped way; this frequently happens in the most varied situations and, especially, in the movies, where it helps constitute the imagery of the *paese*, of *vapore* songs and, in the 1960s, the *dolce vita*.

In Brazil, we should consider these typical features as a set, since Italian representativeness is rather strong due to the Portuguese court of John VI having embedded the taste for Italian music, particularly opera (mostly the Neapolitan school), to such an extent that it inspired the music of Portuguese composers, that is: both taste patterns and techniques followed the Italian model (Brandão, 2012).

In turn, the urbanization of São Paulo flourishes at the end of the 19th century. The city's economic development fosters the theaters²². In the capital city, the opera configures a form of manifestation of the coffee aristocracy *status quo* – the construction of the Municipal Theatre seals this purpose. Alongside, there are the Italian immigrants of humble origin who arrive and do not go to farm works. They generally are craftsmen (tailors, carpenters, streetcar drivers etc.) with little education, but who *drunk opera in their mother's milk*. In other words, in order to attend an opera recital was an activity that drew the capital elite, the intellectual elite and served as entertainment for the Italian immigrants (Meddi, 2008; Brandão, 2012).

We believe that this cultural trace of Italian culture represented in the two most important cities of the country, where the movie industry settled, largely justifies the success this kind of movie had in the long run, despite being highly disqualified by many media intellectuals²³. Our hypothesis is that the success of parodies such as *O barbeiro que se vira* is justified not just by the presence of beloved stars and marketing strategies, but also by the proximity of the storyline

²²Among those built during the 19th century, São José (1964-1898) was the most famous until the inauguration of the Municipal Theatre (1911). For detailed information, please see Meddi (2008). The Municipal Theatre is the only one that stands and remains famous until today, whether because of its prestigious performances or due to political disputes.

²³Up until a few years ago, the press relied on experienced writers and experts by areas of knowledge. Several factors (not only budget issues) resulted into the transfer of those tasks to people who typically have no academic recognition but earned prestige and credibility through the prominence they get in the media.



subject, or, in other words, the reception of the opera is an element of success *anchorage*. Referring once again to Zumthor (1997), we can affirm that work was engraved as a memory.

Another additional aspect is that, unlike the last decades, when musical genres were perceived according the receptors' socioeconomic classification and education level, during the 1950s, artists of different aesthetical affiliations could appear together in the same work or show: a gala evening could bring together, side to side, a lyrical singer and a singer playing viola (cf. Valente & Coli, 2018).

Besides the non-compartmentalization that occurred years later, during the 1940-1950s, the broadcasting of concerts and symphonic pieces was as common as the learning of music (especially the piano) in middle class families, and the notion that playing the piano confirmed the *gifts of the good marriageable young lady*. As such, it is no wonder that Rosinha, after saying farewell to her beloved one, hums some notes of the waltz *The Bat (The Fledermaus)*, by Johann Strauss, a piece of music from the classical repertoire of the Romantic period (also popular at that time).

Finally, it is worth noting Radamés Gnattali's competence as a composer and responsible for the movie soundtrack (the *Quadrilha* and incidental music), which highly contributed to the success of the work. Contrary to the depreciative way several critics refer to *chanchadas*²⁴—as occurs with Panicalli's opening theme for *Nem Sansão*, *nem Dalila*—, Gnattali's compositions are original, played by an instrumental band of great technical and interpretation skills²⁵.

The construction of the soundscape also proved noteworthy. An obvious example of this is the contraposition of crickets and frogs, as a way to signal the rural and nocturnal ambiance in the opening scene serenade. In short, we believe that the *chanchadas* need to be more *listened to*.

NEM SANSÃO, NEM DALILA AND O BARBEIRO QUE SE VIRA: SOME UNIMPORTANCE

As we sought to demonstrate in this analysis, the cinematographic works classified as *chanchadas* represent an important source of information, not only on the Brazilian sociocultural context, the history of cinema and the development of an original cinematographic language (despite the derogatory fame instilled by the critics of the time). More than that, they point out some elements which refer to cultural memory, artistic languages and others: which elements settle and how they arise in each work. Thus, as previously described, there are several elements that rambled from the original works to the *chanchadas*.

²⁴Although the chanchadas have lasted thirty years (since Acabaram-se os otários, of 1929, to the mid-1960s), we restricted our research to the 1950s, in accordance with our current research projects.

²⁵However, we could not find information on the instrumental bands playing in the soundtracks of the movies we analyzed. The name of musicians was also not usually mentioned, nor the composition of the bands used to be predefined. Consequently, the composers counted with whom was available—information sent by email by T. A. Pinto, specialist on the subject (personal communication, 2/17/2017).



Furthermore, two elements appear in a paroxysmal manner, the articulation process between a popular culture, barely emerging from a patriarchal rural world, and its ambiguous eagerness for modernization and American glamour. A first element is related to the formal notion of parody. As Hutcheon observes (1985, p. 51), the parody is a relation between texts distant from each other, taken in an ironic and critical manner which, eventually, assume the recognition by the decoder of the original text. In both movies, as previously explained, there were original references: the classical *Samson and Delilah* and *The Barber of Seville*. The audience would already have this information. The shift, mockery, improvisation and decontextualization (typical operations of the *chanchadas*) can only happen according to the consciousness of the original reference. Thus, it is clearly an articulation between the strength of literate culture and something local resistance. Ambiguity amid an urbanizing society.

Other aspect stands in the background of the *chanchada*, which refers to the traditional professions of clown, comedian and barber. And, it is precisely the clowns Oscarito and Arrelia who lead the plot. And their performance is related to several relevant factors: the work tradition, life and family history, the artistic career. Oscarito²⁶, who was born in Spain, came from a circus family. In addition to juggling and acting, he also played music. Arrelia (Waldemar Seyssel) was born in Jaguariaíva, Paraná, Brazil, and came from a circus family originating from the Seyssel County, near Grenoble, in France ("Morre aos 99...", 2005 ["Dies at the Age of 99"]).

²⁶Oscar Lorenzo Jacinto de la Imaculada Concepción Teresa Diaz (Málaga, 8/16/1906; Rio de Janeiro, 8/4/1970).

In short, the comedian and the clown express in a paroxysmal way the cultural ambiguity of *chanchadas*, which, on the one hand, mixed the taste for burlesque and picaresque with some belittled epic stories, and on the other hand also imitated the modern Hollywood and called for consumption (and consumerism) of modernities. Brazil was also experiencing such a dilemma at the time, namely the ambiguous movement of Brazilian anachronism in the 1950s.

As such, we believe that, from the examples of the movie *Samson and Delilah* and the opera *The Barber of Seville*, specific elements and circumstantial conditions may foster processes of nomadism and mouvance—even if in a parodic manner, as in the examples we mentioned.

In this interchange between cult art and entertainment culture, morphologic elements of the work of art intertwine, producing new appropriations, within new schemes which result into various, and sometimes unexpected, semantic chains. And, frequently, nomadism appears in elements not always considered as essential for the languages as a whole, as also occurs



with fashion and music. But these *unimportant* elements are able to foster new forms of aesthetic sensibility, since they seek new reading keys: a new perceptive device. Accepted by the community of consumers, these new signs convert into culture texts that turn into memory, resonating within media culture.

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