



**Visible and invisible  
scratches in a Brazilian  
cinema of uprisings**  
*Riscos visíveis e invisíveis  
em um cinema brasileiro  
de levantes*



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**Abstract:** The gesture of silent insubordination, kept out of sight, was quite present in the Brazilian film production carried out in the 2010s. Based on a methodological approach inspired by the Warburgian boards from the Atlas Mnemosyne, this article gathers sequences from eight films where it is possible to feel the pathos of a muffled scream manifested at the moment it can no longer bottle itself up. Once they are displayed together on the board, these images can activate, from the collective and public nature provided by the exhibition of the movies itself, the energy of an Uprising.

**Keywords:** Brazilian cinema; uprising; pathos.

**Resumo:** o gesto de insubordinação silenciosa, feita à espreita do olhar, foi bastante presente na produção cinematográfica brasileira realizada nos anos de 2010. A partir de uma aposta metodológica inspirada nas pranchas warburgianas no *Atlas Mnemosyne*, este artigo dispõe juntas sequências de oito filmes nos quais é possível sentir presente o *páthos* de um grito abafado manifestado quando ele não consegue mais se conter. Uma vez juntas, essas imagens são capazes de acionar, a partir de uma natureza coletiva e pública proporcionada pela própria exibição dos filmes, a energia de um levante.

**Palavras-chave:** cinema brasileiro; levante; páthos.

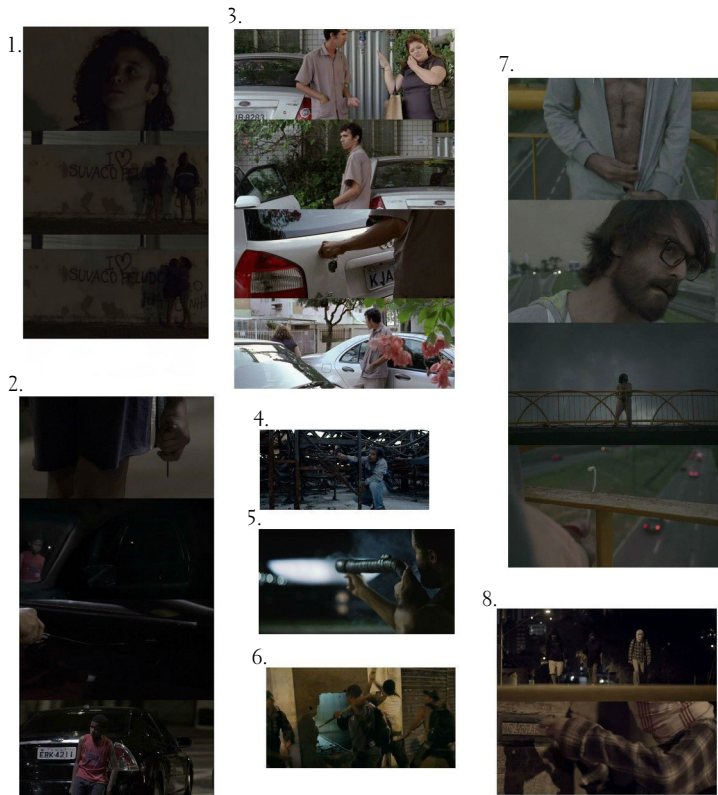


Figure 1: Board of uprisings.  
Source: Elaborated by the author (2018).

*Aprendi com Valéry  
um pouco disto que faço:  
“Eu mordo o que posso”  
(palavra, carne ou osso)  
Me acho  
me acabo de vez  
me disfarço*

*Poética, Ricardo Aleixo*

The camera exhibits and evinces what is born as an invisible and silent act. In two cinematic sequences, the tip of the metal rips the car bodywork and, on the face of the person who leaves this mark, an expression of anger that is as contained as the water in a dam in the second just before the first crack appears on its wall. The scenes mentioned belong to two Brazilian films released in 2013: *Neighboring*

Sounds, by Kleber Mendonça Filho (Figure 1 – image 3), and Riocorrente, by Paulo Sacramento (Figure 1 – image 2). Not by chance, 2013 was also the year that a dam broke in Brazil, in the shape of a social movement that contained within itself all the ambiguities and contradictions of the country's socio-political scenario. The sequences that show these two characters anonymously imprint the accumulated frustration precede and, in a way, foreshadow what would happen in the national cinema produced in that period.

The gesture of intentional scratch in the car should not be brushed aside. When it appears in two films that, in completely different ways, discuss essentially an urban malaise, the repetition of this gesture is no longer a fluke, but a sign of a symptom. However, in addition to being a symptom of something very specific such as the Brazilian political scene, these sequences gain power when we start to observe them as surviving traits of an energy field that goes far beyond the films where they appear. Because although we may not have seen these scenes exactly before, we have certainly seen these images before. For they contain the pathos of a confrontation, cunning insubordination, made with the intention of leaving its signature recorded in space without knowing who signed it. Disobedience that can only be founded on the absence of witnesses.

