On convergences and hybridism:[1]
remix and pillage in border films

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ABSTRACT

The article aims to establish the relationships between media convergence (especially audiovisual ones) and hybridisms of genres in Brazilian border movies. In the first part, we present the *border cinema* and some perspectives to think the cultures of convergence; in the second part we deal with the hybridisms in the work of the director Simião Martiniano, especially in his last film, *O show variado* (2008, 40'), which combines elements of musical, comedy and romance genres, like director's previous works, figuring what we call an impure genre. This film provides useful dialogue with audiovisual narratives present in genre films and those representative of the television drama.

Keywords: Media culture, convergences, hybridisms, brazilian cinema, border movies

> *"O que é bom para o lixo é bom para a poesia".*
> (Manoel de Barros, *Matéria de poesia*)

This article aims at establishing relationships between media convergence (especially audiovisual ones) and genre hybridism in Brazilian border films. In the first part of our text we present the concept of *border films*[2] and some perspectives in order to think convergence cultures; in the second part we deal with hybridism present in the works of moviemaker Simião Martiniano (from Pernambuco, Brazil), notably his most recent release *O*

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[1] A preliminary version of this paper was presented to the Research Group "Culture and Media", during the 20th National Graduate Communication Programs Association.

[2] This term comprises a group of Brazilian movies researched by Bernadette Lyra and her team. For reference: *Cinema de bordas* (Lyra, B. & Santana, G., São Paulo: À lápis, 2006) and *Cinema de bordas 2* (Santana, G. São Paulo: À lápis, 2008). It is important to observe that heterogeneity of styles, forms and narratives are pronounced.

show variado (2008, 40`) which combines elements form musical, comedy and romance genres, like his previous work, creating what we may call an impure genre.

Made up of four sketches – *O pacista, O paciente, Dr. Maluco, O campeão dos pesos pesado* (sic) – with musical numbers inserted between each episode, the movie establishes a dialogue with audiovisual narratives found in genre movies (especially those of North-American make and broadcast) and with narratives representative of TV drama (especially humor shows). Our understanding of the polyphony of the term *narrative* is based on the following quote:

> I take narrative to be a code that structures itself based on the rules of three different levels: that of the plot, that of the characters and that of the way of telling. Therefore, following narratological studies, I believe that narrative is the place where the narrator, regarded as a handling subject, has the greatest possibilities of developing his creative imagination. We can verify this when the reader focuses his interest not only on the twists of the plot or on the actors´ performances, but also in the way of organizing these elements (Peñuela Cañizal, 2007, online).

Our concept of *border films* is that of a group of hybrid movies in relation to the genres of which they are made, but still distinct from the categories of *peripheral cinema*, *paracinema* or *trash*. They are also different from specific genres such as thrillers, comedies or westerns. Such border films are recognizable by:

> ways, techniques and procedures that can refine the concept, such as: emphasis on clichéd phrases and ideas, piling up of sensationalist effects, emotional involvement, underestimation of the concept of originality, heavy descriptive load, lack of character psychological profiling, and repetition of plot. The specific result of the mixture, which feeds itself from the borders made up of different cultural facts, shows that border films go from the most erudite to the most popular levels, and vice-versa (Lyra, 2005, p. 1).

It is a kind of audiovisual production created in many States of the country, but still unknown to many Brazilians. Usually, these are movies produced by self-taught moviemakers that materialize their work with very little financial resources, exhibiting them on public places and events, away from the institutionalized paths of production, distribution and exhibition. These movies constitute what we may call an *invisible cinema*, based on: the reuse and re-creation of cinema genres; everyday themes; non-professional acting; plot improvisation; lack of referential character, and, at the same time, on a naturalistic esthetics, resulting in very peculiar forms of creation. These moviemakers produce, direct, create scripts, distribute and exhibit their work not only on the borders of the cinema industry, but on the very borders of the country (Soares, 2008).

Based on the idea that genres are not fixed typologies, but, on the contrary, that they are forms based on *transpositions*, we call attention upon the peripheral forms of Brazilian genre cinema – be that in its ways of creation, be that in its ways of circulation – in the work of Simião Martiniano. He produces action, romance and humor movies in constant dialogue with mass cinema and TV shows, redefining its forms. Broadening out these questions, we intend to pinpoint the relationships between the *concepts of media convergence* and *genre hybridism*, considering above all the new audiovisual languages created by this process. We will make use of the concepts of *remediation* (based on digital media studies) and of *intertextuality* (based on discourse studies) in order to analyze a certain kind of cinema made up of *genre fragments*, establishing connection between remix and pillage in the contemporary audiovisual cultural scene.

