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CINED: A COLLECTION OF FILMS, A FILM PEDAGOGY

CinEd has joined a mission of transmitting the 7th art as a cultural object and as a support to understand the world. For that reason it was elaborated a common pedagogy, starting from a collection of movies produced in the European countries, partners to this project. The approach intends to be adapted to our era, marked by a rapid, major and continuously change, regarding the way of seeing, receiving and producing the images. These last are viewed on a variety of screens: from the biggest – those in the halls, to the smallest – (to smartphones) ticking, of course, TV sets, computers and tablets screens. The cinema is still a young art whose death has been predicted many times. It is very clear that this didn't happen.

These changes affect the cinema, transmission must seriously take into account the manner increasingly fragmented of viewing movies, starting from this screen diversity. CinEd publications propose and talk about a sensitive, inductive, interactive and intuitive education providing knowledges, analysis tools and dialog between image and film possibili-

ties. The works are described on different levels, of course, viewed in entirely and in pieces, according to different temporality, fixed image, plan and sequence.

Educational brochures invite us to take the movie with freedom and suppleness. One of the major challenges is to intelligently get the movie open – mindedly: description, essential step of any analytical enterprise, the ability to extract, select, classify, compare, confront the images between movies and with the images of other performing and exposure arts (photography, literature, painting, theatre, comics...) The purpose is images not only to run but to create emotions; cinema is an artificial art, extremely valuable for build and consolidate the vision of the young generations.

The author:

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Acknowledgements:

Pedro Costa, Manuela Viegas, Pedro Caldas, Teresa Garcia and Joana Cabral.

And also Isabelle Bourdon, Nathalie Bourgeois, Mélodie Cholmé, Agnès Nordmann and Léna Rouxel.

General coordination: Institut français

Pedagogic coordination: Cinémathèque française / Cinéma, cent ans de jeunesse

Coordination CinEd in Portugal: Os Filhos de Lumière
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WHY THIS FILM?

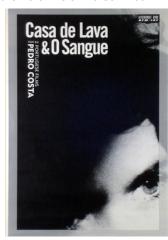
At a time when more and more young people started making films, Pedro Costa is certainly one of the greatest and most inspiring examples for the generations that follow. Since his first feature film *O Sangue* until this day, Pedro Costa has been building, painstakingly, one of the most fascinating works of Portuguese cinema. In a deep and speculative observation / transformation on the concept of real – especially in the relations of his country with its colonial heritage – Costa is the contemporary heir of filmmakers like Robert Bresson and the Jean-Marie Straub and Danielle Huillet couple. Heir due to a deep commitment: ethical with his images, a dedicated worker of his profession. But he is also an heir due his powerful and impacting cinema about the world. He is, therefore, and indispensable author in the CinEd collection.

Pedro Costa was only 29 years old when he directed *O Sangue*. So to choose his first feature film, a work about the love and persistence of a stubborn young boy, corresponds to the desire to understand the roots of his entire cinema. Where does this lack of colour, this pride in the simplicity of his characters, this search for a home, family or roots; come from as a major theme of his universe? But

working on *O Sangue* is also working on a film about learning. In a technical sense, because of the stringent compositions, the use of dim lighting, the actors' direction and the work with a present and evocative sound. And in narratively one as well, once the characters are going to learn to live without a father and find their own path.

Nino and Vicente, as well as Pedro Costa himself, are symbols of a positive mind-set in the growing process. Try, change, evolve, respect and create are all verbs that make part of the film vocabulary. That is the posture we want to underline through the seventh art, starting from the films from the CinEd collection. Besides that principle, O Sangue teaches us something else: an image is never born alone. Thus, all the images that compose Pedro Costa's film incite the young viewer to view the images that inspired the author. It is all the cinema history and its expressive and emotive power that highlights every moment in this children's adventure, in path of youth, heading to the adult world.







TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Original title: O Sangue
Country: Portugal
Duration: 95 min

Format: 35 mm, black and white, 1,66:1
World Premiere: September 6, 1989 (Venice Film

Festival)

National Premiere: December 7, 1990

Direction:Pedro CostaScreenplay:Pedro CostaProduction :Vítor GonçalvesTrópico Filmes

Cinematography by: Martin Schäfer,

Acácio de Almeida and Elso Roque

Sound: Pedro Caldas and Gérard Rousseau

Editing: Manuela Viegas
Wardrobe: Rita Lopes Alves

Cast: Pedro Hestnes (Vicente),

Nuno Ferreira (Nino), Inês de Medeiros (Clara), Canto e Castro (father), Luís Miguel Cintra (uncle), Henrique Viana and Luís Santos

(the creditors).

Isabel de Castro (wife)

and the singer Manuel João Vieira

(Zeca)

GROWTH



ONIRISM

AMBIGUITY

BLACK AND WHITE

ISSUES AT STAKE

GROWTH

To grow is to find the way home

O Sangue is about two brothers who have to learn to live without their father. Vicente, the oldest, will face the adult world and the legacies and debts that his father will leave him. Nino, the youngest, without understanding the whole situation very well, will have to abandon his childish vision and grow quickly. Faced with a new family that will soon be born, they will have to cut their hair, change their face, their clothes, and choose the areas of their home. Throughout this process it is important to face loneliness, face the «bad wolves» that make up for adoptive parents and walk towards the house we chose. Pedro Costa, with his first feature film, is also struggling with his growth as a filmmaker and finally finds his way.

BLACK AND WHITE

Black is a colour

The quote belongs to the painter Henri Matisse and was João Bénard da Costa, the most renown programmer and film critic of Portuguese cinema (cf. Critical reception: crossed looks p 29), who re-used it to describe the colour of Pedro Costa's film, inserting it on a long gallery of artists in art history who worked on the colour black. In *O Sangue*, the black goes beyond the absence of colour. Filmed in black and white, it is the the dark shades that not only draw the eerie and magical atmosphere of this story - heir of the pessimist ruins of the post-second World War period – but also work the border between the visible and the invisible, between what happened and what could have happened.

ONIRISM

The landscape is the space of dreams and of the dead

« The night was dark and there was no moonlight / and a wolf howling can be heard in the distance ». This is the children's song we hear during the opening credits of *O Sangue*, after seeing three kids sleeping, a restless sleep. From the first moments it is clear that all this story of growth fits into an oneiric and fable-like atmosphere of wonderful and ominous nights, in a threat enhanced by childhood imagination. The omnipresent forest with its terrible haunted trees, the swamp

reeds along the river lit only by the moonlight, or the windy plains are part of that world. If this is the space of dreams and from where the dead come, it is opposed to another «threat», designed with straight lines and brought by the great buildings of Lisbon's downtown architecture.

CINEPHILIA

The cinema we love is our family

If cinephilia is the love of cinema, filmmakers we love are the parents to who we ask for love and shelter. It is for this reason that, in order to tell a story of two orphans, Pedro Costa will resort to his other family. Family blood ties, strong and invisible, that spans throughout all continents. It is therefore impossible to understand the origin of *O Sangue* without acknowledging the assembly of influences like the French cinema and its austerity (Robert Bresson), the Japanese simplicity (Yasujiro Ozu), the German film nicety (Straub and Huillet), the classic and tragic American love (Friedrich Murnau, Nicholas Ray) and the mysterious and oneiric timeless worlds (Charles Laughton, Jacques Tourneur).

AMBIGUITY

To discover beyond the visible

As will later be detailed on this booklet, this is a film that seeks to ask questions rather than to give answers. In this sense, the Pedro Costa's direction follows the principle that what we see (and hear) is a "visible island surrounded by invisibility from all sides". Through the figures of the ellipse, the shots in the shadows and against the light, the outside of the film frame, the ambiguous dialogue, he seeks to build, painstakingly, the wonderful space of imagination. "You know what was the greatest human invention?" Asks Nino Vicente. Nino never reveals his brother the answer to this question because that, like many other secrets, is up to the viewer to find out.

SYNOPSIS

Pedro Costa's debuting film focuses on the growth of two brothers, Vicente and Nino, 17 and 10 years, respectively, who will have to learn to live without their father. His father is ill and often leaves home to go to his medical treatments. One night, Vicente assails a pharmacy and locks his father in his room. The next day Vicente asks Clara, his girlfriend and school employee, to help him with his father's body. After going to the cemetery, he decides to tell his brother that their father will not return. It is time to change, to learn to live alone. Christmas comes and everything seems to go well. However, two of the father's creditors approach Vicente to try to get money that his father owed them. Also from Lisbon, an uncle arrives after hearing of the death of his brother; wants to take Nino with him to the city. On a night in which Clara and Vicente go to the park, the uncle took the opportunity to take the boy away. When Vicente comes to his uncle's house to retrieve his brother is also taken captive by his father's creditors. It is up to both brothers, now imprisoned on the last night of the year, to escape his pursuers and find the way back home.

II – THE FILM

CONTEXT

IN THE LATE 80S... A BLOOD DEBT

It was a few years after leaving the film school, with only 29 years, that Pedro Costa wrote and directed O Sangue. It is, therefore, a film marked by a strong learning component and with a small team that brought together, among others, some of his colleagues. Anticipating his extensive work in future films with non-professional actors, Costa went to an orphanage to and picked Nuno Ferreira to play the role of Nino, his only experience as actor until today. The rest of the cast contemplates several professional actors like Pedro Hestnes (Vincente»), Inês de Medeiros (Clara»), Luís Miguel Cintra (the Uncle), Canto e Castro (the Father), Henrique Viana and Luís Santos (the Creditors), Isabel de Castro (the Wife) and singer Manuel João Vieira (Zeca»). All the film shooting took place in some areas of Barreiro, Vale de Santarém, Valada do Ribatejo in Cartaxo and in the centre of Lisbon, from October to December of 1987. Pedro Costa tells how complicated this first experience was, especially because of the rain that precluded shooting scenes on the outside, since he decided to shoot on film in very contrasted black and white colours, always on the edge of visibility.

