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Censorship of eroticism and violence in cinema in Portugal (1968-1974).¹

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Censorship of eroticism and violence in cinema in Portugal (1968-1974).

Abstract: This article presents some of the main conclusions of a post-doctoral project that focused on the study of film censorship, regarding eroticism and violence, in Portugal, during the period of Marcello Caetano's government (1968-1974). The present article intends to make it known that the most censored drive was Eros, concluding that, contrary to what one might think, censorship of cinema did not slow down linearly during Marcelismo. The research was based on the censorship files and minutes of the Censorship Commission of national and foreign films that are deposited in the National Archive of Torre do Tombo (ANTT), in Lisbon.

Key words: Cinema; censorship; eroticism; violence; Portugal; marcelismo.

Censura del erotismo y la violencia en el cine en Portugal (1968-1974).

Resumen: Este artículo presenta algunas de las principales conclusiones de un proyecto postdoctoral que se centró en el estudio de la censura cinematográfica, en lo que respecta al erotismo y la violencia, en Portugal, durante el periodo de gobierno de Marcello Caetano (1968-1974). El presente artículo pretende dar a conocer que la pulsión más censurada fue la de Eros, concluyendo que, en contra de lo que podría pensarse, la censura del cine no se ralentizó linealmente durante el marcelismo. La investigación se basó en los expedientes de censura y las actas de la Comisión de Censura de películas nacionales y extranjeras que están depositadas en el Archivo Nacional de Torre do Tombo (ANTT), en Lisboa.

Palabras clave: Cine; censura; erotismo; violencia; Portugal; marcelismo.

Censura ao erotismo e violência no cinema em Portugal (1968-1974).

Resumo: Este artigo apresenta algumas das principais conclusões de um projecto de pós-doutoramento que se centrou no estudo da censura ao cinema, no que respeita ao erotismo e violência, em Portugal, durante o período de governo de Marcello Caetano (1968-1974). O presente artigo pretende dar a conhecer que a pulsão mais censurada foi Eros, concluindo que, ao contrário do que se poderia pensar, a censura ao cinema não abrandou linearmente durante o marcelismo. A pesquisa baseou-se nos processos de censura e actas da Comissão de Censura dos filmes, nacionais e estrangeiros, que estão depositados no Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT), em Lisboa.

Palavras-chave: Cinema; censura; erotismo; violência; Portugal; marcelismo.

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This article aims at presenting a few of the main conclusion on the subject of cinema censorship during the so-called Marcelist period. The research is the outcome of a post-doctorate project focusing on the study of censorship in cinema, especially of eroticism and violence, in Portugal and Spain in the latter stages of the two Iberian dictatorships (1968-1974).

The project was divided into two parts: the first four years were dedicated to researching at Lisbon's Torre do Tombo National Archive (ANTT) and studying the censorship cases of national and foreign films; in the last two years, we carried out comparative research of censorship during the same chronological period in Spain. The Portuguese case is not as well researched as the Spanish case, which meant that more time had to be allocated to studying the Portuguese archives. The results of this first stage of research are represented in this article, albeit in a very abbreviated form.²

The documental fund at ANTT contains information on the censors' modus operandi, their advice on films and designated resources, as well as reports on the censorship cases. We also took into account the Minutes of the Censorship Committee [Actas da Comissão de Censura] as they met to discuss the approval of the most problematic films and theatre plays.

In terms of structure, the first part of the article is a brief contextualization of Portuguese history during Marcello Caetano's government, as well as an enunciation of some structural features of the Cinema Censorship Committee [Comissão de Censura ao Cinema]; the two following chapters offer examples of cinema censorship cases that we deemed more illustrative of eroticism and violence censorship. The closing considerations list the main results of the research.

How was cinema censored during Marcello Caetano's tenure? Was there a slight opening of mentalities or did everything remain exactly the same as during Salazar's dictatorship? Which impulse was the most censored: love or violence? These are some of the main questions that we will seek to answer.

Portugal in the Marcelist context and the Cinema Censorship Committee

Salazar was replaced by Marcello Caetano as President of the Council of Ministers in September 1968. From that moment onwards many hoped that greater political openness could lead to a regime change in which censorship would cease to exist. In those first years, roughly between 1969 and 1971, many Portuguese believed in a process of change that never came.

² To access this study's complete conclusions, and for additional detailed information, Cf. MORAIS, 2017.