IN THE FOLDS OF CULTURAL BORDERS

The movies present in a *border culture*, in a broad sense, use mediatic convergence processes, subverting cinema genres and TV forms found in audiovisual culture. The question that poses itself, and that we approach subsequently, is: in what ways do the border films create intersections with the *migrant narratives* found in the media?

Among the plethora of concepts used to establish the limits of convergence cultures, Vera Follain presents a contribution to the discussion of aesthetic patterns dominant in the historical and technological contexts in which they are inserted. According to this author "it is especially noteworthy the phenomenon of narratives slipping from one medium to another, form one support to another – the ongoing process of recycling fictional plots, recreated in order to navigate different platforms" (Figueiredo, 2010, p. 11), a productive synthesis that encompasses a broader conceptual scenario in a single expression: migrant narratives. Such configuration denotes, above all:

> Alterations in the cultural hierarchy caused by the intensified movement of interchange, either regarding literature, whose prestige has always been closely attached to the aura of its support, the book; or regarding cinema, due to the expansion of transmidiatic audiovisual narratives, the contents of which unfold themselves in movie theaters, videogames, comic strips, TV series (Figueiredeo, 2010, p.12).

Constantly migrating, the notion of border culture is tributary to debates in varied fields of knowledge, especially literature and psychoanalysis. Jerusa Pires Ferreira´s paper published in 1989 (and re-edited in 2010), thus defines this culture:

> When I talk of *border culture* I want to emphasize the exclusion of the center, that which lays in a *transition* between some and others, *between* the recognized established cultures, like folklore, and those that posses a more up-to-date and prestigious character. A production directed, for example, to audiences of various kinds, *including* those of the urban outskirts (Ferreira, 2010, p. 30, our highlight).

This author approaches the work of a *border writer*, Rubens Lucchetti, in order to "raise questions about this kind of writer, trying to understand him as a whole" (p. 32), with the aim of "perceiving the limitations of circuits and following the phenomena of production and reception among popular urban audiences in Brazil" (p. 30). A developing debate, always taken into account with reflexions upon convergence cultures, started to take shape when it emphasized its call to:

> Reflect upon broader theoretical problems and collect elements for a theory of the text and of popular communication, which has many different possible levels between 'popular' and 'massive', when the reception is directly inputted in what is produced and the mediations are very flimsy (p.30).

In the field of literature, there appeared a dynamics between high and low, with a dispute among texts considered learned and those taken to be *trivial*:

> The objective findings of some textual procedures, techniques and 'formulaic' modes, the valuing of clichéd sentences, the piling up of an emotional and sensationalistic meaning, loss of the sense of distance and of the criterion of originality, heavy cliché load and constant descriptivism may be considered characteristics of this literature (Ferreira, 2010, p. 33).

Triviality, according to the author, opened the way to a *fecund creativity* and an *imaginative adaptation* of formulas and clichés – such dynamics becomes emphatic when we think of current convergences and hybridism. The up-to-date nature of these questions calls forth the obstinate migrant narratives and the border ones, pregnant with meaning, in which "ways of the popular system (orality, corporality, exteriority etc.), but these ways are incurably contaminated by the forms of the mass system that are closest to them" (Lyra, 2007). Cinema borders do not appear to be a structure placed between center and outskirt – they emerge in between the discourses upon which they are built. Regarding trivial films, Lyra claims:

> This type of movies is tributary to forms of production, genre and techniques usually directed to feeling and action. Among them, we may find the 30´s and 40´s melodramas, the 50´s and 60´s chanchadas, the 70´s and 80´s porn-chanchadas and a series of films, like sci-fi, horror, cheap cop flicks, domestic productions, romantic comedies and others that created a cinema experienced linked to the body, to trivial entertainment and a sort of amusement separated from any worries regarding subjective cognitivity (Lyra & Santana, 2006, p. 14).