O Sangue was premiered in the Portuguese theatres in December 9, 1990, just over a year after the fall of the Berlin Wall. This wall had split, since 1961, the German capital into two parts: East Berlin and West Berlin. These were regarded as symbols of two blocks separated by the Cold War, opposing, on the one hand, the capitalist countries, led by the United States, and on the other hand, the socialist countries, of which the communist Soviet Union was its greatest symbol. If the fall of the wall meant the German unification, on the east side, the end of the Cold War and the various revolutions of the Communist collapse in 1989, determined the dissolution of U.S.S.R.

In Portugal, the 80s would serve as a "hard awakening" to the promises of a "new world", headed by the post-revolution hope of April 25 (2). The new environment of freedom that was installed in the post-revolution years had left the population emerged on the expectation of an economic growth. However, in 78, and then in 1984, Portugal would require financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the country was in a state of far greater impoverishment in comparison to the rest of the countries of Western Europe. Therefore, Portugal entered a new economic order, also achieved due to the admission of Portugal in the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1986, with a treaty signed by the Prime Minister of that time, Mário Soares, in the previous year. The following years would be to adapt to a European reality, already under the guidance of the Social Democratic Cavaco Silva ahead of the country's destinations.

Albeit in an implicit way, there are several elements in *O Sangue* that may be related to this period of transformation in the Portuguese history. Since then, the resilience of youth, of Nino, Vincent and Clara, the adult world can be interpreted symbolically as the resistance of Portugal to the external authorities of the International Monetary Fund (and even, in a way, the European Union). In this adult order, the ultimate symbol is the world inhabited by his uncle, who, with his televisions and videos (where Nino can see the cartoon as often as he likes), new clothes, trips to the zoo or to the restaurant, illustrates a new consumer society. In the world of the young, the austerity of post-revolutionary Portugal seems to keep intact a certain material dignity. Vincent asks his father, "and now all this money, where is it coming from?". Besides that, he also rejects the money that his uncle wants to give him and does not feel particularly enthusiastic about receiving the salary from his boss. Nino also rejects all of his uncle's help, "we do not need help," he tells him. He does

not want to go to the uncle offers to take doesn't like going the dining scene in asks Nino what is piece of paper and When I leave, I pay worlds put in oppocome and a past as before. In the world of economic for the integration space («at first you but then you'll get Uncle Nino about the second, a timethey live with small



1987, student protest in front of the Ministry of Education and Culture

cinema when his him and says he to restaurants. In Império, the uncle he scribbling on a he replies: «Prices. you". These two sition the future to that will never be first, in a modern possibilities, it calls of all in the same will find it strange, used to it,» says his new home). In less world, in which means but

endowed with an inner, ancient and mythological wealth, which do not let itself be bribed or domesticated by a new modern city order.

The understanding of the main features of the 80s in the history of Portuguese cinema is also essential to understand O Sangue. On one hand, as told by Paulo Cunha (3), historian, this was a period that definitely returned to fiction after the documentary momentum that characterized the post-revolutionary paradigm⁽⁴⁾. On the other hand, and mainly by the action of the producer Paulo Branco and his work with director Manoel de Oliveira with foreign support (from this collaboration, the film Le Soulier de Satin, 1985, work of almost seven hours and supported by several European countries, it's the best example), Portuguese cinema (5) gained a more international dimension. In 1983, the Film School ("Conservatório de Cinema") changes its name to Lisbon Theatre and Film School ("Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema"), pointing out the transition from an exclusive «authorial design» in the learning methods, to a more technical type of education and more responsive to the business issues of Portuguese cinema. In 1986, it appears for the first time, in the Portuquese Cinematheque, Uma Rapariga no Verão by Vítor Goncalves, a film that symbolically marks the arrival of a new generation of filmmakers to Portuguese cinema. This is a film that appears as a collective project of a generation of filmmakers who had graduated at the film school since the late 70s, with Pedro Costa as his assistant director.

This generation, of which the author of O Sangue makes part, is known as «forgotten generation» or «lost» since most of its films were seen by few people and many had no definite program. In this generation also took part Joaquim Pinto (Uma Pedra no Bolso, 1986), Joaquim Leitão (Duma Vez Por Todas, 1986), Leandro Ferreira (Contactos, 1986) Edgar Pêra (A Cidade de Cassiano, 1991), Ana Luísa Guimarães (A Nuvem, 1991) or Manuel Mozos (Um Passo, Outro Passo e Depois..., 1989). The latter counts as one of the unifying threads of this generation, and something that is very visible in the film by Pedro Costa is the recurring theme of characters in search of their place in the world, of parents and children on a collision course. This theme will have an ethical and aesthetic correspondence: a sense of orphanhood (like Nino and Vicente, lonely and fatherless) in relation to the history and aesthetics of the new Portuguese cinema, which will make these filmmakers question not only their own artistic identity, as well as the very notion of a national identity. Unlike the vanguard of the new Portuguese cinema (6) of the 60s and 70s, or in a stark contrast to the cinematic gestures of the greatest filmmakers of that time, Manoel de Oliveira and João César Monteiro, this «invisible generation» stayed close to the people and their small everyday gestures, rejecting the big productions and big speeches. It was a growing anxiety that believed that cinema could be the most significant tool in order to get the great themes and great feelings out of small and daily events.

- (1) On the release of the DVD version, Pedro Hestnes said that the film was a "rough diamond covered in coal" and "some kind of a ghost". Pedro Hestnes (1962 – 2011) is an important actor of the late 80s and early 90s period in the Portuguese cinema. He starred in prestigious films like O Sangue (1989) and Casa de Lava (1994) by Pedro Costa; Uma Pedra no Bolso (1988) (cf. CinEd film collection) and Um Passo, Outro Passo e Depois... (1989), by Joaquim Pinto; A Idade Maior (1989), by Teresa Vilaverde; Tempos Difíceis (1988), Aqui na Terra (1993) and Três Palmeiras (1994) by João Botelho; Agosto (1988) by Jorge Silva Melo, Xavier (1992) by Manuel Mozos, or Le trésor des îles chiennes (1990) and Le trésor des îles chiennes (1997) by F.J. Ossang.
- (2) The revolution of April 25, 1974, also known as the Revolução dos Cravos ("Carnation Revolution), marks the end of a period of 41 years of a Portuguese dictatorship that started in 1933. This period, also known as Estado Novo ("New State") was led by the iron forces of António de Oliveira Salazar, the President of the Council of Ministers.
- (3) Cf. Cunha, Paulo, *A "Diferença Portuguesa"? in Cinema Português: Um Guia Essencial*, São Paulo: SESI-SP Editora, 2013: 215-238.
- (4) In this period of documentaries, there are few worth mentioning: As Armas e o Povo (1975), a collective film about the revolution itself, performed and produced by Trabalhadores da Actividade Cinematográfica, with appearances by Fernando Lopes, José Fonseca e Costa, among others; Que Farei Eu com Esta Espada? (1975) by João César Monteiro, about a Portugal who finds its revolution threatened; Deus, Pátria, Autoridade (1975), a portrait of the fascist regime and Bom Povo Português (1980) about the post-revolutionary period, both by Rui Simões: Continuar a Viver ou Os Índios da Meia-Praia (1976), a political and ethnographic film by António da Cunha Telles, on the restructuring of a fishing community in Algarve after April 25; and ultimately Torre Bela (1977), by the german Thomas Harlan, a Portuguese, Italian and German co-production about the occupation by farm workers

- without work or land of their own, in a farm in Ribatejo during the PREC (Revolutionary Process in Progress "Processo Revolucionário Em Curso", period of revolutionary, remarkable activities in the history of Portugal, elapsed since the Revolução dos Cravos, which began with the military coup of April 25, 1974, and concluded with the approval of the Portuguese Constitution in April 1976).
- (5) Manoel de Oliveira and Paulo Branco are two of the most important names of Portuguese cinema. The first is the most international director on national cinema, with a career that expands over eight decades and is filled with absolute masterpieces like Amor de Perdição (1979), Aniki Bóbó (1942) or Vale Abraão (1993). The second is not only the greatest Portuguese producer, having produced works of national authors - such as Manoel de Oliveira himself, João César Monteiro, John Canijo, João Botelho, Teresa Villaverde or Pedro Costa - but also an important producer in the European cinema having worked with Wim Wenders, David Cronenberg, Alain Tanner, Werner Schroeter, Raúl Ruiz, Chantal Akerman, Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi, André Téchiné, Christophe Honoré, Jerzy Skolimowski, Sharunas Bartas, Paul Auster, among others.
- (6) The new Portuguese cinema comes in the 60s, heavily inspired by the Italian neorealism and the French New Wave. Linked to the themes of searching for human identity and the portrait of the realities of a deep country, the movement joined the issues of an ethnographic nature to non-classicist aesthetics and the use of lighter techniques in the capture of image and sound. The four most illustrative works of this aesthetics and of the new Portuguese cinema universe are Dom Roberto (1962) by José Ernesto de Sousa, Os Verdes Anos (1963) by Paulo Rocha, Belarmino (1964) by Fernando Lopes and Domingo À Tarde (1965) by António de Macedo.

