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Nosferato in Brazil: Vampires, Military Dictatorship and Pop Culture

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This study investigates the vampires' hideaway in the Brazilian movie fiction. We suggest that these monsters, after facing a myriad of obstacles in their adaptation to the Brazilian cinema, ended up finding shelter for their eternal bloody existence in the most fragile of the audiovisual media: the Super-8. The focus of our analysis is on Nosferato no Brasil (Ivan Cardoso, 1971), one of the most famous films of the Brazilian Super-8 era in the 1970s. We aim to describe how Nosferato was created out of a repertoire consisting of several references to the pop culture of the 1950s and 1960s.

Keywords: *Brazilian cinema, Super-8, Pop culture, Vampire, Ivan Cardoso*

1. Introduction

Discussing the theme of this work, vampires in Brazil, requires some preliminary precautions, once these monsters are not native of the tropics. It is necessary to go back in time and make a wide displacement in space if we want to locate them and contextualize their arrival in the Brazilian repertoire of supernatural creatures. Montague Summers stated in *The Vampire: His Kith and Kin* (1928), if we understand the vampire as an evil being that feeds on some kind of vital energy - almost always represented by blood, but also by other body fluids– we will realize that this is a very old idea widespread in many cultures around the planet (Summers 2008, 22-23). Summers and others have compiled descriptions of vampiric manifestations as diverse as Babylonians, Hebrews, Japanese, Malays, Indians, and Native Americans. Despite some very particular differences among them, we can observe, as Berta Waldman (1998, p. 03) states, that the belief in vampires is based on the idea that, after death, there may be a physical body with the need to feed on.

According to Maria Albaitero (2002, 28-30), in the mythology of the peoples of Europe, there was a great abundance of vampiric creatures, such as Murony, from

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the Balkans; Burkolakkä, from the Christian Greeks; and Boabhan Sith, from the Scottish mythology, to cite a few. The vampire studied in this work is quite more recent and originates in Central Europe: it's the *modern vampire*. As Marco Moraes describes it: "a mosaic of colors and features (...) that came together over time and slowly shaped the physiognomy we have of him today: a monster that rises from the tomb to feed on the blood of the living" (2003, 04). The modern vampire originates from the merging of European mystical and medical traditions harnessed by writers and playwrights throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. This literary movement shaped a fictional figure that would become very popular in the 20th century, spread by the cultural industry. As Nick Groom describes it:

> *From the early 18th century, the figure of the vampire has stalked through the western intellectual and cultural tradition - not merely as a supernatural agent of gothic fictions, but rather as a powerful tool for making sense of the human condition predicament. The investigation of vampires as living dead creatures undead revenants is therefore profoundly shadowed by changes in the definition of the human - changes brought about by new thinking and developments in medicine and biosciences, enlightenment theology and philosophy, Politics and Sociology, Psychosexual theory, and Environmentalism and Ecology. (…) They were sinister renegades eerie outcasts whose emergence/rise/surfacing militant emergency exposed the major issues and in societies of the time - from new magical researches into life Sciences to the power games of Imperial imperialistic politics*. (GROOM 2018, p. xiv)

A philosophical and artistic turn was in progress in Europe in the 19th century. Fiction would try to reinterpret magical thinking of medieval origin through some newborn genres – among them, horror, one of which subgenres is the vampire stories. The romantic approach brought some novelties to the vision of vampires spread so far. As Waldman (1989, 04) observes, the religious controversy in Europe granted a considerable contradiction: on the one hand, for the Orthodox Church of Eastern Europe, resurrected and preserved corpses as vampires would be bound by some kind of curse, on the other hand, for the Catholic Church, the bodies of the saints received eternal preservation as a prize. This divergence provoked an anxious unfolding: would the preservation of the body after death be a blessing or a punishment? The question was faced by the romantics, able to see in the myth of the vampire a poetic way of looking at death. After all, as the author describes, "the anguish of dying and the fascination of death, the hope of surviving and the fear of a diabolical survival, this double tendency seems to be the key to the vampiric phenomenon" (Waldman 1989, 07).

Vampire stories would be definitively renowed by the success of the novel *The Vampyre* (1819), written by the physician John Polidori, at the famous meeting of writers organized by Lord Byron in Villa Diodati, Switzerland. At the same meeting, *Frankenstein – Or The Modern Prometheus*, was written by Mary Shelley. Polidori's novel was inspired on incomplete notes taken by Byron, who was represented in the story as the libertine Lord Ruthwen. He was a mysterious nobleman (actually, a vampire) capable of destroying the lives of several people close to his friend Aubrey. In his seminal work, Polidori transformed the abject bloodsucking figure into a charming and unscrupulous aristocrat, a solution that motivated numerous adaptations, translations and theater plays, definitively influencing vampire fiction from then on.