Many of the characteristics attributed to trivial literature, therefore, find echoes in the theorizing of cinema genres. Even though their narratives share the same space of trivial entertainment, border films are not characterized by the *lack of fictionality* many times stressed on TV shows, such as reality shows:

> Although different among themselves, the examples here quoted – TV soap opera, reality shows, cinema – they share a point in common: the notion, in our context, of fractured entertainment, lacking in fictionality or in hybrid character (but still distinct from that which is shakily characterized as infotainment, out of question here), which appears, at a first glance, to deny that which gives its definition: the situation of a world put between parenthesis, in suspense (Serelle, 2010, online).

We do not find in border films a resigned or conciliatory discourse, but instead the surfacing (in the senses of apparition and necessity) of another reading pact (Eco, 2002), established between the industry, the author, the text and the reader (be that in verbal, visual and audiovisual products). One of the consequences is precisely the peculiar way in which *authorships* makes itself present, that is to say, it is an authorship based on the *cliché* instead of on the author, a kind of parody that enables *genre* remains to be, at the same time, *authorship* traces. *Border moviemakers* are a motley group: it is not unusual for them to be, besides authors, narrators, camera, audio and lights operators, scenographers, costume designers and actors in their own productions. Such being the case, there is no author that deciphers the film to the public, but a movie text by them created in order to be authenticated by the public´s eyes, whose participation is always active.

REMIX, PILLAGE AND WASTE LAND (LIXO EXTRAORDINÁRIO³)

When we take into account the contemporary audiovisual culture, we find concepts that modernize current notions regarding transpositions between popular, mass and erudite cultures, now centered on a mediatic culture (cf. Kellner, 2001). Such culture spreads itself over other perspectives, among which we may find that presented by Lucia Santaella (1992). According to this author there is a phenomenon that cannot be ignored, namely, the growing media hybridism and the creation of networks, which is called *network between medias*, representing:

> (1) Transpositions, supplementation and interchange form one media to another, which I have named network between medias; (2) the growing presence technological information invading all sectors of public and private life; (3) the possibilities created by interactive communication; (4) the new modalities of artistic creation found in the exploration of media aesthetics potential and between the medias (Santaella, 1996, p. 10).

In this way we may broaden the concept of *border*, putting it into relation with syncretic forms found in the media. By so doing, the relationships between the poles of production and reception are transformed, bringing forth new regimes of identification and cooperation, by means of specific communication pacts.

When we consider genres as *matrixes* or *territories* (Borelli, 1996), we face the possibility of migration from one culture field to another, establishing dialogues in the frontiers of literature, orality and audiovisual. Moreover, we distance ourselves from the traditional discussion over canonical genres and genre hegemony. Besides cultural migrations, when we take into account their transitory character, genres create the possibility, in the audiovisual field, of transposition between medias, or, in the words of Jenkins, the emergence of a *transmidiatic* narrative "that unfolds through many mediatic supports, with each new text contributing in a distinct and valuable manner to the whole" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 135).

Recent studies focus on these *new formats of audiovisual narratives* (considering such aspects as: interactivity, collaboration, fragmentation, non-linearity and hypertextuality)[4].

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³ This expression comes from the title of a documentary on artist Vik Muniz´s work with garbage collectors in a sanitary landfill located in Jardim Gramacho, Rio de Janeiro. (*Waste land,* Karen Harley, João Jardim e Lucy Walker, Brazil/England, 2010, 90`).

4 Gene Youngblood forestalls the notions of convergence and transmidiacy in his *Expanded cinema* (new York: Dutton, 1970). This author shows contamination processes between many art forms, especially

Among them, we quote the *theory of remediation*, by Bolter & Grusin, which establishes as a defining axis of Jenkins´ *mediatic convergences* the processes of immediacy (in which the medium becomes *transparent*, as if there were no mediation and of hipermediacy (where there is awareness of the medium, evidencing the *opacity* of representation) from different modes of appropriation, remodeling and transformation. Regarding the concepts of *opacity* and *transparence*, Ismail Xavier (1984) emphasizes the possibilities of representation given by the movies due to its *window-effect* created by the screen (transparency) and the *effect of the screen* as a visually composed surface (opacity). According to this author, in different works the devices (economic or technological ones) are placed in a more or less revealing way. Whereas in transparency, such devices are used in order to create greater illusion, in the case of opacity, the devices call forth the spectator, making it possible that the distancing effect reveal the very presence of the subjects. Let us notice that these concepts find themselves around the built *discourses*, but not around the possibility of saying anything, as something intrinsic to cinema.