THE AUTHOR: PEDRO COSTA, A FILMMAKER OF THE WORLD AND THE MARGIN

Pedro Costa (Lisbon, 1959) is unquestionably the most important contemporary Portuguese filmmaker. During his academic education, after beggining a degree in History at the Faculty of Letters of da University of Lisbon, he decided to study film at the Conservatory (78-81) where he was taught and influenced by filmmakers like António Reis, Paulo Rocha and Alberto Seixas Santos. Among his first experiences, Pedro Costa was the assistant to the aforementioned *Uma Rapariga no Verão* (1986, Vítor Gonçalves), as well as *Duma Vez Por Todas* (1986, Joaquim Leitão), *Agosto* (1988, Jorge Silva Melo) and *Um Adeus Português* (1986, João Botelho).

After his first work, the short film produced for RTP, É Tudo Invenção Nossa (1984), Pedro Costa signs O Sangue, his first feature film that would have its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival. Five years later, still with Maria de Medeiros and Pedro Hestnes among the cast of actors, Costa would go to Cape Verde to shoot Casa de Lava, 1994. The film, described as a loose adaptation of I Walked with a Zombie (1943) by Jacques Tourneur, tells the story of Maria, a Portuguese nurse who takes Leo, a construction worker in a coma, from Portugal to Cape Verde, his native country. The film continues to develop the theme of «home» and the search for roots, but this time from the point of view of the relationship between Portugal and the Cape Verdean emigrant culture⁽⁷⁾, an issue that would no longer leave his cinema.

In the following year, Pedro Costa directs *Ossos* (1995), a fiction story that takes place in the neighborhood of Fontainhas, a Lisbon suburb, where he would direct two more







films: the so-called trilogy of Fontainhas. Ossos tells the story of a couple who, living in extreme poverty, suddenly have a child. Given the inability of supporting the child and the mother's suicidal impulses, the father tries to sell the child. The film, which saw its cinematography being awarded at the Venice Festival, would leave a deep mark on its author. Pedro Costa, using many of the inhabitants of the neighborhood as non-professional actors in the film, was left fascinated by the stories of these residents on the margins of society and deeply moved by this world of survival and poverty. In particular by Vanda, who plays the Clotilde character in Ossos, and her sister Zita. In addition to their wild beauty, reminding the figure of Frida Kahlo, Costa wanted to know what life was like for those people. Later, he creates No Quarto da Vanda (2000), his next film. In addition to this relationship of curiosity and friendship with Vanda, Pedro Costa tells, in his conversation with the French filmmaker Jean-Pierre Gori (8) - that the passage from Ossos to No Quarto da Vanda, as far as the working method is concerned, was due to his realization that working with a great film crew, professional actors, trucks filled with film material, would disturb the everyday life, the nocturnal workers and the cleaning ladies, who had to wake up every day at five in the morning. The international reputation of the filmmaker grew especially with this second volume of the trilogy of Fontainhas (and received a special mention at the Locarno Film Festival) with which, with a small team, resort to natural lighting, entered Vanda's room and heard life stories of drug addiction in the first person. Filmed in digital, Pedro Costa shot 170 hours worth of material, which result in a film between documentary and fiction with 170 minutes. From this film on, the filmmaker decided not only to abandon the use of the analogic film but also the impulse to build a scenario for storytelling and creating a fiction world. He therefore decided to settle on a real world, one that already exists, and find these same stories in it.





In 2001, Pedro Costa directs *Où gît votre sourire enfoui?*, a documentary for the series of films about filmmakers, *Cinéma, de notre temps*, about the editing process of the couple of the filmmakers Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet. Yet on this subject, he directs *6 Bagatelas* (2001), a short film that shows unused scenes in the previous movie about the filmmakers. His next most significant work, the third volume of the trilogy already alluded to, is *Juventude em Marcha* (2006). In *No Quarto da Vanda* it was Vanda herself who «invited» Pedro Costa to her room, an impulse that proved to be static and observant, and in this film the impetus was given by the Cape Verdean emigrant Ventura and it is even more errant: it was him and his ambulation who pulled Pedro Costa to meet the places and the people he later approached on his film. Filmed over 15 months in Fontainhas, the film illustrates the process of dismantlement of the neighborhood and the passage of its inhabitants to another space, the social neighborhood Casal da Boba. It is in this context that Ventura wanders looking for his children and a house to settle his family in that neighborhood.

After directing several other short films – *Tarrafal* (2007), *The Rabbit Hunters* (2007), *O Nosso Homem* (2010), *Sweet Exorcism* (2012), – and an imitate film portrait of the singer Jeanne Balibar, *Ne Change Rien* (2009), made for the ARTE tv channel, Pedro Costa releases his latest feature film: *Cavalo Dinheiro* (2015), which led him to win the best director's award at the Locarno Film Festival, and brings back Ventura, the person-actor-character. Ventura is sick in the hospital, and in a time that already seems to be reduced, he remembers his past, the times lived in Portugal, the revolution period and his personal ghosts that are also the ones from the country that welcomed him many years ago.

(7) Cape Verde, the West African country composed by an archipelago of 10 islands, was discovered by Portuguese sailors in 1460, followed by a long process of colonization that would only finish in July 5, 1975 with the country's independence and following the Portuguese revolution of 25 April 1974. From this strong connection resurfaces a strong wave of Cape Verdean emigration to Portugal, especially after the independence of the African country.

(8) Cf. Bonus features from the DVD *Letters from Fontainhas: Three Films* by Pedro Costa, edited by the Criterion Collection.

THE FILM IN THE WORK CONTEXT: O SANGUE AND THE BEGINNING OF A WORK ETHIC

Philippe Azoury, in an essay entitled "Orphans" (9), writes that O Sangue is both a first film and a film apart, more lyrical than those which will follow. To this idea, we can add that a director's first work always contains a certain innocence, typical of young people, and the characteristics – still in their genesis – that will be explored in the later works. In order to understand the role of Pedro Costa's first feature film in the rest of his work it is important not to lose sight of this duality.

A good example that expresses this double meaning is the way the film deals with the theme of the house. Vicente's growth process, as well as Nino's, involves the escape of the houses of creditors and the uncle, respectively. By analysing this, it can be said that here begins the fundamental issue of Pedro Costa, the relationship with a house, like a root that connects us to a space. But if in *O Sangue* the house takes fugitives, in the future, for Ventura and Vanda, the house will be a place of refuge, a place like home. Still recovering Azoury's text: «*O Sangue* is necessary to cut ties with home. For Vanda and Ventura, their house is their only tie". The Colonial relations between Portugal and Cape Verdean emigrants, the arrival of Leão to his homeland in *A Casa de Lava*, the connection with the inhabitants from the Fontainhas neighbourhood in *No Quarto da Vanda* or *Juventude em Marcha*, or even, symbolically, the emotional relationship of the Straub-Huillet couple with their editing room⁽¹⁰⁾ in *Où gît votre sourire enfoui?*, makes Pedro Costa's cinema possible, as a continuous movement in search of a home. A movement that begins at the end of *O Sangue*, with the determined look of Nino and his «I'm going home», said to Clara moments before (1:27:55).

Finally, the theme of the house also has another reading. Pedro Costa, referring to *O Sangue*, said it was «a film very protected by cinema". This meant that "protection" was made of quotes and influences of several authors with who Costa had learned the seventh art (cf. Affiliations, p12). It is in this sense that the Nino's arrival to the house also means the filmmaker's own growth within the meaning of finding a "home", that is, a thematic and aesthetic universe of his own. To the Vicente and Nino's loss of innocence he will correspond a progressive loss of lyricism and poetic tone in the evolution of the universe of his work. Exemplifying this is the abandonment of the black and white cinematography (that he will only return to in the portrait of the singer Jeanne Balibar in *Ne Change Rien*), the pure fictions and later, since *No Quarto da Vanda*, the use of analogic film.





The «proper home» that Pedro Costa will build will lack every type of luxury and will move towards a despoliation of means, investing in his very own work ethic, inseparable from an ethical treatment with people. As if obeying the order that Clara gives Vicente, «closer, closer", the filmmaker will make use of a small film crew with portable cameras to approach more and more the people he wants to observe. Only by creating a family bond with them in a blurring of priorities between cinema and life, he can achieve its degree of commitment. To Pedro Costa, «the cinema is a craft, it's like being a bricklayer". We can say that the pride in a way of life without great possessions, as it happens with Ventura and Nino (cf. Contexts p6), will then represent the place where Pedro Costa wants to make films. In the margins of the great productions, only the small technical apparatus will allow him to leave home every day in the morning and go to the same places with the same people, and shoot a particular subject.

Other elements already present in *O Sangue* will remain in the later works. First, the working process with non-actors that he started started with Nino. Then, the close-up shots (cf. Analysis... of a frame p18) that Pedro Costa would later use to set the facial expressions of Vanda or Ventura, as well as the fixed, long, slow shots, with moments of silence, often in the shadows or against the light, working both the contrast between the visible and the audible, either the space for reflection and recollection, the word as a storytelling tool. Or even the importance given to the areas of transition between the characters, as is the case of doors, windows and poorly lit streets or paths in the woods.