And yet, the camera that would naturally be the annihilating eye to thwart this gesture of scratching the car bodywork, ends up amplifying it. While also simulating the insubordination of being there recording that image, its intentions become ambiguous: at the same time that it brings out the debate about the reason for the necessarily invisible essence of this action, it also takes responsibility for the gesture, the camera itself is also the one that scratches. The image and the recording of this image share here not only the same petulant nature in the face of what is, conventionally, authorized to exist but also the complicity of the viewer and a certain expectation for undisciplined gestures, from the characters and the camera, to happen. In these shots there's also space for a response energy – the scratch – to impossible environments – the oppression of the status quo, reified here in the figure of cars.

Spatial segregation is an important scene mark in the two sequences mentioned, as well as the gesture that appears in defiance of it. In this respect, they differ from other sequences present in the history of cinema in which actions are intentionally filmed with a set of moral values capable of transmitting an immediate dislike for the image. In these two key sequences of small and discreet insubordinations, the dividing line between something that functions as ethically valid revenge and that which is born only as a cruel impulse from its perpetrators is blurred.

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The looks enunciated, for example, on the faces of the boys in Luis Buñuel's *The Young and the Damned* (1950), when they are about to rip and steal the bag of a blind beggar, are similar to the look of the artful and discreet protagonist of *Pickpocket* (1959), by Robert Bresson, when he takes action on the Paris metro. And all of these expressions are mirrored, to a greater or lesser extent, in the looks and expressions of the flannel and the boy who scratch the cars in *Neighboring Sounds* and *Riocorrente*. However, due to the way and the place where these two sequences are placed in the films, it is not possible to establish an immediate relationship of unquestionable repulsion for the gesture itself. For it is possible that there is also something rewarding in these sequences of cars being torn.

In these films, the sequences work sometimes as the prologue to a state of mind that will set the tone for the rest of the film (*Riocorrente*), and sometimes as the possible and legitimate response to an evident situation of oppression (*Neighboring Sounds*). The pathos that is present in these sequences of contemporary national cinematography can easily be taken as a representation regime compacted by the respective diegeses in which they appear. But, far beyond the representation, which in this case concerns a state of discomfort with living in certain city projects and the possible answer given to this, there is something in the set of facial expressions, the arrangement of the scenes and in the montage of shots that compose these sequences, expanding the debate to other images that, once placed together on an imagined board, can open symbolic layers, – extending the extra field of these sequences and, by extension, these films. The intention of this paper could easily restrain itself at only observing what the sparks produced in the contact not only between these two sequences but also between other shots of contemporary national cinema can tell us. However, it is in the “iconology of intervals” (MICHAUD, 2013), that is, in that apparently empty space between one image and another, that it is intended here to search for the active principle that makes these shots or sequences attract each other. The intention of the image board that this article introduces is not to look for meaning in its assembly, as the sensory-motor cinema does in the Deleuzian concept of the image-movement (DELEUZE, 1983), but to seek a sensation, an energy that calls to the same magnetic field.

What other sequences in contemporary Brazilian cinema can thus trigger this sensation? Here we present the images as they are numbered on the board (Figure 1).

1. We can hear the sound of the spray can while the shot is closed in the face of one of the protagonists of the film *Tremor Iê* (2019), by Livia de Paiva and Elena Meirelles: she looks around. No one is coming. The shot opens up. It is now

possible to see not only the protagonist but another woman present on the scene. They are in the corner of the image. At the periphery of the image, behind them, an old, faded wall, where the message reads: “I love hairy armpit” and “Cunha, out”. Still on the edge of the frame, they approach and kiss. Everything makes up the gesture: the graffiti on the wall, the appreciation of “hairy armpit” which, in this case, relates to the insubordination of women who no longer support control over how they should take care of their bodies, the “Cunha, out” expression that, although it is an evident reference to a former Brazilian deputy<sup>2</sup>, serves in the image as a broader sign of oppressive power and, finally, the kiss that ends the sequence: a kiss that goes against the assumptions of heteronormative oppression. It is night and the population of the city that manages to go out on the streets at that time always walks with reinforcements: they are two women guarded by their two shadows on the wall. The shadows, however, move, leave the scene as well as the bodies that create them, while the graffiti<sup>3</sup> does not, it remains. Its nature is the insurgent risk of the rebel, who can only be anonymous while practicing the act of doing graffiti, since in a later moment the authorship needs to become evident from a signature that is very specific to each graffiti artist. The trace in this city is the trace of Pompeii, known for having been swallowed by a volcano; Pompeii was also the city where messages were painted, almost always anonymously, on the walls: political, erotic, insulting. “I love hairy armpit” persists over time.