What do such definitions have in common amidst their diverse terminology? If we take up the notion of intertextuality, relating it to the concepts of dialogism, polyphony and heterogeneity as presented by Mikhail Bakhtin (1987), we will see possibilities in which to think the current processes as the augmentation o the relation of one discourse – be it verbal or image-like – with others. We will establish the following general definitions of the concepts central to Bakhtin´s work: dialogism is a constructive principle of language, whereas polyphony is related to the controversial voices found in one discourse, bringing forth the question of the speaker´s oneness. Therefore, we may find monophonical dialogical genres (one voice overshadows all others) and polyphonic dialogical genres (many voices dispute among themselves). Heterogeneity expresses the presence (shown or inferred) of other discourse in one discourse, since any discourse finds its unity when limited and built in reference to another (Brait, 2005).

According to Robert Stam, discourse genres are a specific aspect of intertextuality, defined as a network of "infinite and open possibilities created by a culture´s discursive practices, not only in terms of recognizable influences, but also through the process of

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video and cinema, mediated by the growing determination of technological media (special effects, computer art, multimedia surrounding).

'dissemination'" (Stam, 2010, p. 154). Such being the case, transposition *between medias* makes us broaden the concept of convergence, which would not only indicate technological aspects, but most of all, cultural processes, pointing towards *lack of precision* and *merging* of frontiers. And this leads us to a characteristic trait of a great part of Brazilian audiovisual production: the *impurity* of its forms.

Given the growing importance of cultural hybridism processes, we take into account Stam´s (1997) concept which, following post-colonial studies, claims that the appropriation of a given discourse by those formerly subdued to it inverses the stereotyped and established vectors of dominance. Literary and cinema aesthetical concepts, such us *fantastic realism*, *hunger aesthetics*, *imperfect cinema*, *creative incapability of copying*, *trash aesthetics*, *anthropophagy* and *tropicalia* are alternative positions that, by inversion, reassert the value of something that was formerly perceived as negative (Stam, 1997, p. 275)[5]. We may in this way raise hybridism to the categories of productive miscegenation and contamination:

> The cinematographic opposition practices in the First and in the Third World have been exploring a variety of alternative aesthetics. Such variety includes movies and videos that challenge the formal conventions of dramatic realism in favor of strategies and approaches such as carnivalization, anthropophagy, magical realism, reflexive modernism and post-modern resistance. These alternative aesthetics are often times related to non-realistic practices, to non-Western traditions that have a different historical rhythm, other narrative structures and different views on the body, on sexuality, on spirituality and collective life (Shohat & Stam, 2006, p. 407).

Regarding border films, *trash aesthetics*, taken from the notion of genre hybridism, seems to be a central point around which to tie the mediatic convergences we are going after. Cinema, in this way, is a privileged space in which to materialize the multi-temporal aesthetics, based on three aspects: a) constructive hybridism; b) cronotopical multiplicity; c) praise of debris. Without focusing too intensely upon these three elements, let us point towards some of its characteristics.

As for the first characteristic, we would place importance on the value of impurity – or contamination –as something constructive of a certain contemporary discursive genre, also

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[5] For further developments: Stam´s *Film Theory: an introduction,* especially chapter *In search of an alternative aesthetics,* in which he ascertains that "films that follow this resistance practice are neither homogeneous nor static, they vary according to time or place" (Stam, 2003, p. 180). Refer also to Unthinking eurocentrism (Shohat & Stam, 2006), especially chapter *Resistance aesthetics.*

found in the movies. E. Said had already shown that the word *contamination* refers to "a certain idea of literature, and actually of all culture, as something hybrid (in the complex sense that Homi Bhabbha lends to the word) and intertwined, overlaid with elements usually considered foreign" (Said, 1995, p. 389). Before him, Bakhtin had already established relations between a grotesque aesthetics and ways of reshaping cultural meaning that invert old oppositions (good/bad, beautiful/ugly, clean/dirty), creating communicational formats in which social rules and frontiers are temporarily suspended, breaking collective life rules, as for example in the popular festivities of carnival. According to this author "exaggeration, hyperbolism, the profuse, the excessive are, on the general view, the most distinctive characteristics of the grotesque style" (Bakhtin, 1987, p. 265)[6]. The term carnivalization found in Bakhtin merits our attention for its relation with the notions of hybridism and contamination:

> This process of gathering under the name of 'carnival' local heterogenic phenomena and the fact that they be designated by a same name was reflexive of an actual process. In reality, when they disappeared and degenerated, the popular festivity formats brought the carnival some of their elements: rites, attributes, ephigies, and masks. And due to this, carnival becomes the reservoir of forms that no longer had autonomous existence (Bakhtin, 1987, p. 190).