Whether by the technical elements, either by virtue of its themes, it can be said, in conclusion, that *O Sangue* appears as a first frame of a long tapestry formed by the assembly of his work to date. This "weaving", thorough and patient - as Straub says in *Où gît votre sourire enfoui?*: "genius is no more than a long patience." -; is made against a sense of hurry and interweaves various elements that appear and reappear. Not only technical crewmembers and characters, but also situations, letters, phrases and scenes that trespass from film to film. This constant reappearance of elements, as a work based on insistence, not only gives coherence to an author's view, as affirms a family and artisanal dimension in all his movies.

- (9) In Cem Mil Cigarros Os Filmes de Pedro Costa, Ed. Ricardo Matos Cabo, Lisboa: Orfeu Negro, 2009.
- (10) Throughout the history of film, the works by the Straub-Huillet duo are one of the best examples of rigor in the work of film editing. The portrait of the duo's work mode appears mirrored in the film by Pedro Costa that accompanies the editing process of Sicilia! (1999). In Où gît votre sourire enfoui?, Costa's patient camera is fixed in a dark corner in the editing room of directors, who will discuss, expression by expression, frame by frame, the most fair and creative ways to link the images from their film. By seeing Où Gît it becomes clear to the viewer that due to the perfectionism of Straub and Huillet, the editing room acquires the status of «dark room», where both live for a long season, sharing ideas, stories and obsessions.

FILMOGRAPHY

- É Tudo Invenção Nossa, 1984
- O Sangue/Le Sang, 1989
- Casa de Lava, 1994
- Ossos, 1997
- No Quarto da Vanda/Dans la chambre de Vanda, 2000
- Où gît votre sourire enfoui?, 2001
- 6 Bagatelas, 2001
- The End of a Love Affair, 2003
- Ne change rien, 2005
- Juventude em Marcha/En avant, jeunesse!, 2006
- · Tarrafal, 2007
- The Rabbit Hunters, 2007
- O nosso Homem, 2010
- Sweet Exorcism, 2012
- · Cavalo Dinheiro, 2014

AFFILIATIONS

This being a film strongly influenced by the memory of cinema, these are some examples where that debt and inspiration becomes more explicit. Either in Murnau's film ou in the Laughton's is present, like in *O Sangue*, the evocative, romantic and fantastic role of the river. In *Mouchette*, also a work about the helpless growth of a young girl, the slap the heroine of Robert Bresson's film gets, is mentioned in the famous opening scene of Pedro Costa's film. Finally, the loving pair of *They Live by Night*, composed of Bowie, a jail fugitive, and Keechie, the daughter of a gas station owner, has to enjoy the last moments of happiness before the inexorable tragedy that will separate them forever. It's the same atmosphere, filled with a final harmony, that is lived between Vicente and Clara, in the comfort of home (cf. Analysis... a shot p19) before him and Nino were kidnapped.















- 1 Sunrise, a song of two humans (1927), Friedrich W. Murnau
- 2 *Mouchette* (1967), Robert Bresson
- 3 *The Night of the Hunter* (1955), Charles Laughton
- 4 *They Live By Night* (1948), Nicholas Ray.



TESTIMONIALS: THE PEOPLE WHO MADE O SANGUE

MANUELA VIEGAS, EDITOR

Manuela Viegas was a professional film editor for many years and is currently a professor in this area at the Lisbon Theatre and Film School. Among the various films she worked in, besides *O Sangue*, stand out *Conversa Acabada* by João Botelho and Silvestre by João César Monteiro, both in 1981. She also edited *O Lugar do Morto* by António-Pedro Vasconcelos (1984), *A Idade Maior* by Teresa Vilaverde (1991) and *Corte de Cabelo* and *Mulher Polícia*, both by Joaquim Sapinho (1995, 2003). *Glória* (1999) is her only film as a director.

«I edited *O Sangue*, and that work was really instructive for me in those years. I had a fun relationship with Pedro Costa, my classmate in the film school. And it was his first film, with all the anxieties and sudden illuminations that it implied. I had started earlier editing Conversa Acabada by João Botelho and had already worked in some films. But we saw possibilities for connections between these images and the songs and voices, as if we were going back and inventing everything from scratch. The music on the film was Pedro's choice and it was really important because it influenced the film's editing tone, bringing sensuality. (...) I remember that we got to stop the editing to film some more shot like the one where Inês, at night, takes her hands up to her head and covers her ears not to hear anything. The writing of Pedro's first film and something from those characters and those ellipses stayed forever in our cinema and I think that you can see in the most recent Portuguese films".

PEDRO CALDAS, SOUND DIRECTOR

Pedro Caldas is one of the most important professionals in the sound for film area in Portugal. From his resume, we can count collaborations with Jorge Silva Melo, João Botelho, Gil Daisy, Miguel Gomes, João César Monteiro, Vítor Gonçalves, António-Pedro Vasconcelos, Joaquim Sapinho, among others. He directed his first feature film, *Guerra Civil* (2010), after a career with several short films.

«One of the first memories I have of O Sangue is filming at night in Valada do Ribatejo, near the Rio Tejo (Tagus River). It was really far way and we were coming and going every day for what seemed a long time, as if time had stopped. (...) Usually, in these times the concern for the sound department in the film shooting was still little. What was important was to ensure the image and from the first minute that Pedro had a real positive obsession with it, with its texture and density. But as a music lover, he probably already had in mind some sound ideas, and above all the use of music, which would then work during the editing. Moreover, as was common practice at the time, there were no conditions to allow time and space to the sound in the film shooting, therefore the sound ideas had to be, many of them, implemented only in post-production. And it shows in the film, especially the magical work of Gerard Rousseau's sound mixing that only in just three days he managed to create those amazing sound atmospheres and realize all the sound design that Pedro previously imagined for the film. I think that was a real work of alchemy. (...) About the film shooting, I still remember how I found really surprising the affection and patience that Pedro had with Nuno Ferreira [Nino], because he realized that, being a child, he had to pull Nuno in for the film. And after all it is a sign of perseverance of Peter himself that, despite the difficulties of film shooting, always took his ideals on, defending his film against all odds".



Images by Rita Lopes Alves for the film storyboard





III - ANALYSIS

CHAPTERS



1 – At dawn (or dusk) the father goes away. (00:00:00-00:04:07) [cf. Analysis... a frame, p. 18]



2 - Opening credits (00:4:08-00:05:08)



3 - Clara and Vincent look for Nino and Rose in the woods. (00:05:09-00:08:35)



4 - The father returns home after the medical treatment and has dinner with his children. Then, he leaves again. (00:08:36-00:16:02)



5 - Vicente arrives late to his workplace and his colleague Zeca warns him that some «friends» looking for him. (00:16:03-00:18:31)



6 - Vicente assails a pharmacy. (00:18:32-00:21:05)



7 - Vicente asks Clara for help. (00:21:06-00:21:55)



8 - Vicente and Clara take the father's body to the graveyard. (00:21:56-00:28:08)



9 - Vicente and Nino rearrange their life after their father's departure. (00:28:09-00:35:50)



10 - Clara takes Nino to the woods to tell him a secret. (00:35:51-00:40:17)



11 – Vicente is going to cut a pine tree for Christmas but two of his parent creditors approach him. (00:40:18-00: 41:35)



12 –Coming from Lisbon, the boys' uncle comes to visit them and when learns about his brother's death, tries unsuccessfully to take Nino with him. (00:41:36 –00:49:12)



13 – A new family: Vicente, Nino and Clara are preparing for Christmas. (cf. Analysis... of a shot p19) (00:49:13–00:52:26)



14 – Vicente and Clara go for a walk in the park. (00:52:27–00:58:15) [Cf. Analysis... of a sequence pp. 20, 21]



15 - The uncle kidnaps Nino. (00:58:16-01:01:10)



16 – Nino wakes up in his uncle's house in the centre of Lisbon. (01:01:11–01:04:10)



17 – Vicente tries to rescue Nino but ends up also kidnapped by the creditors. (01:04:11–01:06:26)



18 –Uncle tries to earn his nephew's friendship by taking him to the zoo and to buy new clothes. (01:06:27–01:10:56)



19 – Vicente wakes up in captivity. (01:10:57–01:13:57)



20 – Nino goes out to have dinner with his uncle and his son, Pedro. He then waits for his brother to come and get him. (01:13:58–01:17:37)



21 – Nino escapes from his uncle's house and finds Clara. (01:17:38 à 01: 01:26:13)



22 – Vicente also escapes and goes to confront his uncle. (01:26:14 à 01:29:46)



23 – Nino goes home by boat. (01:29:47 à la fin) [cf. Analysis... of a frame, p. 18]

FILM QUESTIONS

1 – IMAGES: A VISIBLE ISLAND SURROUNDED BY INVISIBILITY FROM ALL SIDES

Largely, the work of a director is to choose what to show and what to suggest. Or, in other words, between the ideas or feelings he wants to convey to the audience and what he wants to leave to their imagination. With this relationship in mind it can be said that the principle that guides the choice of the images from *O Sangue* is «to hide in order to show more». Since the beginning, hide part of the plot, leaving many issues unresolved: what happened in fact the father of Nino and Vicente?; what was the secret that Clara wants to tell Nino and cannot remember?; what is the «greatest human invention» that Nino seems to know?; who is the dead body collected in the river?; what happens after all with Nino's cousin, Pedro? All these questions, not to be answered by the director, make the most ambiguous film, allowing more freedom of imagination to the viewer.