4. There are abandoned sheds in the city. In one of them, which looks more like a dump of rusty structures – irons of progress that had been broken for some time, oxidized by greed –, there is Dimas. Was he “that” Dimas, the biblical bandit redeemed on the cross that was next to the one that crucified Jesus? The same Dimas, who in Mano Brown’s words, thus becomes the “first ‘thug’ in history” (sic)? Yes and no. Yes, because the Dimas of the film is multiple, it contains all the ‘thug’ Dimas in History: present, past, and future not only of Brazil but of the world. And no, because, by incorporating these other possibilities of being Dimas, this character inevitably constitutes something new: Dimas Cravalaça, an agent sent from the future to collect evidence about the crime of the Brazilian State against peripheral populations. In this shed that is dirty and empty of life, it is he who, with a closed fist, shoots imaginary bullets towards the “progress ass-kissers”, the world of “225 installments” (sic), the “racist who will not change ever”, to “Fuckin’ Europe”. In the movie *White Out, Black In* (2014),

<sup>2</sup> Eduardo Cunha, a former PMDB deputy, arrested in October 2016, for the crime of passive corruption, money laundering and foreign exchange evasion.

<sup>3</sup> The spelling of the word is used here as it is written by the movement of those who practice graffiti in urban centers.

by Adirley Queirós, the character of actor Dilmar Durães elaborates in his imagination a war field. His performance simulates a direct clash with the forces of Capital and it is, in fact, the possible visual strategy not only for the character but fundamentally for the cinema of Adirley Queirós, who is essentially interested in playing with the fabulations of film genre— action, science fiction – even if these fabulations are filmed with precarious budgets. The war that we don't see, the invisible weapon, the bullets that don't exist: the sneaky movement in Dimas Cravalaça's body forces us to fill the images. If in cinema there is a constant game between what we see and what we are led to see, there is here the explicit revelation of the trick: what we are led to see from the absence and what we see in the materiality of optical presence is, effectively, the motto of the scene. In the first case, we can imagine bullets, enemies, weapons, entering the character's hallucination. In the second, the staging of the war reveals the very condition of this character's existence: he can only rebel against the system in the invisibility of his gesture. Dimas' cunning, hidden behind blocks of rust, lies in shooting the way you can shoot. Just like Queirós films the way he can film. The director who plays for his viewers the possibility of elaborating on what we do not see is the same that deceives and disobeys cinema public funds that approve his film as a documentary when what he does is called science fiction. "I bite as much as I can", wrote Paul Valéry. Dimas uses the weapons he can use: the anger that runs through his body and the imagination that allows him to shoot and scratch this space with bullet holes that never existed. Dimas shoots with a closed fist. And every fist that closes in protest leaves a trail (whether visible or not) when it leaves the scene.

5. In *Once There Was Brasília* (2017), also by Adirley Queirós, we can see the materiality of the weapon on the scene, something that seems to be made with the botch of a piece of pipe. Again, we are forced to imagine the bullet and the damage it causes. However, here the camera points its lens at the surface what will be imaginarily scratched: the National Congress. In addition to cars and buildings, this is the greatest symbolic monument of oppressive power in Brazil. This is the one where the graffiti, the scratch, or the bullet hole would hardly reach, and again for that reason, the director forces us to do the exercise of imagining this scratch. The character who shoots, a guy who also comes from a future time when the time machine available is an old and patched car, looks suspiciously to the side and runs right after he fires his gun towards Congress, because his presence there cannot, in any way, be seen. This image closely resembles a sequence of photos made by the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, which he called the Perspective Study. In his photographic records, carried out between 1995 and 2017, a gesture is repeated: the artist himself

extends his middle finger towards famous monuments of humanity: from the Celestial Square in China to Monalisa in the Louvre, from the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona to the White House in the States United. The gesture itself does not imprint a mark on any of these monuments, and yet, this whole series by Weiwei is itself a great scratch on these postcards.

6. In the dramatic climax of *Era o Hotel Cambridge* (2016), there is a concrete and nervous record of something that the dramaturgy of the film softened until that moment. Before these images appear, Eliane Caffé's film even softens and sucks the hard reality of some subjects in the name of a supposedly poetic framework, displacing the concrete experiences of these people using choreographed performances by both two actors (José Dumont and Suely Franco) and the quite diverse population from an occupation of the FLM (Front for the Housing Struggle). The sequence of militants breaking the wall of an abandoned building is still an inverted reflection of another documentary image shown at the beginning of the film: filmed from a cellphone camera, Congolese workers are seen hammering tunnels from underneath the land, in subhuman working conditions, because they need to extract coltan, an ore used not only by the cellphone industry, but also by the armaments industry. Unlike the images recorded in Congo, the scenes captured in São Paulo refer to a gesture of insurrection, made in the dead of night, under the eyes of only an authorized cinema camera. If for some people it is only possible to scratch a car and for others, this tear necessarily needs to be imagined, here the characters manage to tear concrete. The police see nothing, the cinema does.