In 1897, at the end of the century, Bram Stocker released the novel Dracula. Stocker introduced us to what would be the most famous horror monster of the 20th century. Told in the form of an epistolary novel, the story of the medieval vampire's journey to "civilization" - from Transylvania to modern London - made men of science and a virtuous Victorian woman organize the chase and combat of the millenary creature capable of corrupting young virgins and spreading plague and decay. As far as epistolary novel style is concerned, Botting (1996, 147) notes that Bram Stocker was not strictly attached to manoeuvres typical of the Gothic novel (such as lost manuscripts and letters kept in secret compartments). He went further: he also used newspaper articles and recordings made on typewriters, telegraphs and phonographs, giving an essentially modern frame to the plot.

Already before Dracula, but certainly more frequently after him, many were the reflections provoked by vampire fiction, both among fictional theorists and artists and among literary theorists, philosophers, psychoanalysts and cultural observers. Different symbolic meanings were attributed to the taste for blood, violent impulses, aggressive sexuality and a remaining type of medieval domination. Although vampires were already popular in other media at the beginning of the 20th century, cinema was probably their preferred home since the film *Nosferatu* (1922), the first version of Bram Stoker's book to become famous, was spectacularly successful from the artistic point of view. The movie was directed by F.W. Murnau, set in the Weimar Republic and had the actor Max Schreck in the leading role as the vampire.

Dracula's cinema long-lasting life is due to an ambiguous appropriation that this medium has made of the figure of the vampire since *Nosferatu*. As Mauro Pommer (2008, 26) points out, a central element was the systematic use of special effects to indicate the vampire's supernatural characteristics, thus producing a noticeable interaction between the creatures and the cinematographic device, which generated both narrative and symbolic repercussions The author states that the director's aesthetic choices represent the incorporeal part, present in the nature

of a supernatural creature that travels between two worlds. It can be taken as a "metaphor of cinema, in its ability to keep in a state of animated suspension a set of occasional movements captured by reflected light" (Pommer 2008, 26).

Although *Nosferatu* was taken out of movie theaters due to problems related to the novel's copyright, the film opened the way for *Dracula* (1930), by Tod Browning, a Universal Studios production with the Hungarian Bela Lugosi in the leading role. Browning's film became the first great success of the horror genre in talking pictures, and its impact was so great that it generated a profitable cycle of films for the Hollywood industry in the period, among which *Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1931) and *The Mummy* (Karl Freund, 1932). From this period on, vampires would be recurrently present in prominent popular cinema cycles. The British company Hammer Films promoted monster films in the 1950s and 1960s which raised the actor Christopher Lee to the position of the most famous Dracula in the cinema, embodying the vampire in almost a dozen films, and encouraging other cycles of horror films in several countries from the years 1960s, including Mexico, Italy, France, Japan and Brazil.

2. Modern vampires in Brazil

Vampires were very popular in Brazil from the second half of the 20th century on. References to the myth had already appeared in national literature way before that in works that explored its symbolic potential, and in which "the vampire appears as the embodiment of death, disease and evil" (Santos 2019, p. 193). According to Cid Vale Ferreira (2003, 179), the Arcadian poet Silva Alvarenga (1749-1814) seems to have been the first to deal with these Pictures here. Considered as a representative of Pre-Romanticism in the country, he would have diluted "influences of English tomb poetry in his typically rococo compositions, in which the bucolic landscapes are tainted by the paints and lamentations of the night, in atmospheres that gradually corrupt the locus amenus arcade in the Pre-Romantic locus horrendus" (Ferreira 2003, 179). In the poem *A Noite* [The Night], the poet would evoke for the first time the term "vampyr de sangue" [blood vampyr] in Brazilian literature.

With regard to the Brazilian romantic writers' works there are few references to vampires, even though they do exist. João Cardoso Menezes de Souza (1827-1915 for example wrote the long poem *Octavio e Branca - Maldição Materna* [Octavoio and Branca – Maternal Curse], telling the story of two lovers split up by their families. They return from the beyond to suck out the soul of the girl's father. In the novel *Noite na Tavernai* [A Night at the Tavern], Álvares de Azevedo (1831-1852) made a slight suggestion in the *Solfieri* chapter, in which the character retells his romance

with what would be the corpse or the resurrected body of a mysterious woman torn from the grave. The Romantic poets Casimiro de Abreu (1839-1860) and Castro Alves (1847-1871) also addressed the theme, but in comparison aimed at emphasizing their lyrical discourse (Ferreira 2003, p. 179). Augusto dos Anjos (1884-1914) would later do the same in the sonnet *O Morcego* [The Bat]. In the twentieth century, the image of the vampire in Brazilian literature would gain some prominence with the character Nelsinho, in *O Vampiro de Curitiba* [The Vampire of Curitiba] (1965), by Dalton Trevisan. Although this vampire is not a leech in the literal meaning, the vampire idea is used as an analogy, now to cope with the obsession with sex.