As Stam notices in relation to movies, the new taking up of the notion of hybridism as a symptom of the current moment alters the usual perception that related *miscegenation* to degeneration and infertility. Understood as productive diversity, the processes of hybridism point toward an identity game that gives way to ontologically created identities, in which contamination takes the place of purity. Fixed postures attempt to position themselves, in which the subject´s identity becomes a "developing process" (…) "always being formed" (Hall, 2001, p. 39), opening the way for "rigid boundaries become more porous and barbed-wire frontiers mutates into images of fluidity and crossing" (Stam, 1997, p. 276).

According to Stam´s view, the previous *imperialistic media* discourse makes way to *forms of reciprocity* and *appropriation by the audience*, opening the way for other assemblage – even though the tensions are still felt, evidencing questions related to power dispute and

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[6]We can establish a mythology of the scandalous in analogy with the grotesque: "Since the nineteenth century, the mythology of the scandalous means a field of study that has as its object the infamous, the monstrous, the repelling, and that which causes horror. This mythology presents the double movement of this spectacle in which that that causes repelling is also what attracts, like that hidden Greek machine, the skandalon, the tarp that entices and holds" (Freitas, 2002, mimeo.).

hegemony. Among the many meanings of hybridism, some may be termed as: colonial imposition, mandatory assimilation, downward assimilation, upside down inversion, commercial exploitation, political cooptation, cultural dominance (Stam, 1997, p. 276), revealing its unevenness, discontinuities and special/temporal multiplicity – all of which characterize the second aspect of *thrash aesthetics*.

Finally, in the third characteristic, we have a sort of *strategic redemption* of that which is usually considered as *dirty*, *low*, *disposable*, *imperfect* and *residual* (the example of carnivalization), as if debris, remains and leftovers could create social change from the borders and frontiers of its' discourse (Stam, 1997, p. 277). The overlaying of old and new engender a "dissonant temporality which combines a past imaginary communities with an equally imaginary future utopia" (p. 279), breaking away with conventional linear narrative, chronological time and physical space.

In this way, cinema can be a "privileged space to express cultural and time hybridism" (p. 279). It is hybrid in terms of time in an intertextual sense (since it gathers imagetic forms and traditions of all time) and also in technical terms (since it mixes many places and temporalities in its production and reception). The fabric of audiovisual images is like a tapestry made of overlaying, juxtaposition, digital insertions, multiplicity of sound and image (synthetic or captured). Taking into account *trash aesthetics*, cinema can be defined as a transgression discourse in its many ways of manifestation and dissemination.

As Arlindo Machado states, in the Brazilian case we deal with an alternative *hybridism*: "Movies gradually become electronic, but at the same time, video and TV are contaminated by the tradition of quality that cinema imparts when it´s absorbed" (Machado, 1997, p. 215). This author foresees phenomena that are now current, including, border films: "Many of the films that can be seen on theaters today, including those completely produced by usual cinematographic means, were actually conceived and produced having its workability on the TV screen in mind" (p. 215), be for economical, market or audience reasons. Given these general considerations, what do we see, then, when we look to border films? In the echoes perceived between genre movies and TV series, we have started shaping ways to understand such enigma. In order to do so we present the work of a border film maker, Simião Martiniano and an analysis of his latest work, *O show variado* (2008).