7. In one of the final moments of *New Dubai* (2014), by Gustavo Vinagre, the director, who is also the main actor in the film, is filmed on a pedestrian bridge in the city of São José dos Campos, where the narrative takes place. Throughout the film, he uses his own body as a catalyst for desires that the city denies, creating ironic situations that sometimes flirt with an imaginary of horror films that populated the childhood and adolescence of the characters in the picture. There is an analog game in every script since Vinagre faces the phallic verticalization of urban horizons with his rigid penis. The character who says that he only gets excited in public spaces is seen, at this moment, masturbating. The camera films him from afar and up close, he looks around, no one is coming, the pedestrian bridge is empty. Where are the people in that city? Inside the cars that pass under that bridge. The character is close to cumming. And then the camera captures the exact moment when his sperm gushes out of his body. As in Queirós' films, the director suggests we exercise our imagination skills. For it is possible to deduce that this sperm falls on some car that passes under



the pedestrian bridge: once falling and sticking on the car windows, this semen acts as the organic, personal and non-transferable signature of someone who triggers his lust from the sensation itself of being, anonymously, in a public space. Not only that, he is also someone who wants to create a counter-narrative to the oppression of urban bodies that, as Georg Simmel (1973) would say, must always remain in this *blasé* state as a strategy to survive the stimuli of the modern city. The militancy for the right to the city is interpreted here by the fight for the right to get excited and cum in the city.

8. In the film *Com os punhos cerrados* (2014), by Luiz Pretti, Ricardo Pretti, and Pedro Diogenes, like in *New Dubai*, the three protagonists are also the three directors of the film. However, unlike in Vinagre's film, these three filmmakers create problematic characters for themselves. Together, they interpret a stereotype of young anarchists, mimicking a certain type of European intellectual crystallized in the figure of male chauvinist and misogynist white men highly concerned with the discourse of liberation from power, but little attentive to the oppressions that they operate in the name of a utopia that free them from the malaise of living in the city. The city that they live is Fortaleza, and this is where they act mostly from a pirate radio station, where they transmit command words. They also act with their presence, when they are seen during the night, masked, with the mission of leaving letters in luxury city residences. It is in this moment of going out on the streets at night that the framing and scene assembly allow the construction of a scenario of persecution and constant surveillance of a system of power over people. In this clandestine and nocturnal walk, we never see their faces, hidden behind bandanas, but we see their shadows, we see their bodies fleeing from the image, escaping as they can from the frames. The film was made after the June 2013 protests in Brazil, and, in the contamination of vibrations not yet decanted, it is clearly an attempt to respond directly and immediately to the strange sensation that befell the country in what would be the foreshadowing of an eternal return of the indigestible "7 × 1", the symptom score of the country's history.

### Unconquerable bodies

Disobedient images also call for epistemic disobedience. One that is closer to the poetic intuition of an intoxicated Dionysus than to the rational and balanced contemplation of an omnipotent Apollo (NIETZSCHE, 2007), even though these two forces do not eliminate each other in the approach to images, even because the very disposition in investigating them establishes the exercise of a minimally Apollonian appraisal. We are, after all, contemplating images: the question is how we contemplate

them. Do we do it from the well-established contours that limit the bodies, or from the impulses that pass through the flesh of these bodies through their interior?

The Nietzschean gesture of seeking this drive that exists in an unconquerable body, charged with power, is undeniably a fundamental starting point to approach this young car keeper and the child who lives on the street. First optical impression? The tear. First haptic impression? Anger. Like revenge, signature, confrontation, visual expression of dammed-up energy that needs to be purged in some way. Something lives in the hell of human neglect. Because anger here exists as a possibility for this car keeper and this boy who lives on the street to claim their existence in history.

The right to anger as an inscription – a tear? – in the human narrative, even if it appears in camouflage, it is still legitimate when it is directly opposed to the institutions that oppress and deny that same narrative. Paulo Freire (2011, p. 74) was already discussing “the legitimacy of anger against fatalistic docility in the face of the denial of people”. Let there be talk about anger, then:

I have the right to be angry, to manifest it, to have it as a motivation for my fight just as I have the right to love, to express my love for the world, to have it as a motivation for my fight because, historical, I live History as a time of possibility, not of determination. If reality were like this because it was said that it would have to be, there would not even be a reason to be angry. My right to anger presupposes that, in the historical experience in which I participate, the future is not something “pre-given”, but a challenge, a problem. My anger, my just anger, is based on my revolt in the face of the denial of the right to “be more” inscribed in the nature of human beings [...] Adaptation to situations that deny humanization can only be accepted as a consequence of the dominating experience, or as an exercise in resistance, as a tactic in political struggle. I give the impression that today I accept the condition of being silenced to fight well, when I can, against the denial of myself. (FREIRE, 1996, p. 30)

The car keeper in *Neighbouring Sounds* and the street boy in *Riocorrente* share the motivation to fight against self-denial. At the same time, they also operate against the discourse that man adapts, that he bows to the fatalistic condition from which one cannot escape.