The Brazilian media landscape became heavily populated with vampires only from the 1950s on, due to the popularity of comic books, which gave rise to classic characters from national comics. As Primati (2003 p. 272) describes, in January 1950, the launch of *Vault of Horror* magazine in the USA marked the beginning of an era in the comics market with magazines dedicated exclusively to horror stories. Brazil immediately followed the trend in 1951, when the magazine *Terror Negro* [Black Terror] was launched as a translation from North American originals. The success led to the emergence of many others, all reproducing imported stories. However, as Primati (2003, 272) reports, in 1954, the publication in the US of the book *Seduction of Innocents*, by psychiatrist Fredrick Wertham, pointed to violent comics as causes of juvenile delinquency, which intensified censorship. As a result, the material that Brazil imported became scarce, and publishers took advantage of the habit of redesigning imported stories to add more pages to them, encouraging national artists to create their own stories.

Many collections came up at this time, including *Drácula*, created by Miguel Penteado in 1966. Screenwriter Hélio Porto wrote the first adventures, followed by Helena Fonseca, Francisco de Assis and Maria Helena de Godói. The drawings were in charge of one of the main comic book artists in Brazil, the Italian Nico Rosso. The Brazilian comic book was one of the first regular titles starring the vampire count, but the stories ended up taking on a more anarchic aspect, as Piedade describes:

> *In fact, we find in the episodes in which the vampire gets involved in everyday situations the determining factors for the composition of his unique personality, which would differentiate him from other personifications, and would turn the canons of vampirism upside down. This Vampire of fertile imagination and skin-deep trickery is present in authentic exercises of nonsense, such as: in A Revolt of the Living Dead, Dracula decides to renovate his almost ruined castle using the living dead as workers. (*PIEDADE, 2012)

The popularity of the series brought other monsters along with it: in 1967, Brazil saw the birth of its first comic book "monster": Mirza, The Vampire Woman, created by

artist Eugênio Colonnese and screenwriter Luis Merí. Mirza won her own magazine and she was later resurrected in several publications. In the early 1970s, with the institution of prior censorship by the Military Dictatorship, dozens of magazines dedicated to horror comics in Brazil just disappeared from the market,

The decay of the horror Brazilian comics and the rise of the Brazilian censorship is the perfect terrain for the Super-8 *Nosferato no Brasil* (Ivan Cardoso, 1971), object of this study, to be born.

3. Vampires in Brazilian audiovisual

Despite the popularity of vampires in a variety of Brazilian cultural manifestations, the truth is that they were never taken seriously by film and television producers. It is possible to state that vampires were systematically demoralized in these spheres. One of the most famous vampires in national audiovisual is probably Valdenino Bento Carneiro, The Brazilkian (Picture 1). He was created in 1986 by the comedian Chico Anysio (1931-2012), who presented his own weekly comedy program on Rede Globo. Bento Carneiro was an undernourished vampire who lived in poverty in his castle and had a hillbilly accent. Disturbed by outsiders who found his coffin, he tried to use all his powers to punish trespassers, in vain: the results were disastrous. Furthermore, Bento Carneiro had a catchline that is still famous (and sometimes quoted): “My revenge will be evil for those who laugh at me”. The soap opera *Vamp* (1992), by Antonio Calmon, was another successful comic approach to vampires. The vampire Vlad (Ney Latorraca) dominates the rock singer Natasha (Cláudia Ohana – Picture 2). One of the songs of the soundtrack, *Noite Preta* [Black Night], performed by Vange Leonel, still plays on Brazilian radios these days. Ten years later, the soap opera had a sequel: *O Beijo do Vampiro* [The Kiss of The Vampire], also by Calmon.

Pictures 1 and 2: Images from *Chico Anysio Show* and the soapopera *Vamp*.

Source: https://memoriaglobo.globo.com/.

The status and fame vampires obtained in comedies on television was not repeated in the cinema. In fact, the vampires faced a pathetic fate in the Brazilian movies, because not only were they a laughing stock, but also they were not a great commercial success. The only successful vampire film in the Brazilian cinema, *As Sete Vampiras* [The Seven Vampires] (1987, Picture 3), by Ivan Cardoso, had a carnivorous plant as its main monster. Another box-office success, the hard coe comedy *As Taras do Minivampiro* [The Perversions of the Minivampire](José Adalto Cardoso, 1987) was launched in the same year. The leading role was played by Anão Chumbinho (nickname for Carlos Nascimento), an actor who was a dwarf. The story is about a toothless dwarf vampire craving for blood who attacks couples in the middle of the sexual intercourse. The mayor of the city then decides to exploit the image of the vampire and he becomes a tourist attraction (Picture 4).


Pictures 3 and 4: Frames from *As Sete Vampiras* and *As Taras do Mini-Vampiro*.
Source: Digital copies from original VHS.