A VARIETY SHOW OUTSIDE THE SCREEN

In placing the border on the sphere of media convergence, it is by means of genre hybridism that we arrive at the movies. By way of example, we have selected from this all too fickle ground, bordering between movie spaces, one producer and one of his movies. The hybrid character of border movies and its strong presence in Martiniano´s work are here taken as premise. His work is constituted by eight movies: *O herói trancado* (1998-89); *A rede maldita* (1990-91); *O vagabundo faixa preta* (1992); *A mulher e o mandacaru* (1993-94); *Traição no sertão* (1995-96); *A moça e o rapaz valente* (1997-98); *A valize foi trocada* (2006-07)[7]; *O show variado* (2008)[8]. In his work, as well as in other border filmmakers productions, it is extremely complex to pinpoint specific genres in the stories told, which leads us to the following statement: borders are a genre on its own, that not only overthrows canonic genres, recreating them, but also it lingers in the frontier between genre awareness and rupture. Different from the others, in his last two movies, Simião Martiniano has concerned himself with technical and market questions, presenting advanced image and sound quality. He also has cultural endorsement from Recife´s City Hall or Pernambuco´s government:

> I am Simião Martiniano, a movie street hawker, and I have now nine movies recorded here in Pernambuco – the last one was *A valize foi trocada*. The film is now in São Paulo, in an award festival. The next one will be *O show variado*, a short movie with dancers, music and karate (…). And we have this project of starting recording this movie in the first week of January, sponsored by Recife City Hall. This is my life – recording – many years now. Since 1979 I have fought for the movies, and now have results, with nine productions, seven long, two short. And now I get help from the government. *This is my life* (Revista Zé Pereira, 2008, our highlight).

O Show variado (2008), digitally recorded, is made up of four sketches, separated by musical numbers. "*O show variado*" is a movie with no plot, just sketches, like "A praça é nossa". There will be a doctor sketch, an office sketch, teachers, industry. I´ll play the singer, the comedian, the entrepreneur and a heavy-weight guy. "I´ll take up 200 Kg, you´ll see", Simião explains[9]. In this movie we can acutely perceive mediatic convergence (specially between movies, TV and video) and gender hybridism (not only in the narrative forms – humor,

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[7] The Word *valise* is written in the movie title as "*valize*". We chose to keep the original movie spelling in all mentions of this movie.

[8] Detailed summaries of the movies: www2.uol.com.br/JC/sites/periferia/cinema.html

[9] Simião Martiniano joins the dance. **Revista Zé Pereira.** News report with text and video. Retrieved Aug 12, 2008, From: http://blogdozepereira.blogspot.com2007/12/simio-entra-na-dana.html#links

romance, martial arts, musical – , but also in the discursive formats – soap opera, TV series, audience shows, reality shows), above defined. Stating by the initial credits that, in a way typical of this director, do not introduce actors, characters and technicalities. We read on the screen, written in circus fonts typical of old TV shows, the name of the movie – *Página 21 presents "O show variado"* –, as if it were the *next attraction* on the local show. Simião Martiniano is responsible for the script, direction; he also sings and acts in all sketches.

It is a *show variado* (varied/variety show) because, for the first time, Simião Martiniano makes a movie composed of different episodes, not by coincidence a tendency also found in movies and TV. The film opens with an upward movement of the camera, following a girl dancer going down the stairs, wearing a generously short satin skirt. When he invites her to dance, the audience finds itself involved in the plot, in which the movement from one sketch to another is always through music sung by Simião himself. After all, in a variety show (as well as in a TV audience show or stand-up comedy), musical numbers are always important, interlocking the narrative. Actors frequently found in his movies, mostly friends and acquaintances, take turns acting the main parts.

In the first sketch, preceded by a song "Come here, brunette, come kiss me", a young girl tells Mr. Joaquim, Simião character, her love misfortunes with her husband. Joaquim flirts with the girl, not noticing the arrival of the husband, burly and macho. After an altercation, the husband carries of Joaquim on his shoulder, as a conclusion typical in old TV sketches (such as, the humorous *Praça da Alegria* e *Os Trapalhões*, the last one by Rede Globo). The second sketch (with a musical background; "Oh beautiful girl, your eyes mesmerize me" sung by Simião as a girl dances around him) takes place in a hospital room, where a doctor, nurses and patients complain over medical assistance. An emergency comes up – a man run over by a hose carriage – and this changes the scene to the patient´s care, done n a histrionic and rude fashion, until he passes out after receiving, by mistake, a horse shot. Noticing their mistake, nurse and doctor run away, opening the third sketch.