In *Neighbouring Sounds*, the act happens as an action within the narrative, in a logic of chaining between cause and effect: the character is humiliated by the owner of the car and, without her noticing, scratches her car. The sequence starts in the outer corridor of a building, where a woman is seen leaving the house holding

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a bag in one arm while talking to someone else on the phone. She approaches the fixed camera to the point where we see a close-up on her ear, marked by seeds of auricular acupuncture, an allegory of the middle class. The movie cuts to the scene where a boy, that earns money guarding cars, offers help to this woman who has just left the building and she, who ignores what he says, says only that she will give the money to his friend. He says he is not asking for money and she, still without listening to him, makes a gesture asking him to shut up. The man changes his aspect and a contained, discreet hatred appears on his face. The camera now follows him. He walks slowly behind the woman's car and, with the tip of a key, scratches the rear of the car from end to end. There is a sound signal played on the scene here: the friction noise between the key and the car is accentuated. The amplified sound of this gesture becomes the culmination of the sequence. The moment of the interaction between the unknown arrogant lady and the street car keeper takes place in the first of the three chapters of the feature and works as anticipation of other sequences that also bring characters who, accumulating frustrations, cross the boundary of at some point is socially expected from them.

In *Riocorrente* the sequence is actually a prologue. It happens right before the movie title appears on the screen and acts as the first trigger fired before a story that has yet to be told. In the foreground, we see a closed frame between the character's waist and knee, which is on his back. There is a focus on your hand holding a nail. This initial shot immediately throws us into images repeated in the cinema history of murderers, sometimes serial killers, who are filmed in that same position (facing away from the camera) holding their weapon discreetly before committing their crimes. The movie cuts to an open shot of the city of São Paulo at night and returns to a camera movement that accompanies him, still in a closed frame, in which his face cannot be seen. There is a short but important camera movement there. It is a follow shot, when the camera follows the character behind him, denying his face and, therefore, his subjectivity and, in this case, also denying the motivation for his subsequent action. One more cut and then, from inside the car, we see a boy approaching. The camera finally shows his face and, soon after, a closed shot of him scratching the car. The scene ends with him leaning against the car as if nothing had happened. His aspect does not change, he always remains rigid, circumspect.

Contrary to what happens in *Neighbouring Sounds*, *Riocorrente's* character does not act in response to any previous action. His gesture, in fact, exists to set the tone in which the rest of the entire film will be addressed. The scratch in the car in the opening sequence is actually mirrored in several other sequences throughout the narrative: angry dogs that choke on collars, the lion that growls behind a railing, the woman that runs on the (static) treadmill of a gym, motorcycles that rotate inside the Globe of Death. Everything in *Riocorrente* speaks of powerful energy trapped in the increasingly claustrophobic spaces of the city, an energy that needs to be contained, but that will inevitably burst at some point.

With these two sequences, the repetition of some gestures can be seen: the bodies of the characters leaning against the cars, unfriendly facial expressions, clenched fists. Using these images as centralizing forces, what will be done is to put them in contact with others, through which one passes through the pathos of insubordination that can only manifest itself through camouflages. And what better environment to exercise the art of disguise than the city? In the space where faces serve to create unindividualized landscapes and uniform crowds of people who come and go, the field of the invisible expands. The insubordination mentioned here has, therefore, an urban nature, since it is the experience of living in this automated space, which destroys subjectivities, that triggers the agglutinated gestures in this article. Images that have the strength of disobedience that, in itself, cannot be witnessed. It is only seen by someone who takes it as an expressive force of a human condition and, in this case specifically, by a cinematographic language that takes the gesture for itself, amplifying not only the insubordinate action but the result of it: the scratches in space.

### **Methodological bet**

When we have cinematographic sequences, taken from films with quite different formal proposals that, without any previous pact from their directors, bring about very similar manifestations of disguised insubordination, the repetition of this gesture may be more than a coincidence. When we observe then that other images of Brazilian feature films produced in the same period activate a very similar gesture in their intensity, one begins to work with the suspicion that the notion of symptom, so fundamental to the methodological experiments of Aby Warburg (2015), becomes

crucial to seek what is said when talking about the pacts established between these characters and the environment where they circulate – in this case, the city.

Equally fundamental to the Warburgian iconographic experiments is the idea that images are charged with energies far beyond their respective representations, and that, therefore, their agglutination from a common pathos opens an anthropological time of surviving affections from the moment these images, or objects, are placed close together.

How, then, to search for images that can enhance the debate and unveil these survivals based on two sequences of people scratching car bodywork? Was it for what the gesture represents? By the facial expression and poses on the bodies of those who trigger this gesture? Or because of that, in addition to the formal borders of the image, these same bodies appear in what pulsates within them? There is a bet here that it could be a combination of everything above. In fact, betting is a keyword in undertaking this analysis. We bet that bodies produce thought, we bet that Warburg, the man who talked to butterflies<sup>4</sup>, managed to have a methodological intuition capable of opening the time of images, we bet that the empty spaces between these images arranged on a board are everything but empty.