This ambiguity is also a chromatic issue. On the one hand, there are several scenes where Pedro Costa decides to film with a little natural light that gives the impression that is dawn or dusk. For example, the opening of the film with Vicente's first confrontation with his father. On the other hand, as is already mentioned since the opening of this booklet, in *O Sangue* «black is a colour.» That is, in various moments of the film, we can only see the faces of the characters and everything else is in the shadows, or in some cases, the character seems to merge with the landscape itself. These choices not only allow the space left out of view of the camera spectrum to expand into the image, as it allows the viewer to evoke a fearful and supernatural environment.

If darkness is the mastery of fear, in *O Sangue* the whole invisibility is a topic in itself. As the blood that unites the brothers and that gives title to the film but that is almost never seen, there are several present things that, either aren't seen at all, or have a status of an unearthly lightness. In fact, since the second scene of the film where the kids are in bed having a restless sleep, a question may be imposed: this really happened or was it all a dream? To this environment, various elements contribute. For example, the vague expectation that the father may return after all (from the dead?) at any time soon; or the ambulation of people who, like zombies or spectres, watch the collection of the dead body from the river on the night Vicente and Clara go to the park; or even the soft whisper of voices, shadows distorted by the lamps in the evening and the importance of fog (see Analysis... of a sequence p20-21) and the wind, which puffs up the curtain in the room where Vicente is held captive. This world is still part of the séance that one of the creditors seem to want to do, the enormous twisted trees of the forest or the trips to the graveyard.

This strangeness and ambiguity are also associated with the Vicente and Clara's couple. From it is associated the black colour and, given his ambivalent relationship with his father that we do not know if the victim or his executioner, there are several situations where Pedro Costa films him like he would film a an attacker, causing doubt in the viewer. Two examples. The first is right after the sequence of the graveyard in which we see Nino sleeping in his room and there is a shadow and then a hand that comes over his face (27:13). A threatening image that later turns out to be Vincent stroking the forehead of his brother. The second, a few minutes earlier when Vicente follows Clara on the street to ask her for help (21:38) and holds her by the shoulder. Again: aggressor or victim?





Regarding Clara, associated with the white dressing, Pedro Costa films her as a haunt. We have already mentioned above, in the sequence analysis, in the first shot where Clara breaks out suddenly, like a haunting. An appearing to be realized later when, in the dressing room of a clothing store, Nino hears Clara, without seeing her, saying «Nino, now I will not lose you. Do not be sad, pretends it's nothing. Wait for me.» (1:09:06). Shortly after, she will rise again, as a haunting, in the fish tank and then, in fact, next to a metal frame.

Finally, it should be noted that Pedro Costa often resorts to metonymy in order to shoot only a part, a small island of visibility, leaving us to imagine the whole. A particularly recurring example is the importance of the hands. Not only are the hands that grab, hug and pull, as they are the ones that symbolize any relationship. As when Pedro's finger touches Nino hand (1:05:30), trying to meet him. Or when later the woman who keeps Vicente arrested, attempts to calm him putting her hand on his hand (1:21:50). In both situations the hand of the «intruder» will be repelled.



2 - THE SOUNDS: WHAT IS HEARD IS ALSO AN IMAGE

In one of the most important books written about cinema, *Notes on the Cinematographer*, 1975, compounds a compilation of ideas on the art of making a film, its author, the French filmmaker Robert Bresson writes: "What is to the eye should not be redundant with what is to the ear". This principle, which Pedro Costa surely knew, is followed precisely in the sound composition of this film. As an example of this, there's the opening scene. Before we see something, we first hear the sound of steps (first one, then two people), the storm, the mud and an engine. Only then we saw the father and son meeting, dismissing seeing any rain or mud, since these already «integrated», by the of use the sound, the following images. It is known, mainly for technical reasons, the difficulty of sound capture in Portuguese cinema until very recently. In *O Sangue*, the sound of various shots had to be redone in the studio because of this difficulty. However, that fact will be set at the beginning of composing a soundtrack that expresses the oneiric dimension referenced above. To this end, many of the sounds picked up during the shooting were then worked into the final mixture in post-production to provide such an effect. The result is that the sound also gives us this wonderful world, the ambiguity that surrounds the characters.

In addition to the evocative sound composition cited in the section dedicated to analysis of a chosen sequence (which will slowly changing and preparing what is seen), it can still be given the example of the construction of the sound environment of the neighbourhood of Nino and Vicente's house, where they hear the barking of dogs, the crying of children, the voices of the inhabitants of the adjoining houses, alarms, etc. However all these elements appear sparse, as if warning the ear of the living world that transcends what is seen on the screen. The heavy breathing, the low voices and whispers of the characters – one of the precise instructions of Pedro Costa to some of his actors during filming – contribute to this environment that oscillates between the wonderful and terrible.

There are several songs used in the film: excerpts from *The Firebird* by Igor Stravinsky, *This is the Day* from 80's pop band The The, the child melody from the opening scene (a direct quote from *The Night of the Hunter*, by Charles Laughton), excerpts of typical compositions of classical American cinema, or even the melodies composed and sung by the Zeca character, played by the renowned Portuguese musician Manuel João Vieira. Being a music lover himself, Pedro Costa – who had a radio program for several years – his musical selections potentiate the changing atmosphere of the film. Familiarity and relaxation in the sequences in the workplace, the mysterious and supernatural especially with the use of Stravinsky, the oneiric child melody, or the nostalgia of youth through pop music.

For all this, we can say that all work on the sound and music in *O Sangue* certainly has the role to give more than what is on the screen, extending the field of visible without eliminating the subtlety of imagination and ambiguity.

ANALYSIS... OF A FRAME

The father's departure

Seq. 1 - TC: 00:00:17 et 01:33:17

It can be said that the frame is, by its nature, more photographic than cinematographic. If the static shot gives us the maximum degree of immobility for the camera during the film shooting, it, like all other types of shots, is composed of even more unique and immobile elements, the still images printed on film, or frames. It is the connection of all these elements in the projection that gives the illusion of movement.

We decided to choose a frame that opens the film and finds a certain echo, or a pair, in another frame at the end of the film. If all the film is, in a way, the journey of its protagonists, this is a work on the transition to adulthood, symbolically illustrated as a crossing between two faces: from Vicente to Nino. The first image of the film, after several seconds of black along with the sound of footsteps, is Vicente's face, serious, almost frowning, at the centre of the frame. Within moments, it can be heard a slap that his father makes and that sounds like a thunder, followed by a submissive phrase that contrasts with his so unsubmissive look: "Make what you want out of me». The last image of the film is Nino, also with a resolute look on his face, as the older brother, also at the centre of the shot, drives a boat towards the house, after running away from his uncle's house in the centre of Lisbon.

The crossing that can be found here is related to a growth movement and a geographical one. In the first, Vincent confronts his father when he mentions that he is going away because of his disease situation, in which Vincent really doesn't believe in. In the image immediately after this one we have chosen of Vicente, director Pedro Costa will frame the father in a very similar way, that is, the child is always «keeping up», formal and thematically, with the father. Throughout the film, Vicente shows that adult attitude because, with the absence of his father, he now has a brother to take care of. On the contrary, Nino is a 10-year-old boy who has to grow up. An intermediate step that is especially noticeable on the scene where he decides to dress up just like his older brother. But the ultimate act of growth - which will get Nino, in the latter frame, the same expression, serious and determined, of his brother - is the escape from his uncle and the discovery of the way home. Precisely because of that, the second movement is geographical. If in the first sequence of the film there is a father who runs away and a son, who had just grown with that slap and now returns home, with Nino the situation is similar. He too, «trapped» by his uncle, will have to escape and return home without getting lost. Two brothers, the same growth journey.

Formally, the two frames are also related. Besides the centrality of young people, either in or in another, the background appears to be blurred (technically referred to as lack of depth of field) emphasizing the subjectivity of the characters. That centrality is completed with the fact that, in the image of Vicente – who wears black opposing to Nino's white (cf. Issues at

stake), the hand of the father who beats him in the face comes from the off-screen. Here, there will never be a wide shot of the two, except when we know that the father's departure is inevitable. Also in the image of Nino, he will speak to the boatman that we never see, who will ask him questions from the off-screen.

If it was already stated that one of the influences of *O Sangue* is the work of filmmaker Robert Bresson (cf. Affiliations p.12), the eyes of Vicente and Nino in both frames illustrate a very present kind of look in the French films: the «inner eye». A look that is not empty or absent, but which intensity seems to be facing the interior, the "soul" of the character. If we add to this evocative force look (often off-screen) and this centrality in the plan, the quiet moments of the characters and their immobility, we come to one of the major characteristics of Pedro Costa's universe, the "portrait-shots". These seek, through some kind of clearance, to reach a dramatic intensity of the characters: to reach the maximum of emotional mobility precisely through the path of immobility.





ANALYSIS... OF A SHOT

A NEW FAMILY

Seq. 13 - TC: 00:52:09-00:53:38

After having expelled his uncle, marking him in the ear like Robert Mitchum's hands in *The Night of the Hunter* (11) (cf. Affiliations p12), Vicente goes to his home with Clara and Nino. It's Christmas, the boy is whistling the «jingle bells», Vicente decorates the tree and Clara sweeps. A momentary image of domestic tranquillity. But the threat looms: Vicente says that «he will not give up,» referring to the uncle, Nino receives from his brother a calculator as a Christmas gift (later learning the prices of things, but for now it serves only to make music) Clara looks out the window outside and sees the unsheltered space that awaits them, where if there are trees, they are certainly haunted.