Although they are intimately related, love and violence can be seen as separate when understood from the perspective of the anthropological pessimism that guided Marcello Caetano's whole political thought and action. Studying his trajectory, speeches and political actions it is apparent that the statesman saw the human being as saturated with original sin and immersed in a duality in which matter almost always won over the force of the spirit, as if every virtue concealed a vice.

For Marcello Caetano human nature was evil. Left to their instincts, free from the obligation to earn their keep, human beings would soon annihilate others for their own benefit. Perhaps for this reason, he constantly sought for a balance, from politics to juridical theory, perceived to be located between authority and freedom, justice and individual merit, the intervention of the State and its absence. Nothing seemed more averse to Marcello Caetano than the individualist culture of the 'self'. However, Portuguese society was entering an era (which lasts until now) in which personal identity shifted to the centre of human concerns. To a certain extent this inadaptation of his whole being to this growing novelty might have contributed to the fall of the Marcellist regime.

In Portugal, the 1960s were a period of great change mostly brought about by external circumstances. Portugal had ceased to be a predominantly agricultural society to become a country in which the tertiary sector was increasingly relevant. Emigration, tourism and the reformation of the educational system were decisive change-bringing factors. The dominant tendencies (which by and large still remain today) were urbanization, the development of market economy, increased access to education by the young and population ageing.

These structural changes occurred in tandem with a great opening of mentalities, an awareness of the outside world and of Portugal's lack of democracy and overall backwardness. However, because they consisted of long duration structures, Portuguese mentalities did not change easily. According to Jorge Borges de Macedo:

Neo-realism was still taken seriously among us, Orwell was considered a communist, Burnham was unknown, Ionesco was a pervert, Beckett an absurdist and Rougemont's debates non-existent. No one knew of Aron or Toynbee, American philosophical thought was reduced to Will Durant's pedestrianism; in Brazil, Gilberto Freyre was a fascist, Jorge Amado was a tear-jerker, existentialism was terrifying, the *Follie Bergères* were the best thing ever, and Mauriac or Camus were dangerous thinkers of the human drama. (MACEDO, 1993, p. 271)

As for the Cinema Censorship Committee, one of its structural features concerns the criteria

they abided by. Cinema censorship had a deeply arbitrary character, as seen in the completely random decisions in the minutes of the Censorship Committee. Behind these decisions is the censors' view of the public, which they deemed infantile and mostly uncultured. Indeed, there seems to have been no uniform, concrete criterium governing the selection of what should and should not be censored: everything seemed to hinge on the personal criteria of each censorship committee and each particular censor. Marcello Caetano himself thought that,

The problem of censorship is, however, one of the most difficult to solve satisfactorily. The law can define which matters are forbidden and allowed and have their publication conditioned after prior examination, but the law is enforced by men and men have their personal interpretation criteria. Some look at things from one angle, others from another. Despite all instructions, the existence of a certain degree of freewill among the censors was never eradicated. (CAETANO, *Depoimento*, 1974: 73)

The statesman goes on to say that he never intended to curtail the censors' freewill:

The law has established the right to appeal and the competent entity to evaluate the appeals. Sometimes, people would come to me complaining about the merit of a certain cut: usually, my office forwarded those complaints to the entities in charge of upholding the instructions that had been issued. I personally explained to certain complainants that mine was not the role of censor-in-chief; nor should I interfere in a service which had its own organs, staff and norms; a service which had to be made responsible for their own actions. (CAETANO, *Depoimento*, 1974: 73)

In fact, the only internal norms for what should and should not be censored appear in a document titled 'Directrizes para uso da censura cinematográfica [Guidelines for cinematographic censorship]' printed on 1947 SNI [National Information Service] letterhead. These guidelines were an update of those established in article 133 of the 6 May 1927 decree. However, throughout the New State [Estado Novo] regime, what was forbidden, censored or allowed remained virtually unaltered. And what was forbidden and censored seems to have consisted of what the censors considered 'obvious' offenses against common decency, morals and the authorities, which may explain their laconic and succinct opinions about a very substantial number of films.