It is important to note that Warburg's methodological bets undergo some changes throughout his life. At first, the German historian looked for what he called a *Pathosformel* of images, and, in his last years of life, used as an image attraction tool an "atlas principle" (DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2013b). There are, therefore, two ways of approaching the cinematographic sequences in question, and both concern the distinct methodological intentions (and intuitions) applied by Warburg (2015), but intertwined with each other: the first is in the identification of the *Pathosformel*, that is, formulas of the pathetic, of physiognomies, movements, and gestures that survive and manifest themselves in images that cross times and spaces; the second is linked to an ambitious project, in which the author tried, from archeology of knowledge, to assemble boards in which the images started to establish contiguity of forces between them.

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<sup>4</sup> In the preface to Michaud's (2013) book on *Aby Warburg and the moving image*, Didi-Huberman mentions that Warburg could spend hours talking to butterflies, insects that were themselves the pulse-image itself, and recalls that the word "imago" designates the final state of insects in complete metamorphosis. The butterfly is a complete metamorphosis.

In addition to all these intuitions that, paradoxically, are scientific, since there is a rigorous constellational exercise – inexhaustible, both in the case of Warburg with his unfinished *Atlas Mnemosyne* (2011), and in that of Walter Benjamin, with the also unfinished *Arcades Project* (2002) – of reworking the concept of memory in our society, there is also another bet at stake: that the thought made by Warburgian images is thought in motion and, therefore, perfectly applicable to the cinema. Although he has never worked with any cinematographic image at all, Warburg created a method of assembling the images that, according to Philippe Alain-Michaud, ends up creating a movement very similar to that of cinema itself.

Scrolling, attendance, cutting: the images gathered by Warburg on the Mnemosyne boards work in the manner of discontinuous sequences, which only express their expressive significance on condition that they are taken in a chaining arrangement: the panels function not as pictures, but as screens, where they are phenomena that cinema produces in succession, are reproduced simultaneously. (MICHAUD, 2013, p. 300)

Focusing on what is felt and narrated from the layout of images of the board presented here, it would be important (but, according to the Warburgian methodology, not exactly essential) to describe where they come from and what each of them brings to the scene. This will be done from the perspective that the pathos that aggregates these images start from three different perspectives. Approaches that, according to Didi-Huberman, were already given when Warburg started applying *Pathosformel* in his research:

The unveiling of “pathos formulas” is not evident. It is not enough to identify some analogies between different representations of the same type of gesture to make their genealogical connection emerge and to understand the process of “body mark of surviving time”. *Pathosformel's* sources and theoretical bases are numerous. They presuppose, at least, a significant articulation of three points of view, I would even say that of three positions: philosophical (to problematize the very term “pathos” and “formula”), historical (to bring out the genealogy of objects) and anthropological (to account for the cultural relationships that these objects establish). (DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2013a, p. 177)

Therefore, from a philosophical point of view, we need to understand that the pathos that Warburg deals with is taken as a capacity to be affected, a power or,

in the words of Nietzsche (2007), a “will to power” that does not separate passion from action, when unconscious forces become producers of forms themselves. “[...] The will to power manifests itself as the capacity for being affected, and as the determined capacity of force to be itself affected” (DELEUZE, 1972, p. 70 apud DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2013b, p. 183). All of the images above carry this desire for power not only over their characters (they all have a profound ability to be affected), but particularly by the audience watching the sequences. In a way, they function in the diegesis of their respective films as moments that synthesize this power that is given in the argument of each of these stories.

From the historical and anthropological point of view, these sequences were taken from Brazilian films shown between 2012 and 2017, therefore, there are two conditions in common between them all: space and time, assuming the sharing of both a socio-political situation and symbolic repertoires. Contrary to the central idea of the Warburgian *Pathosformel*, which expanded each image to unrelated times and spaces, there is here a deliberate attempt to apply the methodology of the atlas principle as a way to identify the survival of gestures and symbols in a body that is temporarily and geographically cohesive, precisely because the central question of this research starts from a concern to identify the strategies, either calculated or intuitive, that reveal how a particular set of fiction feature films, or even films that create fictional devices in documentary structures, reveal the conditions of people’s existence who live in urban spaces, in a historical context in which the debate about the right to the city had become central in the country.

In other words, I am making a disobedient use of the assumptions that aggregate the images as they were originally used from the concept of *Pathosformel*. In this sense, I am much closer to the drives that moved the images on the dark canvas of Atlas Mnemosyne, brought together under the condition of sharing the same energy, than the original research by Warburg (2015), which, more attentive to formal aspects, could both identify anthropological survivals between the lines of the dresses of the nymphs of ancient history and the muses of Sandro Botticelli, as well as between the cry of despair of the Hellenic sculpture of the Laocoon and the photographic record of a Hopi Indian in the snake ritual, in North America during the 1920s.