A solitary girl cries and Simião consoles her, singing "Don´t cry, don´t regret, when the end of the year comes, I will marry you", until she hugs him. We then see an office background in which an employee complains of his boss (that is Simião), until he enters the room, pointing the mess. They argue and the boss threatens to fire him. With no connection to this scene, a

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waltz suddenly begins, following the rhythm of the lines, and both start to dance. The boss gets angry and they mutually accuse each other of starting the dance, with an unlikely dialogue: "I´m going to explode" is said to the sound of the opening song of *2001, an odyssey in space*. A sampled vignette that literally makes the office roof blow up.

In the longest sketch of the movie, Simião plays *Dr. Simião*, that is to say, himself. In the second part, a sheriff asks Simião to take care of his wife while he is out of town. A string a misunderstandings takes place, filled with lies and backstabbing, climaxing when the sheriff tries to choke Simião. The framings, lights and scene cuts, in shot and reverse shot, are very similar to those seen in soap opera, especially during the moments of dramatic tension in indoor takes.

A beautiful girl leads us into the fourth sketch, in a pleasant spot of Recife city. Wearing a yellow satin skirt, she is dancing to the sound of an accordion and a triangle. While three other girls in pink, red and greed satin clothes dance, Simião, also main character of this episode sings: "Sieve girl, sieve the flower, this sieving makes it all loose" (…) "Beautiful girl, you know how to dance, you are stunning, you´re a passion fruit, come here my flower". The story begins with a host in tail-coat and bowtie announcing, in a rather simple school or club stage, the opening of the *21st Heavyweight Championship*, a name written in block letters on a ribbon, surrounded by a full crowd. With suspense music, skinny Simião comes up, showing his muscles in a comical and mechanical way, as if in a TV show parody. He makes a tremendous effort to lift a 400 kg weight, and the music follows his movements. Simião manages the task and the audience claps in response. A predictable turning point takes place: we see a child stealthily walk in and expose the fraud – the weight was made of Styrofoam material and the story ends in a chaotic, anecdotic fashion.

The last scene, which ends *the variety show*, stars a second singer, a frequent actor in Simião´s movies, chanting: "Don´t you all cry, don´t you all regret… when the end of the year comes I´ll marry you all". Once again four brunettes, in made-up hair colorful clothing, dance to a typical song until the credits come up. Simião places himself as the central character of the movie, taking the credits as director, author, actor, narrator, character and, many times, potential viewer of the sketches announced by his own musical numbers.

In order to establish some connection between the concepts and our chosen border film, let us make some points. First of all, regarding the genre: in each of these small shows the music

isn´t accessory, because no matter if the songs are popular or romantic, they testify to the rather baffling fact that this movie *belongs* to a *musical genre*. An interesting play between generic quote and denial can be noticed, since the musical numbers are not, in theory, related to the narrative. They also do not detach themselves from the dialogue, to be later incorporated. As a sign of this is the lack of any other kind of music background: other than the normal noise background, the songs are specific to certain scenes and transitions.

By means of this and other devices, the movie evidences at least two tendencies associated with convergence and hybridism: intertextuality between movies and TV and many genres of the two discourses; and the remix of forms and characters pertaining to them. In so doing, the moviemaker asserts the independent and yet autonomous nature of border films in relation to other cultural matrixes, refuting the simple idea of rudimentary copy of a canonical genre picture, be it due to financial, stylistic or technical difficulties. If we assume that the music genre is the prevailant one in this variety show, we can point to contrasts between typical musicals and its reuse in border movies, raising questions over these connections.

Border musicals (that, in the case of this movie, is not an isolated genre) not only copy traits of classical musicals (in which narrative is based on choreographed songs) – or of its deconstructions accepted by the critic, such as *Everyone says I love you* (Woody Allen, 1996) –, but also evoke a group of fancied images tributary to radio and TV productions in which music is not an ornament, but an actual possibility of sharing. Border films do not evoke musical pictures, they promote their pillage, concomitantly confirming and refuting TV audiovisual culture. According to Frederic Jameson, *historical pillage* is not a contemporary phenomenon, but a trial at "thinking the present historically, in an epoch that has forgotten how to think in this way" (Jameson, 2006, p. 13). In the words of Eliza Casadei, we are dealing with a characteristic of narratives about the past that maybe:

> through the possibilities created by communication technological means and information spread, has become more exaggerated to the point of us perceiving, with clarity and broadness of view, this assemblages that reshape the meaning of an event by reorganizing their elements (Casadei, 2010, p. 233).