In Portugal, during the Marcelist period, censors sometimes alluded to or reflected on their responsibility within the apparatus of the New State. The minutes of the Censorship Committee meetings during Marcello Caetano's time are very illuminating in this respect. The Minute of 19 October 1971 is an example of such concerns; in it, the Committee's President – Caetano de

Carvalho – acknowledges the importance of the censor's mission and discusses the criteria that should govern the Censorship Committee:

(...) Regarding the defence of moral and social values, or political values in general, both in cinema and in theatre, the responsibility of this Committee is of the highest order. This is not, therefore, a matter of earning a certain salary per month; this is a position that requires a spirit of mission, for there are values that we have the duty to preserve and defend. (...) [The President] Recognized that to speak about criteria is too vague, because their validity is reached and achieved during these meetings by directly looking at the problems as they appear. (...) The President added he believes that the good and correct exercise of censorship is greatly aided by a knowledge of what happens around us in daily life – for sometimes even the tabloids can have an impact that would otherwise go unnoticed –, as well as by enjoying theatre and cinema to a certain extent. These details, along with reading this or that specialized magazine, are undoubtedly very important factors in the censor's mission, a mission that should not be that of a ruthless auditor who cuts willy-nilly, but of a trained and prepared person who looks at the problems with care and even feels a certain measure of sadness at having to excise certain things (...) (SNI – Minutes of the 1968-1971 / DGSE session, Book 29)

Bylaw 263/71 brought about a renewal of the cadres of the Censorship Committee, which was divided into sub-committees for theatre and cinema. Some members left the Committee: Maria Eugénia Sá da Bandeira, José António Guerreiro de Souza Barriga and João de Deus Figueira. During one of these renewals, censor Mariana Rita Nova Goa was brought into the Committee; she is one of the most explicit examples of the subjectivity inherent to the censor's work.³ We quote one of her comments from 13 January 1974 (already not far from the 25 April 1974 Revolution) regarding the case of the 1973 film *40 Carats* by Milton Katselas:

Very well, I would add the following... [regarding the previous evaluation]. To my mind, this film is utterly amoral. It features not a single person of solid character, seriousness and remorse. I approve it only because I am sadly sure that if it is seen by any other group [of censors] it will be immediately approved...and without any cuts (this is not a malicious criticism, to each his own, some are more liberal and, as for me...we all know where I stand). I approve it very reluctantly. Those with little moral education can be galvanized into leading a life similar to the characters': disrespecting morality, ignoring the responsibility that comes with marriage, etc. The shocking, stupid way in which the protagonist's mother and daughter act is repulsive, not to mention the imbecilic husband. To accept the love between a 40-year-old woman and a boy of 20 is horrible and ignoble. Much evil is learnt with this double-edged weapon that cinema is!

3 On censor Mariana Rita Nova Goa and her comments in censorship reports, cf. MORAIS, Ana Bela. 'A Woman Censor during the Portuguese Dictatorship (1968-1974)', in E. Cordero-Hoyo, B. Soto-Vázquez (eds). *Women in Iberian Filmic Culture. A Feminist approach to the Cinemas of Portugal and Spain*. Bristol: Intellect, 2020, p. 132-145.

This comment highlights how mentalities are long duration structures and, therefore, very hard to change. On 9/1/1974 the film was classified as ‘Group D, after cutting some scenes and the respective captions, from scenes 1651 or 1655, so that the protagonist...misses the plane and never makes it to Greece. The trailer is approved for Group D’.

While researching the censorship cases we found some unpublished documents that may also constitute valuable contributions to the knowledge of the mentalities at the time. These include the case of the film *The light at the edge of the world* (~~A luz à beira do mundo~~ – [Portuguese title] crossed out, followed by the words in blue pen: *Os piratas do arquipélago* [The pirates of the archipelago]: the final title, n.d.), directed by Kevin Bellington. This case is very interesting because of the attached letter from a spectator dated 12/4/1972:

To the President of the Committee for the Examination and Rating of Theatre and Cinema. Dear Sir, I sometimes disagree with the rigour of your classifications; but because rigour is not a detrimental thing I have abstained from interfering. I recently went to Édén theatre to watch a film rated age 14, *Numa árvore empoleirado*, [Perched on a tree]), if memory serves me well, featuring Geraldine Chaplin and Louis de Funés, Why was this? I confess I saw nothing wrong with it, except perhaps for the fact that the star is scantily dressed – although any normal child at the beach will see people that are even more scantily dressed. I did not bother you at the time because, exaggerated as it might have been, the criterium did not harm anyone except the film companies. But today the case was different and I considered it so serious that I decided to call your office as soon as I got home. However, my complaint was not accepted on the telephone, although I identified myself, and therefore I have sent it in writing as advised. My name is Maria Elvira Gonçalves Marques Carvalho dos Santos Henriques Tomaz, ID n. 345709 (Lisbon), married, the mother of three minors, living in Avenida dos Combatentes da Grande Guerra, 51, 2nd floor, Algés, 214519. I went to Condes theatre, for the 14h15 screening, to watch *Os piratas do arquipélago* [The pirates of the archipelago], whose rating is Group B (age 10). I would like you to review the rating, which I consider ill-advised: the film is Sadistic, (?), and Harmful to any child; those who saw and rated it might have been swayed by the name of Jules Verne. It is much more salubrious to watch a fine work such as *Romeo and Juliet*, which might even be considered immoral, than to teach the most vicious ways of killing of which this film is an example, along with those ‘Westerns’ that you sometimes rate age 10 and 14. Cordially, Maria Henriques Tomaz.

The film was in fact rated ‘Group B’, with the cut of the torture scene after subtitle 284 – in part 13 – up to subtitle 287’. 29/10/1971 Rating request: 7/9/1971 (case date 4/4/72).

Here below, we present and comment some censorship cases in which the cuts deal mostly with eroticism and violence.

Censoring eroticism in cinema

Some of the analysed censorship cases clearly expose the traditional mentality structures in Portuguese society at the time. By studying the actions of the censors, we can confirm that the foundational structure for their framework of ethical values coincides with the one that prevailed during Salazar's dictatorship, aiming at keeping unchanged the values that allowed it to remain in power. In terms of the family, these values focused on the respect for the pater familias and can be read as a synecdoche of the need to obey hierarchical superiors such as the Head of State.

In that sense, one of the most revealing cases is probably John Huston's film *Sinful Davey* (Portuguese title: *Davey, o folgazão* [Rowdy Davey]). The film was approved for age 12 years and over after several love scenes were cut. The trailer was also approved for age 12 years and over after cutting the following subtitles and the corresponding images: '5/A – In love... 5/B – Charming. 5/C – Only John Huston could have created such a character... 5/D – The very personification of the 7 mortal sins! (...) 15/A – Down with the law! 15/B – Down with virtue! 15/C – Long live Davey!' (Censorship case n. 22364 SNI-DGE: ANTT, 4 / 7 /1969).

Other more delicate situations included films that were forbidden for endangering traditional morals, such as the film *I love you, Alice B. Toklas* (Portuguese title: *A borboleta vermelha* [The red butterfly]), directed by Hy Aberback. After several Censorship Committees, the final decision of the Committee for the Examination and Rating of Theatre and Cinema did not authorize the film in Portugal. The report of the first group of censors reads:

I think that this film does not contain a critique or an alternative that might contrast the 'hippie life' and conventional morals so that the audience might clearly choose the values that have so far governed Christian western societies. Moreover, I noticed that the director only perfunctorily suggests an alternative, albeit not stating which one, condemning both conventional morals and 'free' or 'hippie' love. I also think that the suggestion and evidence in the film of the use of aphrodisiacs and other libertine lifestyles (perhaps the term 'liberal' is currently in vogue), are sufficient for me to apply such extensive cuts that it would no longer be possible to show the film (...)' (Censorship case n. 21937 SNI-DGE: ANTT, de 23 / 5 /1969)

Sexual allusions were considered so shocking that the film *Twisted Nerve*, directed by Roy Boulting, had the first Portuguese version of its title crossed out: *O psicopata sexual* [The sexual psychopath] was replaced with *O anormal* [The abnormal] (Censorship case n. 22738 SNI-DGE: ANTT, de 28 / 12 /1969). Until the eve of 25 April 1974, the resistance to approve subtitles and images deemed immoral by the censors was constant, as exemplified by the case of the 1970 film

Venga a prendere il caffè... da noi (*Venha tomar café conosco* [Come have coffee at our place]), directed by Alberto Lattuada. The film was rejected on 28/7/1971 and then rejected again on 14/7/1973. The 4/7/1973 report reads:

In this new version, with its numerous cuts (the distributors speak of 21 cuts equivalent to almost 400 metres of film), some of the film's inconvenient contents when it was first examined by the Committee could not but have been removed. In fact, there are no longer any images to be excluded as the scenes in which sexual speculations were most apparent and the freer and bold parts of the dialogue have now been abolished. However, the truth is that one of the reasons for censoring the film was the nature of its theme, which could not be excluded. The criticism of bourgeois society, or at least of some of its core values is still sharp; the negative behaviour of the characters remains unchanged and is contrary to the ethical principles that still govern social relationships; the immoral meaning of the storyline is unchanged, even though a few highly erotic images were expunged. Therefore, although the efforts to eliminate the film's reproachable aspects are evident, we must also reject this new version.