I move within an undeniable passion invested by Warburg in his boards organized and reorganized according to intuitions that, although directed to the

possibility of scientific thought, were born from the restlessness of someone who needed the images to cure a diagnosed schizophrenia. This board emerges from personal concerns from the identification of a recurrence of the aforementioned gestures and symbols in aesthetically diverse cinematography. If the dictionary principle presents words whose denotative meaning seeks messages, the atlas principle places images on a table whose connotative meaning, instead of messages, seeks a montage that can read the world. And in this case, the world is the Brazil of the years 2010.

Let us imagine, for a moment, all the sequences of the board, here with their static images, in the duration of their movements, in a closed and dark room, where everywhere we would see these insurgency images. What, together in their differences and similarities, do they tell us?

### **An uprising triggered by the cinema**

In 2016, the philosopher and art historian Georges Didi-Huberman signed for the curatorship of an exhibition at the Jeu de Paume museum in Paris, which, based on the Warburgian atlas principle, organized images of uprisings throughout history. In Brazil, the same exhibition took place at Sesc Pinheiros between October 2017 and January 2018. Along with the exhibition, there is a publication of the exhibition's catalog, in which not only Didi-Huberman but several invited authors, discuss the concepts that surround the word "uprising". In one of these texts, the philosopher Antonio Negri (2017) writes about the negative and positive ontology of the term. The denial would be rooted in the idea that the feeling of nostalgia can easily eliminate the desire for upheaval, unfolding into a kind of cowardice and collective apathy justified by utopian speeches that most anesthetize that they provoke.

In positive ontology, there would be two moments: the first guided by desire, a desire that starts from the body not supporting the conditions given by the external world, and a second moment of producing subjectivity of that body. "Positive ontology links the two moments, planting on earth what rises in the sky" (NEGRI, 2017, p. 41). At the end of the text, Negri takes up this relationship between the materiality of the body (earth) and what he, based on an untamed desire, creates in the imaginary (heaven). The uprising then arises from a difference between the voice of a system and the refusal to listen to that voice. The difference, for Negri, is equivalent to resistance



which, in turn, is equivalent to uprising. And what, in the world, can manifest itself as a difference? A smile, perhaps.

Alexis de Tocqueville evokes in *Souvenirs* [Memories of 1848] the day of June 1848. Today it is dinner in a beautiful apartment on the left bank of the River Seine, in the 7th *arrondissement*. The Tocqueville family is reunited. On that calm night, cannon fire suddenly sounds, fired by the bourgeoisie at the insurgent workers' riot – it is a distant noise on the other side of the river. A chill goes through the guests, there is a tense, restless silence. Does a young maid who serves at the table and has just returned from the insurgent Saint-Antoine *faubourg* let out a smile, the true sign of the uprising? It is the same smile that terrified the tsar, the pope, and the lord of Tocqueville. Isn't there the "breath" of joy that constitutes the spark of liberation? (NEGRI, 2017, p. 46)

There is a similar nature between the disobedient smile of the worker of the Tocqueville family and the agglutinated gestures on the board exposed here. They are all born out of resistance, sometimes poetic, sometimes impulsive, now orgasmic, now all at the same time. But always, in all cases, it is a resistance that is born of a disguise and is created in the blind spot of the social panopticon. As a result, how could the images on this board be taken as uprisings if they deny two fundamental principles of the conceptual nature of an uprising? According to Judith Butler (2017), in this same catalog organized by Didi-Huberman, every uprising is, in essence, collective and, in addition, always carries a symbolic value precisely because it is made public, that is, it needs to be seen by a large number of people. "The uprising is standing with others against a form of power, it is showing and making oneself heard in situations in which, precisely, standing is not allowed" (BUTLER, 2017, p. 25).

Therefore, an inevitable question arises: isolated in themselves, many of these sequences could not be read as an uprising. But if we activate them all at the same time, in the same space, could we not visualize an uprising, of a public and collective nature, operated by the national cinema itself? And what kind of uprising would that be that almost always lurks? What marks and cracks does it leave in its way? We work here, of course, with the hypothesis that, once together, in an exercise of montage that is simultaneously warburgian and cinematographic friction between images that carry a common affection, these scenes fabulate another narrative that

extrapolates the respective diegeses in which originally met. One that concerns an uprising gesture promoted from this montage.

In the socio-political scenario of Brazil in the 2010s, national cinema feeds on an imaginary of the malaise of the times, on a latent discomfort in living in large cities and, particularly after 2013, it also feeds on a gradual pessimism about the country's political prospects. By placing the sequences selected here together, an energy field that oscillates between energy containment and the body that rises is perceived (but even when it rises, there is the need to hide it somehow). It is possible to identify that, when we dive in the intervals between these sequences, we find ourselves in the space of a cinema that, absorbing and feeding back the environment where it is born, produces a muffled cry.