Vampires had first appeared in *Um Sonho de Vampiros* [A Dream of Vampires] (Iberê Cavalcanti, 1968), with the comedian Ankito in the leading role. They would only reappear in *O Vampiro de Copacabana* [The Vampire of Copacabana] (Xavier de Oliveira, 1976), a film in which the monster is a frustrated man, dressed as a vampire for the Carnival. In the 2000s, *Olhos de Vampa* [Eyes of Vampa] (Walter Rogério, 2002) was released. The production of the movie started in 1996, but it was released only on DVD in 2002. *Olhos de Vampa* highlights the national discomfort with the vampiric figure, once it features a miserable monster whose wife is a trash accumulator. Not even in Brazilian horror short films, which had been multiplying since the 1990s, the vampire is a recurring subject, being surpassed by zombies, ghosts and other monsters. An exception is the short film *Nocturnu* (Dennison

Ramalho, 1998), made in B&W 16mm, filmed on an abandoned ship in the city of Porto Alegre.

Despite, however, the little consideration given to contempt for vampires in the Brazilian cinema, it is mandatory necessary to remember that the most emblematic character in Brazilian cinematic horror: Coffin Joe [Zé do Caixão]. He was created by José Mojica Marins in the film *At midnight I will take your soul* (1964), and bears some similarities to vampires, in particular to Count Dracula. 1) He wears a black cape, like the most famous Draculas in cinema (Pictures 5 and 6). 2) He does not sleep in a coffin, but his name certainly goes along very well with the idea, because he owns a funeral home. 3) He looks to people as objects to satisfy his desires, in a typical vampire fashion. 4) But, above all, Coffin Joe is obsessed with blood. His first words in Brazilian cinema leave no doubt in this regard: "What is life? It is the beginning of death. What is death? It's the end of life. What is existence? It is the continuity of the blood. What is blood? It is the reason for existence!"

Pictures 5 and 6: Frames from *At Midnight I'll Take Your Soul* (1964) and *This Night I'll Possess Your Corpse* (1967).
Source: Digital copy from DVD (*Zé do Caixão Collection* – Cinemagia)

Regardless of such similarities, Coffin Joe is not a vampire for several reasons. First, because he has no superpowers other than being a rich sociopath: his power comes from the fact that he doesn't have the same moral boundaries that ordinary people/men do, which makes him feel free to commit countless/infinite atrocities. Second, he is not an unburied corpse, but a mortal man like any of us– so much that, in the three main films of his saga (*At midnight I will take your soul*, 1964; *This Night I'll Possess Your Corpse*, 1967; and *Embodiment of Evil*, 2008), he apparently dies; in this films, he does resurrect, but his "resurrections" have explanations that are not due to the supernatural or any superpower. Third, because when he becomes a figure of darkness, haunting his creator (as in *Black Exorcism*, 1974), Coffin Joe is linked to the demon, not to a Vampire.

And there is a crucial characteristic when it comes to defining a vampire: Coffin Joe doesn't feed on blood. His fascination for blood is not for survival, but for heredity. The character pursues restlessly the woman who will give him the perfect heir. In the journey after the woman, it is possible to observe that he is much closer to the sexist and racist ideology of the Brazilian dominant classes than to the supernatural thirst for blood of the European vampire. So, there is a curious observation concerning Coffin Joe and the image of the European vampire: the Brazilian character exploits and punishes other people as if they were servants, dwells in quite isolated and protected spaces like castles, lives without justifying his actions to anyone and abuses God-fearing people, like the classical European vampire, but unlike the modern European vampire. It is a fact that the monsters represented in stories like *Dracula* had already been guillotined in the bourgeois revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries. In Brazil, however, these Pictures have a different status. Our vampires are perhaps too recent to figure in the national tradition of horror. As a matter of fact, they still feature in the political and police sections of newspapers. Maybe the modern vampires have not yet found a place of honor in Brazilian fiction because they are still too much alive...

4. Super-8: the home of Brazilian cinematic vampires

There was a place in Brazilian audiovisual where vampires found shelter: the Super-8. This phenomenon took place from October 1971 on, when *Nosferato no Brasil* was launched by Ivan Cardoso, a 19 years old youngster from Rio de Janeiro, and the film became a model for many other productions. The director casted Torquato Neto (1944-1972), a poet, journalist and composer for the leading role, and also some "Ivanps" (Cardoso's nickname to his friend actresses). Although the film was released as a comedy, it featured the first potent and successful vampire in the Brazilian cinema – and it remains as an exception until these days. *Nosferato no Brasil* was part of a series of Super-8 films by Ivan Cardoso called *Quotidianas Kodaks* [Daily Kodaks]. The films, handcrafted by the director, were shown at private parties, always accompanied by improvised live sound created by him, who used K7 tapes and vinyl records. The film was a hit within upper-class young people and artists who attended these parties that were enthusiastically publicized by journalists.