However, on 21/9/1973, the appeals Committee 'decided to approve the film in its current version rating it as Group D (18 years and over), with the following cuts: a) around subtitle 26 leave only a reference (the 3rd one) to the scenes featuring the rooster; b) around subtitle 410 eliminate all the scenes featuring the rooster and the chicken'. (Censorship case n. 12473 SNI-DGE: ANTT, 21 / 9 /1973)

The sole reference to censorship of cinema posters concerns morality related aspects. The 1968 film *Prudence and the pill* (*Sarilhos conjugais* [Conjugal trouble]), directed by Fielder Cook, was highly controversial: it was rejected on 19/6/1968 and again in 30/10/1968. On 30/7/1969 it was rated 'for adults 17 years and over, without cuts'. However, on 14/8/1969 the Director of Censorship Services received a letter saying that although the film was approved this 'could lead to speculations on the part of the press as it consists of a comedy on the subject of "pills". Therefore, please allow me to kindly request you take the necessary steps this case might call for'. On 14/8/1969 the distributors were informed that 'the Committee for Examination and Rating of Theatre and Cinema decided not to approve the posters for the film 'SARILHOS CONJUGAIS' (PRUDENCE AND THE PILL)'. Capitals by the censor. On 11/11/1969 the film's trailer was rated for adults age 17 years and over and 'images featuring the original title "PRUDENCE AND THE PILL" are to be cut'. (Censorship Case n. 22743 SNI-DGE: ANTT, 11 / 11 /1969)

We could have given numerous other examples of censorship applied to eroticism, but due to space constraints we have gleaned the most noteworthy yielded by our research at ANTT. As can

be deduced by their contents, much of the censorship directed at eroticism implies the existence of censorship related to moral and ethical aspects.

Censoring violence in cinema

One of the conclusions regarding the cuts applied to the cases under analysis that deal with violence in films is that the aim was to eliminate all the scenes and images that could evoke dissent and thereby lead the spectator to formulate a personal opinion.

As Paulo Cunha has demonstrated, in the turn from 1969 to 1970 cinema censors forbade a significant, unusual number of Portuguese films. Cunha came to the conclusion that half of the eight films in question allude directly or indirectly to the colonial policy of Marcello Caetano's regime:

(...) on the one hand the film *Índia* (1972), by António Faria, and *Deixem-me ao menos subir às palmeiras* [At least let me climb the palm trees] (1972), by Lopes Barbosa, questioned the notion of exemplary colonization maintained by the regime; on the other hand, *Grande, grande era a cidade* [Big, big was the city] (1971), by Rogério Ceitil and Lauro António, and later *O Mal-Amado* [The ill-loved] (1974), by Fernando Matos Silva, dealt with colonial war traumas. (CUNHA, 2010, p. 545-547)

Most of the analysed cases are of films that dealt with the problem of war. The horrors of war were such a major nuisance for the censors that film title translations could hardly be farther from the original, to prevent spectators from perceiving the depth of the film's message symbolic meaning. Specific examples include Vittorio de Sica's *Sunflower* (*I girasoli* in the original Italian), which was translated into Portuguese as *O último adeus* [The last farewell]. The translation can be explained by the censor's cuts to the film, which included subtitles that elucidate the meaning of the original title:

221 – The Germans forced us to dig our own graves. 222 – There were Italian soldiers and Russian civilian prisoners. 223 – The Germans forced us to dig graves to bury them. 224 – As you can see, each sunflower, each tree, each field of wheat... 225 - ...they hide the bodies of Italians, Russians Germans... 226 – ...and also the bodies of many Russian peasants, old men, women, children. (Processo de Censura nº 23635 SNI-DGE: ANTT, de 10/ 10 /1970)