In this way, a second aspect emerges: without the deliberate intent of creating a genre film, border film makers cast a renewed genre that brings forward the *burlesque*, understood as farce and play, based on the TV shows they are inspired by. TV, by its turn, had previously taken

this playful genre from the cinema: a genre that, albeit predominantly humorous, finds its peculiarity in its way of showing everyday life activities in an exaggerated and distorted way. In literature, burlesque[10] originally means the parody of classical texts with intent of comical effect; or it can refer to an irrelevant matter taken seriously, in which sense it is close to Bakhtin´s concept of carnivalization, that is to say, when something sublime is brought down.

Coming directly from the Italian *commedia dell´arte*, it became a form of impromptu theater during the fifteen and seventeenth centuries, the burlesque arrives in the United States around the 1830-40´s as a musical artistic spectacle and until the 1960´s it underwent many changes. In American movies the term begins to appear in the 1910´s. Coming from British musical shows, burlesque films (just like comedy, parody and humor) aim at entertaining the audience through unexpected and immediate comical effects (*gags*) inserted into the narrative stream in an absurd and irrational way. Producer Mack Sennet was in charge of countless mute movie sketches and actors Charles Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Oliver Hardy and Stan Laurel (working as a comical pair from 1926 to 1950)[11] are representative names of an inventive kind of cinema, of popular, fun narrative forms, many of which are evoked in *O show variado*.

If TV took the burlesque form the movies, Simião Martiniano´s latest work uses this genre already as it has been absorbed by TV, making a second pillage adding on top many narrative layers–giving rise to a legitimate variety show like those found in 1930´s London, with dancers and musicians. Contamination goes in all directions: from cinema to TV and, previously, the other way around, evidencing the intersection between borders and convergence. As we see in O *show variado*, such discursive streams "aren´t new, even though they are in a state of paroxysm due to digital technology" (Figueiredo, 2010, p. 12). From theater to movies, from radio to TV, from newspapers to books and, more recently, form books to movies, from script to books, from TV to movies, from movies to videogame, form videogames to cell phones – pillage and intersections contaminate not only legitimate spaces, but also cultural borders.

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[10]We do not intend to take into account this genre. For reference: Vincent Pinel, *Écoles, genres et mouvements au cinema* (Paris: Larousse, 2000) and http://capitulosdecinema.blogs.sapo.pt/1692.html

[11] Among the movies we would like to mention: *The general* (1927), by Buster Keaton and Clyde Bruckman; *Safety last!* (1923), by Fred Neymeyer and Sam Tailor; *Modern Times* (1936), by Charles Chaplin; *Unaccustomed as we are* (1929), first sound movie by Oliver Hardy and Stan Laurel.

Finally, one last aspect comes to mind: by assimilating TV discourse, border films seem to drift away from usual cinematographic circuits. Beyond hybridism that can be noticed through the narrative and textual markings of plot, there is also a peculiar kind of convergence in which not only the media, but its very formats are shuffled. Simião Martiniano´s latest two movies – *A valize foi trocada* and *O show variado* – illustrate this movement clearly. Produced from 2006 to 2007, *A valize foi trocada* is Martiniano´s first city-themed movie (including its ambiance), dealing with unemployment, relationships and social problems. *O show variado*, even though it is a variety movie (a term occasionally used in TV journalism and afternoon entertainment), gives continuance to these themes, establishing a dialogue with TV series (*A Grande Família, Toma Lá, Dá Cá*), audience shows (*Domingão do Faustão, Caldeirão do Huck*), Sunday programs (*Fantástico, A Turma do Didi*) and humor shows (the old school *Zorra Total,* the new *SOS Emergência*), just to mention those shown by Rede Globo, the country´s largest broadcast company.

Outlining something as inapprehensible as borders is not a simple task. We put forward an exploratory approach from our notes on convergence, hybridism and media genre, a place of permanent tension between consent and dissent, accommodation and resistance. What is left is to do is to enquire after the object, setting it to future research: how should one think about cultural borrowing, on the part of many social actors? How to raise questions about them not only in technological terms (uses, machines, supports) but also relating to their social and cultural imaginary background? Is there a *Brazilian* way of converging cultural forms, especially audiovisual ones? If genres have by definition grades of *impurity*, how can we tell these apart when we look at border films? In these shifting movies we foresee the outline of *strange forms*, copied in an innovative way though their hybridism and pillage.

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