The plan chosen for analysis comes in a moment of time suspension: «We have time,» we heard Vicente say even before we see the three of them. A triangular composition, just like Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus, in the living room sofa. Pedro Costa will shoot the three characters with a travelling ahead, really slow, a not very common movement in the rest of the film. Various are the times that the camera moves but almost always to follow the movement of the characters (for example, the lateral travelling to the beautiful sound of Stravinsky accompanying the race of Clara and Vicente in the woods, 40:19). Here, however, all three are immobile and is the director who seeks to draw an approximation with the camera. An approximation of the three, forming a new family on that space (the father and other parental figures, the uncle and creditors, are very distant).

This approximation progresses from the familiar touch to the sexual tension that will slide to the next sequence, ending it with a symbolically physical relationship between Vicente and Clara by the river (1:00:20).(12)













But the shot begins with the touch of Clara's hand on Vicente's sweater (actually, it is Nino's he wears it now), a symbol of approximation of the two brothers after the death / departure of the father. Clara wants to sew his sweater and he also cares about her «shiners» he says, putting his hand on her face. «It's the children,» she says, but we know it's much more than that, which is the weight of the night, the burden of growing up.

Meanwhile, the travelling obeys to the increasingly whispered words of Clara to Vicente: «Closer, closer». As the camera approaches the couple's faces, Nino is out of the visible field. A fatal exit, because he will only wake up at his uncle's home, after being kidnapped while Clara and Vicente were in the park. It is a simultaneous disappearance, in the plot and in the shot, as if the «carelessness» of the characters is corresponded to Nino's abandonment, conscious by the filmmaker. This «exit» of Nino from the shot allows the viewer to focus on the love and fear of Clara and Vicente. She feels that he is afraid («you're shaking») of the threats of the night, but also of the flesh threats. The night outside is littered with corpses and fog and "Escuro", the dog, is the only one that lives without fear. Inside there is heat and light but also the restlessness of the blood that boils.

Since the scene where Clara drops the books, picks his bloody hand and saves him (21:46), she wants to help him ("ask me things"). Among these "things" to ask her, could be a kiss in the long shot of the two, ending with the camera movement, but it does not happen. Feelings evolve but are contained: from the touch of the sweater's fabric (or Nino's blanket) to the skin of Clara's tired face, the camera knows that the approximation of two lovers is done slowly, more by touch than by sight. Maybe that's why, instead of the kiss, Pedro Costa gives us the black, which will begin with the following sequence (see Analysis... of a sequence p20).

If this movement shows a new family that is born, it also rearranges the positions of its members. Vicente, who several times in the shot looks down at the body of Nino asleep, will above all have to join the other vertex of the triangle, Clara. This is his stage of growth: he will have to play the role of lover, not brother. In turn, Nino, by leaving the shot, will be "orphaned" for the second time in the film, dissolving the pair with Vicente. Because he joined another couple (with Clara), Nino is asked to search alone the way home, this home, which now guards him at rest.

(11) In the Charles Laughton's film, Robert Mitchum plays the role of a dangerous religious fanatic who just escaped from prison. He has both of his hands tattooed: on one the word love, on the other the word hate.

(12) See Sofia Sampaio in her text on the film, «Nós não precisa-mos de ajuda»: materialidade e ética em O Sangue, by Pedro Costa», published in the proceedings of the 2nd meeting of the Association of Motion Picture Researchers (AIM).

ANALYSIS OF A SEQUENCE

LOVE AND DEATH ARE A PATH OF LIFE

Seq. 14 - TC: 00:53:40-01:01:03







If there is an emblematic sequence in *O Sangue*, it corresponds to the nocturnal walk in park with Clara and Vicente, culminating in the kidnapping of the brother, Nino, by their uncle. On the one hand, all the film's themes are present: nostalgia of a cheerful and unconstrained past, the purity of love, fascination and fear of death, orphanhood, growth as an interior and exterior fight. On the other hand, technically, there are several elements here that make part of Pedro Costa's universe: the work on the black colours, the oneiric and mysterious environment, the references to a classic cinephilia that goes from the gothic to the B-series, the low-angle shots, etc. Finally, this is the moment in the plot in which the trio of protagonists have to abandon their vouth. a turning point that will trigger the entry into adulthood of them all.

But let us look more closely at the embodiment of these elements:

Still at the end of the previous scene (cf. Analysis... of a shot p19), the opening chords of "*This is the Day*" by The The can be heard in the distance. This is the song that will accompany the first of the three parts that will divide this sequence. Clara emerges on the shot [picture 1], as an appearance (an element that appears associated with her), with the rain falling softly on her hair. The liquid element is one of three that punctuates this set of scenes. With the white lights from the entrance of the park "exploding" a black undercoating (as has happened, for example, with the headlights from Vicente's vehicle), the young couple enters the "Picnic Park" [picture 2]. Holding hands, they happily come down the dirt slope to the inside of the party. In addition to the music we hear the motorbikes, voices and the crowd. People dance and enjoy the moment. The hanging lamps are similar to the stars in a low sky or the Christmas illuminations [picture 3]. It comes to us the second of the following elements, the gas, which brought by the fog and smoke of the party, contributes to the mysterious construction of the dramatic atmosphere. However, the atmosphere is still cheerful.

Clara and Vicente go for a walk. The The's song is toned down and the nostalgia of its lyrics – «All the money in the world / couldn't buy back those days» – is poured in Clara's words, «We'll never have a night like that.» As in several other scenes in the

film, the characters are shrouded in gloom. The lack of light, or as happens here, the shot in backlight [picture 4] allows extending the invisibility of what is visible, that is, you can not see or distinguish the details of what's in front of the camera. It is then up to the viewer to complete and imagine it. After a chance encounter with Zeca (whom he sees Clara may have had an affair with), the two observe something [picture 5]. "What is it?" asks Clara. "Fog," says immediately afterwards. However, points of light flickering on their faces maybe be the reflection of the water. They talk about Nino's fatigue, on the fact of being alone at home. The initial song resurfaces along with horns, motorbikes, river water, in a whole that enhances strangeness. It is the sound mix that clearly operates the slow transition to another phase from this set of scenes.

It starts here, with the woods now more close to resemble a marsh full of reeds, the second part of this sequence. If in the first part is celebrated the joy of a youth that won't never come back, this one gives an inevitable encounter with death. Clara and Vicente observe a dead body in the river waters that will be collected by a boatman [picture 6]. A spotlight illuminates the river, a ubiquitous element in the whole film, a symbol of its «circulatory system».

The river water is, in a way, symbolic of the blood counterpoint that gives the title to the film and it's practically not seen. In this shot, the boatman collects a body from the river [picture 7]. If the sequence had already shown us the liquid (rain, river water) and gas (fog), to these is added the solid element. We feel, by the moans from the boat owner's effort, the body's dead weight when it's lifted. Narratively, and we never know what happened in fact with Vicente's father, it also never revealed the identity of the deceased man.







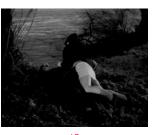
6

The dead body, the spectators of the backlit event (as if they were zombies of a Jacques Tourneur's film) [picture 8], and the return of pieces of classical music all contribute to a total change of atmosphere with which the sequence starts. It is now punctuated a dreamlike environment, which could have been taken from a gothic horror or a mystery film. Death and darkness are the dominant elements.

Vicente, in the middle of the funeral cortege, finds a white scarf that is presumed to belong to the deceased. The scarf somehow filters the following shot. In it, we can only see distorted shadows, contributing to the idea that ghosts are the ones who dwell those woods overnight. However, this phantasmagorical connection to the dirt (via the roots) is opposed to the anodyne and depersonalized space from the centre of Lisbon, where Nino and Vicente will be «retained.» Then, Vicente puts the white scarf around Clara's neck, over her white dress [picture 9]. Once again it applies to Clara the symbolism of white as opposed to black, associated with Vicente. Clara, realizing that this is a piece of a dead man (of a shadow), rejects it and starts to run away from it. As in the initial entrance of the park, the fumes of the party and the mists make these long shots of the party, the creation of a portal for the characters [picture 10]. Now is the time to get out of this 'dimension' made of dead and shadows. However, the escape is reversed: if Clara begins to escape from Vicente at the end of the shot, he then disputes the attention of Clara with Zeca. As these are involved in a dispute, Clara runs now behind Vincente. Both disappear in this smoke corridor, starting the third part of the sequence.







11 12

This third and final part concerns the consequences to pay for the actions of Clara and Vicente. His departure to the park and Nino's defencelessness will cause him to be abducted by his uncle [picture 11]. The brothers will not see each other anymore. Clara chases Vincent down the dirt slope, but now in tense atmosphere completely opposite to the beginning of the sequence. She catches him and is stronger than he in that «loving and sexual struggle» [picture 12]. This is the ultimate consequence of the approximation act between them and that Pedro Costa had stopped before the kiss, in the previous scene (see Analysis... of a shot p19). From this scene on, they will no longer find or touch each other, except at the end of the film.







7 8

RICOCHET-IMAGES

This page is a free image association around one of the film motifs: the lovers.