Born in 1952, in a wealthy family in the south of Rio de Janeiro (his grandfather, General Dulcídio Cardoso, was mayor of Rio de Janeiro), Ivan do Espírito Cardoso Filho began his career in film making along with radical artists from Tropicalismo and Marginal Movies (Brazilian underground cinema). Thus, his art, his movie, coexisted very closely with quite relevant Brazilian art iconoclasts, such as the

poet Torquato Neto. Ivan Cardoso consecrated himself as the self-proclaimed creator of a genuine Brazilian film genre, which he called *terrir* (terror + laugh). Terrir consists of bringing the spirit of Brazilian popular musical comedy into horror stories, full of monsters and beautiful women.

Cardoso has a very different socio-economic and cultural background from that of José Mojica Marins, but he was never interested in highlighting such difference. Cardoso belongs to a privileged economic class of the 1950s and the 1960s that lived the origin of the Brazilian New Cinema of the 1960s, but also under the influence of comic books and movie matinees. All this experience furnished him, on the one hand, with a myriad of multiple cinematographic repertoire, and, on the other, with a conscious attitude of the peripheral position of the Brazilian cinema. The awareness of the Brazilian cinema's peripheral position is very much present in the anarchy and self-irony shown in his films. When *Nosferato no Brasil* (1971) was launched, Cardoso was influenced by all the current discussions about cinema. As a consequence of this rich context, it became a hit at the time (REMIER, 2009, p. 99), and found followers among artists dedicated to the Super-8 in Brazil, including Ligia Pape (*Wampirou*, 1974), Ana Maria Maiolino (*X*, 1976, Pictures 9 and 10) and Jairo Ferreira (*O Vampiro da Cinemateca*, 1977).

Movies shot in the Super-8 method are capable of having different versions, with different montages, lengths, sound tracks and performances. This was not different with *Nosferato no Brasil*. The original version, exhibited for the first time in 1971, was a feature film (REMIER, 2009, p. 92). However, the restored copy, inserted in Ivan Cardoso's feature film *A Marca do Terrir* (2005), is a 31-minute version, while other versions that circulated on VHS and on the internet since the 1990s have different lengths. The 27-minute version chosen for the analysis in this work was released in 1993 by the American distributor Something Weird Video. Such version was part of a compilation entitled *Ivan Cardoso Shocking Shorts*, launched with a collection dedicated to José Mojica Marins's cinema. This copy of *Nosferato no Brazil* was edited with the sound track synchronized according to Cardoso's favorite songs among those at public exhibitions in the 1970s.

A similar edition of the film, with quite few variations was part of the compilation of Brazilian experimental films in Super-8 presented at the exhibition *Marginália 70 – O Experimentalismo no Super-8 Brasileiro* [Marginália 70 - The Experimentalism in Brazilian Super-8], held at Instituto Itaú Cultural, in São Paulo, in November 2001 (also held in Paris, at the Georges Pompidou Museum, in 2003), curated by researcher Rubens Machado Jr. In 2011, Machado Jr. has described some of the characteristics of these films, including the spontaneity of the recordings, the circumstantial nature of filming and exhibitions, and also the search for artistic and body freedom in private and urban spaces – all of them, notable in *Nosferato no Brasil*.

> *The super-eightist de-monumentalization was linked to another trend that was quite evident in its opposition to the standards of the established art: the performance, the camera recording of a performative act breaking with "respectable" behavior. (...) Super-8 approached, at those moments, the theatrical happening, graffiti and the momentary nature of marginal poetry, which were proposed to be transitory, immediate, more active than representative. Coherent with this kind of direct filmic action, the politics of the body and sexuality acquired centrality in the omnipresence of Super-8 films. "It was a very political, erotic and political thing", according to the philosopher and poet Jomard Muniz de Britto, protagonist of tropicalism in the Northeast, which became entrenched in "anarchosuperoitism". Bisexuality, transvestites, deconstruction of the bourgeois image of women, frequented the "sympathetic gauge". Many of the films have something of a Dionysian feast, a cinematic version of the riot. With the strong presence of the counterculture in the 1970s, the dialogue of the body that cries out for liberation seems to cry out for nature, to which the body wants to return. (*Machado Jr 2011, 30)

The version analyzed here of *Nosferato no Brasil* is composed by four narrative blocks: an eight-minute prologue and two more blocks of the same length each, followed by a two-minute epilogue. In this work, we will call these blocks, accordingly: Budapest, Rio de Janeiro, Epidemia, and Despedida. In the prologue, we learn about Nosferato's origins in his homeland, Hungary. Next, we follow his arrival and adaptation in Rio de Janeiro. In the third block, we see the emergence of a entourage of female vampires who are responsible for spreading the plague in Brazil. Finally, in the epilogue, we see Nosferato depart back to Europe.