However, although most cases of violence censorship focus on the theme of war in general and of the army in particular, there are only a few cases focusing on the censoring of crime related

violence. One such example is the film *Dead Heat on a Merry-go-Round* (Portuguese title: *Amar... nas horas vagas* [Spare time love]), by Bernard Girard, one of the works that was rejected on 4 December 1967 and then approved, without cuts, for age 17 and over on 20 June 1969. In the report, the first group of censors commented:

We have reached the point where the activities of convicted criminals are presented in a rosy tone. The likeable hero of the film is an unscrupulous bank robber whose plan is crowned with success (?) – the crime goes unpunished. I think that scripts of this nature are by far more dangerous than nudity...we vote to reject it, although its viewing by another group would be advisable. (Censorship case n. 22039 SNI-DGE: ANTT, 20 / 6 /1969)

It is interesting to notice that the cuts were aimed not only at violence in general, and war in particular, but also at any images and scenes defending pacifist values. This apparently contradictory situation, related to the intersection of love and violence, can be explained by the ongoing colonial war. That is, allusions to war were forbidden so that spectators were not reminded that Portugal was involved in an ongoing conflict in Africa, but any appeals to peace were also censored so that spectators were not persuaded to fight against the colonial war, and in the hopes of maintaining the will of the Portuguese to defend the notion that the colonies were an inseparable part of the national territory.

The case of the film *Guns of the Magnificent Seven*, by Paul Wendkos, is one of the most explicit regarding the need to avoid any appeals to pacifism: it was rejected on 4 November 1969, but approved without cuts by the Censorship Committee for age 17 years and over on 2 December 1969 after an appeal was filed (approval confirmed on 16 January 1970). In the report, the first group of censors who voted in favour of rejecting the film comment:

The film deals with a rebellion that preceded Mexico's independence. The uprising against the established power was victorious. One deduces that the revolt was based on the Mexican people's desire for independence. The film depicts several kinds of violence perpetrated by the legitimate forces in power, which generates a feeling of sympathy with the rebels. Although the situation cannot be compared to our current situation overseas, it may induce a suggestion of similarity among less informed audiences. I would rather not decide for its approval, which is nevertheless viable despite the featured violence, before at least another group views the film. If my perspective finds support, I think that at least in its present state the film is not fit for exhibition. (Underlined by the censor)

The report is dated 22/10/69; on 30/10/69 another group of censors writes:

We share in the doubts and concerns of our esteemed colleague Colonel Nave. The film contains libertarian, pacifist and revolutionary intentions typical of this kind of American production, in which those opposing the established order are systematically praised, while its defenders are portrayed as unpleasant and cruel individuals. We think that the film is indeed less than opportune, and that its eventual approval should be adjourned “sine die”. (Underlined by the censor. Censorship case n. 23430 SNI-DGE: ANTT, 16 / 1 /1970).

As we can see, some of these cases feature the censoring of violence in a constant – although not always explicit – relationship to eroticism.

Closing considerations

The study of cinema censorship cases in terms of eroticism and violence during the Marcellist government shows that the action of the censors did not differ substantially from the guidelines extant during Salazar’s dictatorship. The censor recruiting circle was in fact the same. During the course of the New State there was an increase in the number of censors, a situation that became obvious in the 1960s as more and more cinema and theatre venues appeared, i.e., as the demand for entertainment among the Portuguese grew. Marcello Caetano did feel the need to modernize the country, but at the same time he wished to maintain the conservative nature of Salazar’s regime. The ambiguity of his political positions can be explained, as we have mentioned above and among other reasons, by his desire for balance.

After researching the ANTT archive, we realized that the censoring strictness was identical to Salazar’s era, despite the fact that some films that were initially rejected were subsequently approved without cuts at the start of Marcello Caetano’s tenure (in 1969 and 1970). However, the rigour of the censorship committees seems to have increased in 1970 and by comparison with the previous year, which begs the question of whether the famous ‘evolution in continuity’ that Marcello Caetano defended in his speeches had started to reveal its illusory character already in those early years.

Another conclusion was the realization that eroticism was more censored than violence, a fact that can be explained by Portugal’s overture to Europe and the world in general, which accelerated during the 1960s. Cinema is a privileged medium to divulge foreign habits and mentalities and the censors did their best to control any influence from abroad, which they saw as

an attack on the ‘good old customs’, traditional order and ‘balance’ that Marcello Caetano was so keen on.