In fact, it is possible to establish a parallel between the muffled scream that manifests itself in people scratching cars, shooting in the bush at invisible enemies, doing graffiti and breaking walls and sending anonymous letters with that which Ismail Xavier (2018) calls "figures of resentment", which he observes to be repeated in some characters of Brazilian cinema in the 1990s. In his text, Xavier brings the idea of resentment from two axes: as it is given in the second dissertation on *Genealogy of Morality*, "in which Nietzsche comments ways to seek justice in the field of resentment" (XAVIER, 2018, p. 314) and in the first chapter of *L'homme du ressentiment*, by Max Scheler, when a re-reading of Nietzsche is made to describe resentment as a:

Psychological disposition, of a certain permanence, which, by systematic repression, releases certain emotions and feelings, which are in themselves normal and inherent to the foundations of human nature, and tend to cause a more or less permanent distortion of the sense of values, as well as the ability to judge. Such emotions and feelings include, above all: resentment and the desire for revenge, hatred, evil, jealousy, envy, malice. (SCHELER apud XAVIER, 2018, p. 315)

It is important to note that in both Nietzsche and Scheler, resentment manifests itself mainly out of a desire for revenge, that is, it is something that demands a reaction. Resentment, therefore, is not passive in nature, it inevitably spills over into the body. There Xavier makes an exercise of mobilizing this concept using as examples some characters in a cinematographic production that, not by chance, and this is emphasized in the paper, happens in a historical Brazilian moment of

disappointments with the country project then taken by the neoliberal politics of Fernando Collor, Itamar Franco, and Fernando Henrique Cardoso governments. These characters, whether protagonists or assistants are often abandoned, rejected, and jealous men.

Thinking of resentment as a historically localized energy that flies over a body of films has similarities with the analysis of the board undertaken here. But there are also some differences. To begin with, the characters described by Xavier are captured within an arc of the script that accompanies them in the respective films. In the case of images triggered by the board that makes neighboring sequences of Brazilian cinema in the years 2010, resentment and bitterness come together through very specific gestures. Some of the characters who undertake these gestures do not even have a psychological development in the film that precedes the gesture itself. The other difference is that, unlike the images triggered by the films analyzed by Xavier, revenge here always manifests itself using the disguise code. The game between the gesture and its invisibility is central.

Even the guy who masturbates in a public space in the city, of all gestures, the most clearly explosive and exposed, can only cum with the certainty of not being seen in the act. Gustavo Vinagre's character in *New Dubai* has the power to transform himself into a *Jesuvius*, Bataille's Jesus-Vesuvius (1985) that erupts to scandalize the world and at the same time save this world with the erotic movement. Frustration, however, turns everything into melancholy. Before and after the orgasm, there is only room for the hopelessness of an announced storm. One of the characters, Vinagre's boyfriend in the movie, sings Miley Cyrus's song desolate: "You wreck me."<sup>5</sup> Behind him, at a bus stop, the announcement of yet another real estate development in the city of São José dos Campos. And right after the masturbation sequence, another character in the film finally succeeds in his much-desired suicide, whose previous failed attempts were always narrated by himself with utter boredom and apathy.

Looking back with the images still too close to establish a historical distance, a central question overflows these images: what was the national cinema in this period able to do? One answer is signaled by the exchange of ideas between a

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<sup>5</sup> The song in question is called *Wrecking ball*, in which the chorus, sung by the film's character, is heard: "I came in like a wrecking ball, I never hit so hard in love, all I wanted was to break your walls, all you ever did was break me, yeah you, you wreck me".

Frenchman and a German who thought the world in the interval between the First and the Second World War. In the text *La révolution et les intellectuels*, published in 1926, Pierre Naville, a surrealist sociologist and writer, calls for an active pessimism that can escape the traps of naive and mediocre hopes: “it is necessary to organize pessimism, or rather, since it is not about answering a call, you have to let it organize itself” (NAVILLE, 1965, p. 76). Three years later, these words became known from Walter Benjamin’s (1987) reading of Naville, in the essay *The Surrealism: the last snapshot of European Intelligentsia*. In this essay, Benjamin affirms that the treasure of the poets of social democracy (here the representation of the idea of progress) is optimism. The integral pessimism invoked by the Surrealists, on the other hand, could, based on a mutual distrust of everything and everyone, move the world.

To organize pessimism simply means to extract the moral metaphor from the sphere of politics, and to discover in the space of political action the complete space of the image. But this image space cannot be measured in a contemplative way. If the dual task of revolutionary intelligence is to overthrow the intellectual hegemony of the bourgeoisie and establish contact with the proletarian masses, it has failed almost entirely in the second task, since it could no longer be accomplished contemplatively. (BENJAMIN, 1987, p. 34)

It is quite possible that, contaminated by an inevitable discomfort that was being breathed in the air, this national cinema, seen almost always by an intellectual elite that sometimes watched it at film festivals, and sometimes in rooms with exhibition windows for films outside the commercial circuit, tried to somehow actively organize our repressed will to rise. It is as if, for some time, this cinematographic production was always operating from the sensation of suddenly waking up from a nightmare in which your home is invaded by strangers, as in one of the most frightening sequences of *Neighbouring Sounds*. To act after this fright is to always be on the verge of explosive responses.

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