IV – CORRESPONDENCES



O Sangue (1989), by Pedro Costa



Pierrot le Fou (1965), by Jean-Luc Godard



Les Amants (1928), by René Magritte, oil paint, MoMA, New York



Sculpture by Rui Chafes I Am Like You, 2008 (Iron pierce, located at Av. Liberdade in Lisbon)

DIALOGUES BETWEEN FILMS

O SANGUE (1989), BY PEDRO COSTA, AND *THE SPIRIT OF THE BEEHIVE* (1973), BY VÍCTOR ERICE >TWO DREAMS ABOUT GROWTH

El espíritu de la Colmena, 1973, directed by the Spanish director Víctor Erice several years before *O Sangue*, has with it a number of contact points. Especially for its theme since both portray a family in the restructuring process. If in the film by Pedro Costa is the father figure that is absent, in this one is the mother, clinging to memories of a past love, shown apart from her husband and their two young daughters, Ana and Isabel. While the first scenes of the Portuguese film Vicente tries, in vain, to retain the departure of the father and keep the family together, Erice never filmed the mother, father and

daughter together Another common the two works is that the growing process Sangue) and two sisla Colmena) before values.

In the Spanish film, door spaces are but with very disinterior spaces - home, like Nino places of refuge and house in the Portuand cozy and we living room and the house of Erice's film its long corridors, dowpanes in beehive This is the ultimate



in the same shot. element between precisely both depict of two brothers (O ters (El espíritu de the failure of parental



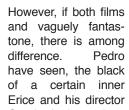
the indoor and outequally important, tinct functions. The especially the family and Vicente's - are comfort. But if the guese film is small only see beyond the cramped rooms, the seems endless, with large rooms and winhoneycomb format. function of the inte-

rior, being seen and filmed as hives. In both films the relationship with the woods and the fields is crucial. These presuppose a contact with nature that will stimulate not only the growth of young people but also warns them about the dangers. In *O Sangue* we have the dead that is collected from the river, in *El espíritu* the father warns his daughters to the dangers of poisonous mushrooms. This beyond the «smoke monster» (the train) that advances on them by the railway line and brings the wounded soldier that Ana will secretly feed.

As we saw in the section about the context of *O Sangue*, there is a veiled allusion to the difficult economic conditions that Portugal lived after the IMF intervention on the country, and a subsequent adjustment with its entry into the EEC in 1986. Victor Erice's film also comments implicitly the political landscape of its country. Spain in the 40s, the end of the civil war and the beginning of the Franco regime. The breakdown of the family emerges as a counterpoint of the effects of the nation's unity around Franco's victory in the civil war. In this sense it is possible to interpret the «spirit of the hive» as a new system of work and efficiency that would start to settle at that stage.

Now, let's talk of cinema. We have seen, for several moments in this booklet, the importance of references to other films in *O Sangue*. In *El espíritu de la Colmena*, the importance of cinema is integrated in the plot with the wonderful and terrifying effect that the viewing of

Frankenstein, 1931, Whale, will cause in girls. When later in mythical monster is oneiric dimension of shares with the tone Nino or Ana, will be moments of unforget-seek to work the fluiworld and the world of nation. The images through the editing sition, making some into the others.





by director James the minds of the two the film, Ana finds the even more explicit the the film, something it O Sangue. Whether lost in the woods in table fun. Both films dity between the real dreams and imagiabove show that flow and its technical tranimages come slowly



have the same lyrical tic of the supernatural them an important Costa works, as we as chromatic signal anguish. But Victor of photography Luis

Quadrado, have chosen to work the colour. Especially the warm colours of honey and fire, the yellow, with which warm and «sweeten» the whole atmosphere of the film. Complementing this difference it can also be noted that the crooked and oblique lines of *O Sangue* (for example, the twisted branches of trees or the diagonal streets) is opposed to the very large shots with straight lines out of sight, in the imaginary of *El espíritu de la Colmena*.

PASSAGES PHOTOGRAPHY: THE DARK IMAGES ARE THE REALITY

This phrase belongs to photographer Paul Nozolino (Portugal, 1955), a friend of Pedro Costa, with whom he collaborated in *O Sangue*. Some of the photos she took during the pre-production stages (cf. images below) not only helped he the search of premises, but in the most appropriate tone for the film as well. As it can immediately detected, many photographed images appear, in one way or another, in the film. We can see the terrestrial globe where Nino receives the news from Vicente that their father will not return, the plants that resemble shadows in the backyard of the boys, the solitude of the man inside the car that evokes the kidnapping of Nino or the sequence of the joyful moments of changes in the work, or even the slabs of the graveyard.









In addition to their collaboration, we can see some of the common concerns in the work of Costa and Nozolino. His career will be eminently marked by the travel, staying in London and Paris, and his works influenced by his passes in the Arab world as well as in the fall of the Berlin Wall. Despite these passages, Nozolino does not have the fascination with the instantaneous of photojournalism. It especially interests him to see how far the degradation can go, observing "what has been but is not already." In common with the filmmaker, he has this fascination with ruins and the poetic drama of black and white, to reveal shadows and spaces where darkness has the last word. Away from the mundane and exotic stereotypes often associated with the representation of places, Nozolino's photography also wants, like movie Costa, to use light in minimal doses in order to see clearly this darkness, and reveal the traces of the disappearance of a way of life. As if following a brief poem by Antonio Osório, a Nozolino's personal favourite: "Store suffering. Distribute it after clearance".

As is shown below in some of the photographs by Paul Nozolino, the similarities / influences with *O Sangue* are well visible. Since then the importance of the weight of city buildings in relation to the totality of space, as if crushing the sky; the impersonality of those who pass by, by relation to a fusion with the walls and floors of the long, dark street; the minimum chance of light (and white) in a heavy night, as here are the cases of persistent headlights of Vincente's motorbike or a solitary stroke on the road; or, finally, the symmetry of membership, in blood and in childhood, to evoke a past of complicity, of growth of the two brothers, never coming back again.

For Nozolino, as well as for Pedro Costa, these are the fragments of real life. The hypothesis of recognizing the beauty of a world, even though knowing the "intervals in which we think we are happy", quoting the photographer, is ephemeral. In the background, to see our passage through the spaces, as an intermediate point between the inhabited and the ruin.

















ARCHITECTURE: TO INHABIT THE DARK, AN ARCHITECTURAL PROBLEM

As it was already referenced in this booklet, Pedro Costa's cinema can be seen as the process of searching for a home. But not just any house. For example, in *Juventude em Marcha*, 2006, a film about the demolition of the Fontainhas neighbourhood stalls and the relocation of its inhabitants in the social district of Casal da Boba, there is a strong opposition of areas. On the one hand, we have these tents of dark rooms and peeling walls, a kind of «cave archaeological dimensions» where its occupants tell and imagine stories in that black devoid of light. On the other hand, Costa films the white houses of social district, where you can't hear people, but only birds and the sound of televisions. This is seen as a modern space, flat, without memory or dramatic dimension.

If this opposition is clear it can be said that is the architectural treatment of the spaces in the *O Sangue* – especially, but not only, in the contrast between the prison-house of his uncle in the centre of Lisbon and the Vicente and Nino's shelter on the outskirts of town – that kicks off this opposition, explored in his future works. An opposition that is basically between the modern and the mythical / old. In the script written by the direc-



tor we can see there are some drawings and images with indications for filming. In the final pages, referring to Nino's uncle's house, the following statement can be read: "House burned by reality, piece by piece, anonymous. General light without shadows". This is the house that will be presented to Nino, room by room, and which he will refuse.

In addition to the uncle's home, in Lisbon's most modern and cosmopolitan vision, you can still see the facade and the interior of the Império restaurant, the old Grandella warehouses or the uniformed balconies on the New Year's Eve in the woman's home where Vicente is arrested. If it is true that there is a complete mismatch of the characters in this urbanized domestic space, the periphery inhabited by Nino and Vicente, the filmed streets of Barreiro or other dark and mysterious ways, seem to be the most industrial symbol of Lisbon, much more than monumental. Old neighbourhoods and destitute places (mostly built before 1974) in place of the most efficient places, in an architectural view of some hierarchical space, favouring the non-immediate recognition of those spaces for the viewer. The privilege of action in passing places - corridors, narrow streets, yards, forests and wetlands - seem to favour the absence of linear and recognizable routes, an incomplete geographical map of places that may be about to get out of their historical time. The greatest example, beyond the mythical river and mythical forest with its beautiful and frightening trees, is the strange metal structure around which Nino meets Clara before fleeing. With no more information, it could be treated to a real or dreamed space, we do not know it, contributing to the

aforementioned association of Clara to the theme of appearance (cf. Film Questions p 16, 17).







CRITICAL RECEPTION: CROSSED LOOKS

O Sangue had its international debut at the Cannes Film Festival and in Portugal on 9 December 1990. Although the public was small, it had an enthusiastic reception from the critics. Among its distinctions, there is the Special Mention Critics award at the Rotterdam Film Festival 1990, and the first prize at the at the Portuguese-Speaking Countries Film Festival in the same year. It was also the Portuguese pre-selection candidate for the Oscars, for the category of Best Foreign Film.

In that same year, António Braz in the magazine «Grande Ilusão» in his review of the film, writes: «The narrative, fragile plot (...) has the virtue of allowing it to loose strands to our inner fictions. Opportunity to dive into the night in the childhood dark closet where we hid us so the others felt our absence, for we exist in our absence, the attic of old toys from our parents made again children, the girlfriend of stairwells and the useless waiting, the first and definitive losses. The big cave of all spells where we like to lose us in order to find us again. This blood is my cinema».