Our research on cinema censorship during the Marcelist government period (late 1968 to 1974) listed and analysed a total of 1064 cases. The nationality that was the most censored was American, with 365 cases (34,3%), followed by the Italian with 225 cases (21,1%), the French with 180 cases (16,9%) and the British with 165 cases (15,5%). There were 10 Portuguese censorship cases, a number that can be explained, as mentioned above, by an increase in Portuguese films alluding to Portugal’s colonial regime.

The most censored film genre was drama (a total of 385 films equivalent to 36,2 %), followed by comedy (168 films equivalent to 15,8) and crime (102 films equivalent to 9,6%). The preponderance of drama as the most censored genre relates to the most censored theme: eroticism (502 cases or 47,2%), followed by censorship of eroticism and violence (313 cases or 29,4%), and finally violence (200 cases or 18,8%).

The following commentary by director António de Macedo to his 1972 film *A promessa* [The promise], reveals how much more problematic it was to feature erotic scenes than acts of violence in the political and social context of the time. The director explains that when he and director Fernando Lopes met face to face with Moreira Baptista:

when I pointed out that one of the cut scenes was an innocent act of love, the Secretary of State declared: ‘We are at war!’ [meaning the war in the former African colonies]. The scenes of gunfighting and death in your film are fine, but the erotic scene...no!’ We should remember that this was in the wake of the 1960s, the hippies and May ’68; the famous photograph of a young hippie holding a flower to the bayonets, or the slogans ‘Kiss don’t kill’ and ‘make love not war’ were considered subversive and thus forbidden by Portuguese censorship. I then blurted: ‘We live in a truly pathological society, in which the taking of life is encouraged, and the giving of life is censored!’ (MACEDO, 2007, p. 34-35)

Although as the years went by some manifestations of sexuality were tolerated, the images of the naked body, especially of a sensual nature, were still censored as exemplified in the last analysis by the cut of the last shot of *A promessa*, which shows the naked protagonist couple. However, as the Marcelist regime progressed, any allusions to the political regime in power or to the colonial war were no longer allowed, as we have demonstrated above. The decadence of Marcelism seems to have been accompanied by a censoring effort.

As Lauro António points out referring to Portuguese cinema and to foreign cinema arriving

in Portugal,

on 9 December 1970, an exposé by União de Grémios de Espectáculos (Union of Spectacle Associations) signed by José Gilera was sent to Marcello Caetano; a ‘distressing’ text laying out the inversion of censorship criteria: out of 157 censored films for the first months of the 1970 / 71 season, 34 were forbidden (21,6 %), while 76 (49,7 %) were subject to mutilation! (ANTÓNIO, 2001, p. 49)

Another conclusion that comes out of this research points to a close link between censorship and Portugal’s backwardness, especially in the cultural plane. In fact, in line with the work of other researchers (ANTÓNIO, 2001; AREAL, 2011; AZEVEDO, 1999), censorship was one of the factors that contributed to the country’s isolation, ergo, to its under-development, as it barred Portugal from ideas and values that it was deemed unprepared for. After 1973 the number of cut films rated 14 years or over grew, but with the option of being rated 18 years or over without cuts. This aspect reveals already an openness towards a change in mentality.

To conclude, we would like to mention the example of a very curious case, which we came across at the start of the research and is one of the few in which a greater importance is given to violence, more specifically to the Army and the imaginary of war – the case of the film *Soldier in the rain*, directed by Ralph Nelson (Censorship Case n. 22148 SNI-DGE: ANTT, 10 / 7 /1969). The first report of the Censorship Committee lists the following cuts:

a) images of women in provocative attitudes, around subtitle 371; the images of naked breasts (*if they exist at all; we could not tell for certain*) around subtitle 349; (...) However, it should be stressed that the film takes place in a military environment, featuring elements of the Army whose qualities of honesty, morality and discipline are not especially commendable. Therefore, despite the overall comical atmosphere, we think that the film should be evaluated by Colonel Almeida Nave.” (Our italics; underlined by the censor)

The colonel approved the film for 12 years or over without cuts except for the sentence in subtitle 346. Moved by curiosity, we looked up the subtitle. Ignoring the advice of the first censorship report, the colonel proposes only the elimination of the sentence: ‘You are too clever to stay in the army’.

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