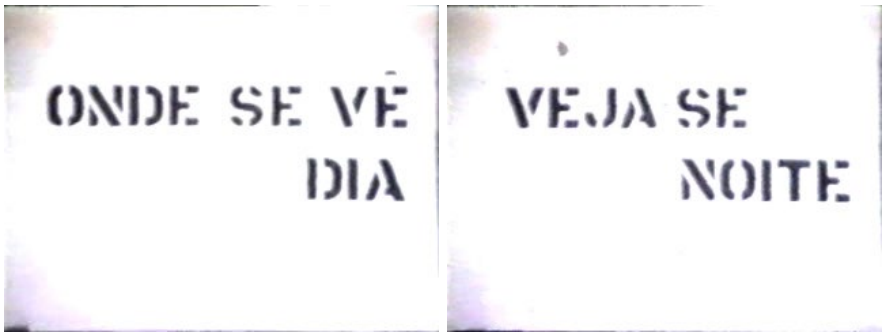
The film begins without any title. As for the opening credits, there are still images of an ossuary and a mortuary wreath with the words "Last homage". A theremin, an electronic instrument widely used in the 1960s in soundtracks in horror, fantasy and science-fiction films, goes along with these first images, in order to reinforce the eerie atmosphere. The ossuary and the mortuary wreath are on and off all the film with some variations to mark the funeral tone. The funeral atmosphere was intensified after Torquato Neto's suicide in 1972, at the age of twenty-eight.

The plot, according to the signs, begins in Budapest, in the 19th century (Picture 7) – space and time restored in Praça Romania [Romania Square], in the neighbourhood of Santa Tereza (city of Rio de Janeiro). The square is full of cars and girls in miniskirts, as well as street dogs that wander freely in the open air. Apparently, the only interventions made by the team for this sequence are in the costumes of three characters: the long dress with puffy sleeves that the vampire's first girlfriend/victim wears; Torquato's black cape and the vampier's rival's white

uniform, played by Daniel Más. In addition to the costumes, there is the stylistic option for black and white photography, which is enough to characterize a dark world, in contrast to the colorful and sunny climate in Rio de Janeiro (Picture 8).

Pictures 7 and 8: Frames from *Nosferato no Brasil.*
Source: Digital copy from VHS (*Ivan Cardoso Shocking Shorts* – Something Weird Video)

The low quality of the images in the long prologue of Budapest, resulting from both the limitations of capturing images in Super-8 and the action of time on the film, does not conceal the care taken by the director in the compositions. To reproduce the chiaroscuro typical of horror films, Cardoso made up his images by combining black and white costumes with contrasting elements of the square. Thus, few elements can move us to the capital of Hungary a century earlier, where a conventional vampire story takes place, until two cards abruptly interrupt the events, with the request "Where you see day, see night". This operation, in a way, summarizes the irony of Nosferato no Brazil (Pictures 9 and 10).



Pictures 9 and 10: Frames from *Nosferato no Brasil.*
Source: Digital copy from VHS (*Ivan Cardoso Shocking Shorts* – Something Weird Video)

With his fluttering cape and hunter's instincts, the vampire chooses his victims among young girls, who flirt with him and flee from him in a mixture of fear and idyllic love, until they are finally captured and killed. The female victims are embushed in flirtation and overwhelmed by tempting seduction. Only after this erotic procedure the female victims have their blood sucked by the monster, lying dead in the square with their legs and necks exposed (Picture 11). He is also violent with young men who wander in the square, although there is no eroticism in this situation. As far as the male victims are concerned, they are attacked by surprise and killed right away. The monster uses weapons that prevent direct contact between his body and that of the victims'. (Picture 12).

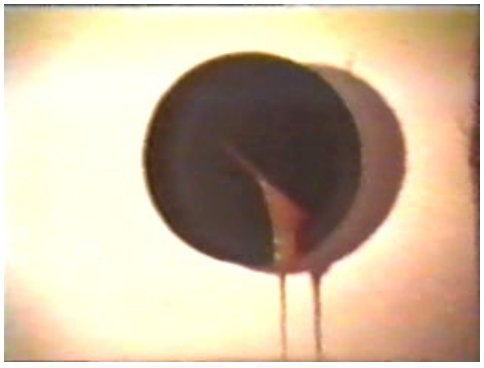
Pictures 11 and 12: Frames from *Nosferato no Brasil.*
*Source***:** Digital copy from VHS (*Ivan Cardoso Shocking Shorts* – Something Weird Video)

The monster, however, has his weaknesses and is mortal. At some point of the narrative, a rival, played by Daniel Más, shows up. Different form Nosferato, he is dressed in white. He dances around the square and wields a sword until he manages to corner the monster (Picture 13). Nosferato dies in a duel, without much resistance, with the sword across his chest (Picture 14), his body abandoned in the square. This setting reinforces the idea of a 'European' environment: a square located between a little castle and a path surrounded by neoclassical columns.