The programmer, and then director of the Portuguese Cinematheque, João Bénard da Costa, in a laudatory text of the work of Costa, in 2009, entitled "Black is a colour or Pedro Costa's cinema," writes that the father's slap to Vicente opens the film away from the identification system (of knowing to soon who each character is) and establishes in the middle "of the verb to be." We do not know who they are, "but we know that between one man and one boy - son and father, as the viewer will learn in time – the confidence is lost. Death is just so sudden, so prepared, so irremediable as the lost confidence. He says "Make what you want out of me" but there is no donation or delivery. There is nothing. Nothing you can do. Nothing you can say. Nothing you can see. Dark, very dark".

Mário Jorge Torres, a film critic for the newspaper «O Público», at the release of the DVD by MIDAS Films in 2009, writes: «Watching O Sangue today is not only a strong punch in the stomach, but also an amazing rediscovery: a waking nightmare, a film about the dead who breathe under the ground, under the moisture from the rubble of whimsical characters, playing with shadows, the heretical call for a cinephile inheritance to transfigure (to kill, as if the «father's death» became urgent), a convulsive lyricism of oneiric contours. (...)". No one in Portugal has ever filmed like that, the fey and ghostly lights of a winter fair, no one had torn the real and powerful simulacrum of life in such pieces".

In the newspaper «Expresso», the critic Francisco Ferreira points out: «terrible things happened in *O Sangue* (...) and come from afar, from a low range Hollywood cinema that once lived obsessed by night and childhood, and which influenced a young Portuguese filmmaker different from all the others. What is revealing is how *O Sangue* embodies this heritage in Portugal the end of the 80s, one of Portugal's Vicks VapoRub for the afflicted people. It begins with a slap and with that the awareness of being a film of all fears».

Still on the cinephile dimension of the film, the French critic Philippe Azoury,in a text already quoted above, «Orphans», published in the book «Cem Mil Cigarros», states: [O Sangue] is built on the desire to return to play with the entire cinema, in all its gradations (even to the genre film). But it is also a film that invokes the cinema ghost one last time before leaving for other places for a different relationship with the image. It is amazing for us to perceive today how far O Sangue was thought of as a last tribute to the cinema and to some extent, as the way of good-bye». (...) «O Sangue runs through the madness. Its quality is the silence. Here is a film that knows what it is to keep a secret. Never says things that work it, instead explaining them it rather see them as a delirium: Costa argues that never knew how to shoot a dream. We could tell him that it is the opposite: all of this film has an hallucinating atmosphere — is it real or you just dreamt it?».

Adrian Martin in "The Inner Life of a Film", text published in the same book, writes: "In O Sangue there is a steady and unsteady voltage: when a sequence ends, when one door closes, when someone turns their back to the camera, will the character that we see ever return again? People disappear between cuts, a sick father dies between scenes, turning, in an instant, into a body that speaks and (barely) breathes a heavy corpse. And if a few people return to film indeed, what form do they do it? Like ghosts, zombies, memory projections, virtual realities?".

V – LEARNING ACTIVITIES

To reflect the pedagogical principles set out in the introduction to this booklet (p. 2), this section encourages an intuitive and sensitive approach to the film, thanks to the tools offered by its content. The "CHAPTERS" section serves as a reference for the moments evoked by these educational itineraries. You will also find, on the CinEd website, a glossary with all the cinematographic vocabulary.

BEFORE THE SCREENING

1) WORK ABOUT THE FILM POSTERS (cf. film posters imageS 1, 2, and 3)

- * a description of what you can see
- * description of makeup and its aesthetics
- What can someone guess about the characters and the film's dramaturgy?

The first poster is designed in a minimalist style. The predominant colour is black showing us that this could be a film in black and white and with a melancholic and gloomy atmosphere. The poster thus illustrates the typical composition where what you see is often little compared with what is in the shadows or wrapped in mist. To the contrary of what happens in the film O Sangue, a more symbolic than literal element, comes to us in red. Symbolically, the title of blood separates the characters of Vincent and Clara. The analysis of its expressions – fear in the case of Clara and seriousness in the case of Vicente – mark the mysterious and serious tone of O Sangue.

- * Choose a frame from this pedagogical booklet and project it to the students. The aim will be to make them imagine the situation, the characters and the location where the film unfolds.
- * Listen to the initial scene without image, only with all its sound elements. Then ask students to imagine the situation that may be occurring (local, tone, time) and what kind the film belongs to.

AFTER THE SCREENING

- * Listen to their opinions and feelings about the film.
- Does the film correspond to the ideas they had about it from the film posters?
- What are the most important moments of the film?
 And why? Describe these moments and its location in the chronology of the film.
- * Retell the story of the film and characterize their characters. Describe the beginning and end of the film, as well as the changes that happen to their characters between those times.
- What genre(s) does O Sangue belong to?
- Why do you think that the choice of black and white was made?

1) WHAT DO WE SEE?

[Cf. Film Questions, pp. 16, 17]

What personal answer to the following questions:

- What happened in fact the father of Nino and Vicente?
- Why is the film called *O Sangue*?
- What is their favourite character from the film? How do they describe it?
- Do all characters act the same way (diction, gestures, way of walking)?
- What is the difference between the space where Nino, Vicente and Clara live to and the space where Pedro and the uncle live?
- How do the characters dress? Why do Nino and Vicente dress the same way in a certain time of the film?
- How do you think the film's director builds an atmosphere of fear? With which images, what sounds?
- Why do you think that Nino does not want his uncle's help?

2) WHAT DO WE HEAR?

[Cf. Film Questions, pp. 16, 17]

How many songs are in the film? In what moment do they arise?

- Do they all belong to the same genre? How does each genre is related to what is happening in the scene?
- Do you can associate a particular song to each character?
- Identify the different sound elements that can distinguish in the opening scene
- The night was dark and there was no moonlight / and a wolf howling can be heard in the distance. Au, au, au, au, au. At what point of the film do you hear this song and who sings it? What is the relationship between this song and the film?

3) ANALYSIS

Display the selected frame [cf. Analysis... of a frame, p. 18]

- What is Vicente thinking, with his serious expression?
- What is the relationship with the final shot where Nino goes home?

Show again the chosen shot (cf. Analysis... of a shot p19):

- What is the tone of the scene (happy, sad)?
- Why is the camera coming closer to them?
- Why do Vicente and Clara whisper? Imagine another dialogue for the scene.

Show again the chosen scene [cf. Analysis... of a scene, pp. 20, 21]:

- in how many parts is this scene divided?
- What is the most joyful time and the scariest? Identify the music of this scene.

4) RECEPTION OF THE FILM

- Pedro Caldas, music director of the film, says (cf. Testemonials p13) that at a given moment in the shooting seemed that time had stopped. What are the fastest and slowest times of the film?
- Compare the style of criticism of Antonio Braz and Mário Jorge Torres on the film. (cf. Critical reception: Crossed looks p29). What are the issues that arise in the texts of each?
- Philippe Azoury writes (cf. Critical reception: Crossed looks p29) that «O Sangue was thought of as a last tribute to the cinema and to some extent, as the way of your goodbye.» Why?
- Adrian Martin writes (see Critical reception: Crossed looks p29): « And if a few people return to film indeed, what form do they do it? Like ghosts, zombies, memory projections, virtual realities?». «How does O Sangue seem to be, or can be, a horror film?

INTERACTION WITH IMAGES

1) INTERACTION WITH STATIC AND MOVING IMAGES

Choose or ask the students to choose an image from the film.

– What film themes (cf. Issues at stake p5) are present in it and what is missing?

From the selected frame (cf. Analysis... of a frame p18) establish the context, describe the composition (the space, the placement of the body), the directing options (placement of the camera angle, camera movement)

and explain the dramaturgical elements in the image.

– How the image announces what will happen next?

Ask students to choose a favourite film shot. Ask them to describe it, to indicate his importance in the history and justify the reasons for their choice.

Choose a scene (cf. Chapters p14-15).

- What are the characters that enter it? As can describe the action of each one?
- What is the position, angle and movement of the camera?
- What is the framework?
- What sound elements?
- What is the new narrative information that we acquire with this scene?
- * Analysis with Students the relationship between the final plane of the first selected sequence and the next, focusing on the issue of the assembly and, in particular, the figural relations and dramatic content linking the two pictures.

VISUAL CREDITS

p. 3 : Midas Filmes, *DVD cover « O Sangue »* ⊚ Midas Filmes / Eilidh Price, *Film Poster for « O Sangue » (* p. 6 : Photography, *student protest in 1987,in front of culture and education ministry,* 1987 / p8 : Photography Pedro Costa ⊚ Kenichi Eguchi, Tóquio 2003 / p. 12 : Friedrich W. Murnau, *L'Aurore,* 1927, ⊚ Costa do Castelo Filmes S.A. / p. 12 : Robert Bresson, *Mouchette,* 1967 ⊚ Animatógrafo / p. 12 : Charles Laughton, *The Night of the Hunter,* 1955, ⊚ Alambique / p. 12 : Nicholas Ray, *They Live By Night,* 1948 ⊚ RKO Radio Pictures / p. 13 : Rita Lopes Alves, *drawings for the storyboard* O Sangue / p. 22 : René Magritte, *Les Amants,* 1928, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York / p. 22 : Rui Chafes, *I Am like You,* 2008, Av. da Liberdade, Lisbonne, in *A Capital,* por Carlos Vidal, juin 1995 / p. 22 : Jean-Luc Godard, *Pierrot le Fou,* 1965 ⊚ Independente / pp. 26, 27 : Paulo Nozolino, *photos during O Sangue production*

GRAPHIC ADAPTATION

Ana Eliseu and Patrícia Gomes



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