Pictures 13 and 14: Frames from *Nosferato no Brasil*.
Source: Digital copy from VHS (*Ivan Cardoso Shocking Shorts* – Something Weird Video)

The absence of direct or synchronized sound in the film (a resource inaccessible to Super-8 in 1971) is made up for by the musical accompaniment of pre-existing pieces. The soundtrack of the prologue in Budapest is the song *Sing this all Together*, from the psychedelic album *Their Satanic Majestic Request* (1967), by the Rolling Stones. This soundtrack depics the time discrepancy between the modern and archaic elements coordinated so far, as well as the combination of violence and sexuality – which is one of the hallmarks of the Stones and other rock bands. It is also possible to suggest that the sound serves to determine the presence of rock and counterculture absorbed by Brazilian Tropicalism, a movement which Torquato Neto was directly involved with, and which guided all Ivan Cardoso's art production at that time.

With Nosferato's death, the film seems to be over. After all, having a sword through the chest is always the end of the line for vampires. Not this time, though. The film starts again, combining bright red tones with black and white in a new credits entry, which finally bears the title *Nosferato no Brasil* – "Nosferato", spelled like that, with an "o" at the end of the word, possibly mixing *Nosferatu* (Murnau's 1922 vampire) with the actor's name Torquato. Besides showing the spelling of the vampire's name in Portuguese, the new credits reinforce the playful tone of this new beginning and the amateurish conditions of the shooting through a blade that pierces a black balloon filled with blood (red ink, Picture 15) that glides down a letter-set poster glued to the wall (Picture 16).



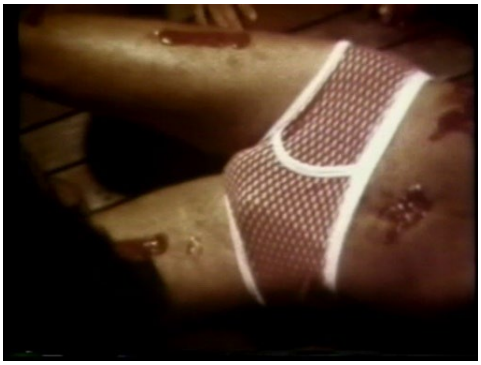

Pictures 15 and 16: Frames from *Nosferato no Brasil.*
*Source***:** Digital copy from VHS (*Ivan Cardoso Shocking Shorts* – Something Weird Video)

The ellipse created after the first part of the film leads us to a very different scenario, now shot in color. Once again, few elements are enough to put the landscape together: some Brazilian flags, signs traced in the sand and the bossa nova instrumental track locate the audience. We are no longer in Budapest in the 19th century, but in Rio de Janeiro in the 20th century, more precisely in 1971. Despite the obvious differences between the environments of Budapest and Rio, Nosferato's behavior remains the same. He is still a sinister wanderer who continues wielding his cape, aimlessly, only looking for beautiful victims to seduce and feed on their blood - even on the Ipanema promenade, where he attacks a girl in a bikini, and leaves her fainting on the floor.

However, as the attacks went on– first on a hitchhike on the road, then in the Tijuca forest, and finally by the sea – Nosferato's costume changes. He abandons his warm clothes of the beginning (Picture 17) of the story to just keep the cape lined in red satin and a swim trunk, maintaining his identity while drinking coconut water with a straw, without being annihilated by the carioca sun (Picture 18). The soundtrack that accompanies the vampire's adventures also changes. From Bob Dylan (*If Dogs Run Free*, 1970) to Brazilian star Roberto Carlos (*Detalhes*, 1971), the song keeps its function of marking the different attacks, which take place in settings that also vary from big cars to the Tijuca forest (in the city of Rio de Janeiro), thus avoiding the monotony caused by endlessly repeating deaths.

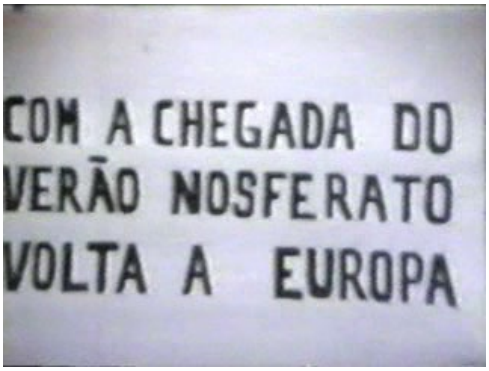

Pictures 17 and 18: Frames from *Nosferato no Brasil.*
Source: Digital copy from VHS (*Ivan Cardoso Shocking Shorts* – Something Weird Video)

About sixteen minutes after the the film starts, there's yet another twist. Now Nosferato's female victims are transformed into seductive vampires, dressed in the same colors of their master's cape: black and red. While the audience listens to *Third Stone From the Sun*, by Jimmy Hendrix, the women spread the vampiric plague to the men they meet along the way, in an apparent process of colonization. Many events of the same kind take place in this segment of the movie, clearly making up a/the third part of the movie: the Epidemic. The process begins with a very sensual character dressed in red who stops her car on the road in the middle of a sunny afternoon, and is helped by a man who tries to grab her by force and, in return, receives the fatal bite. In the following scenes, new female vampires, acting like merciless maenads, feed on unsuspecting men in Nosferato's house (Picture 19). Also Nosferato goes on with his attacks, but the film now focus on presenting the vampire's peaceful coexistence with his entourage of young women. The female vampires are comfortably gathered with their master in a house that seems to be run by teenagers (Picture 20): it is full of movie posters, horror comics and rock records; the television is permanently on, showing auditorium programs; and there are many bottles of beer and cigarettes scattered around.




Pictures 19 and 20: Frames from *Nosferato no Brasil.*
Source: Digital copy from VHS (*Ivan Cardoso Shocking Shorts* – Something Weird Video)

After that, to the surprise of those who considered the vampire fully adapted to Rio de Janeiro, the audience sees Nosferato heading to the international airport of Galeão, where he boards a small plane and waves to the audience with a smile, his face close to the window (Picture 21). This image composes a nice Epilogue. The intertitles read: "With the arrival of the summer, Nosferato returns to Europe" (Picture 22), in a promisse to return to Brazil in order to keep on with his never-ending saga, which makes him, more like a swallow than a bat. Nosferato's farewell is particularly painful for reasons unrelated to the film: seeing him say goodbye with a smile full of nostalgia, reminds us that, less than a year after filming, Torquato would decide to take his own life.

Pictures 21 and 22: Frames from *Nosferato no Brasil.*
*Source***:** Digital copy from VHS (*Ivan Cardoso Shocking Shorts* – Something Weird Video)

5. Vampire legacy

Nosferato's legacy can be found in Ivan Cardoso's extensive work, characterized by his obsession with monster movies, as in his two most successful productions*: O Segredo da Múmia* [The Secret of the Mummy, 1982] and *As Sete Vampiras* [The Seven Vampires, 1987]. Other recurrent characteristics in Cardoso's movies are the presence of the "Ivanps" and famous stars from TV and cinema, as well as the collages of scenes of violence, pop songs, television programs and references to radio soap operas and comic books. This playful pop universe becomes a mark found in the most recent Ivan Cardoso's works, which makes Nosferato in Brazil both a portrait of the time when the action takes place and part of one of the most coherent – and also self-referential – works of the Brazilian cinema. .

When describing the vampiric traits in Dalton Trevisan's work, Berta Waldman makes a statement that could refer both to Nosferato's behavior and to Ivan Cardoso's own cinema. According to Waldman, "what makes up Dalton Trevisan's narrative is precisely the absence of changes, and the movement he traces is one of constant repetition". Waldman states that in this itinerary, a never-ending search takes place "by the exhaustive repetition of the same motto in endless rounds" (1989, p. 01). However, if Nosferato's modus operandi does not change when he moves from Hungary to Brazil, the fact is that, when in Brazil, he causes changes wherever he goes, leaving a legacy to the female vampires, who acquire power to spread the epidemic.

Thus, Nosferatu, forgotten in an Eastern European cemetery, with no function in the Old World (which has already digested its vampires for centuries), becomes a powerful and seductive villain when he reaches the tropics. In a way, in Nosferato no Brasil, as well as in other Ivan Cardoso's films, the throwback that the monster represents in his homeland gains other creative and political nuances when the vampire is adapted to Brazil, since the expression of his desire dialogues with different projects. One of them is the music/art movement Tropicália. The tropicalist project consisted of absorbing what was foreign and giving it back to us in a Brazilian package that welcomes the pleasure and delight of "cultural garbage": comic books, horror stories, rock'n'roll, auditorium programs and everything else that accumulates in Nosferato's room.

Nosferato no Brasil was produced in a period of intense censorship to all cultural manifestations – including Mojica's cinema and horror comics. The film is presented as a work of resistance of a certain imaginary, being treated as a transgressor. Furthermore, the freedom of desire that Nosferato distributes among women makes an obvious reference to the sexual revolution in progress all over the world, while beginning its first steps in Brazil. Finally, the irony in relation to the

political engagement of Cinema Novo is also a hallmark of Nosferato, which is quite evident in his mocking reference to the affirmation of the Paulo Martins's (Jardel Filho) character in Terra em Transe, by Glauber Rocha. In the 1967 film, the character claimed that history is not written with tears, but with blood. This statement, taken up in a letter-set cartouche of Nosferatu (Picture 33), replaces this statement on other bases: now, it is about fictitious blood destined for the repetition and eternal reproduction of vampires and other pictures of the popular horror genre (Picture 34) seen through the anthropophagic lenses of the Brazilian cinema.

Translated into English by Flávio Vargas

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